

Language Choice and Attitude of IKIP Saraswati Students

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Abstract

IKIP Saraswati is a multicultural campus where people come from various regions and ethnicities and is known as a campus whose advantages include being professional, character and competitive, as well as a campus strategically located in Tabanan. This situation provides excellent opportunities for students to communicate with people from different cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. Generally, they speak Balinese, the local language spoken throughout Bali. Meanwhile, because of involvement with those who speak a different language, Bahasa Indonesia is increasingly used. Related to this situation, this research investigated the language choice among students at IKIP Saraswati. This study also examined their language attitudes towards Bahasa Indonesia, daily language, and regional languages in achieving goals. The sociolinguistic questionnaires were administered to 58 sample respondents who were IKIP Saraswati students. The study results showed that students have an appreciative attitude towards the daily language of Bahasa Indonesia, English, and regional languages. An investigation into the choice of language shows that students prefer to communicate using Bahasa Indonesia. The dominance of Bahasa Indonesia shifts the use of regional languages.

Keywords: Language Choice; Language Attitude; Domain.

INTRODUCTION

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IJEVSS, Volume 02 Issue 03, 2023



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Language choice is a condition when the language speakers decide to use different options of languages in different situations. Language choice is informed by the kind of participants in a communication situation, the topic, social distance, and location (Ansah, 2014). These speakers master more than language, that makes them bilingual, even multilingual. This language use makes a speaker decide what language to use in different domains (Holmes & Wilson, 2022). The domain is considered an institutional context, affected by topics, locations and participants when a language is considered more appropriate to use than another. This phenomenon could happen in a place with multi-culture people. IKIP Saraswati is a multicultural campus where people come from various regions and ethnicities and is known as a campus whose advantages include being professional, character, and competitive, as well as a campus strategically located in Tabanan. This situation provides excellent opportunities for students to communicate with people from different cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. Generally, they speak Balinese, the local language spoken throughout Bali. Meanwhile, because of involvement with those who speak a different language, Bahasa Indonesia is increasingly used. Related to this situation, this research investigated the choice of language among students at IKIP Saraswati. This study also examines their language attitudes towards Bahasa Indonesia, the daily language, and regional languages in achieving goals.

The previous research above presented that language maintenance could be affected by various factors such as nationalism (pride), social interaction, social distance, social scale and status of the language. Furthermore, some aspects, such as the demographic factors of speakers and educational elements, such as the medium of teaching and institutional education, are also the sources. Some of the information was initially obtained by indirect observation of several students. Some native speakers hesitate to admit that they can use the Flores languages at the IKIP Saraswati because of different cultures and languages. This negative attitude raises whether they are still trying to maintain the language. Therefore, further investigation is needed to explore and describe language choices and attitudes towards the various varieties of language they may use. Knowing attitudes towards a particular language can have different results on language retention. As described in two cases by Holmes and Wilson (2022), the maintenance of the language through speakers' positive attitude will help them resist the language shift to other languages. However, this research focused more on the language choice and attitude of IKIP Saraswati students through the following research questions: (1) how do the students value the regional languages, colloquial Bahasa Indonesia, and English? and (2) what language do they use in a particular domain?



METHOD

This research was conducted in a descriptive quantitative-type study. It was designed to investigate how the students value the regional language, colloquial Bahasa Indonesia and English, and what language they use in a particular domain. A questionnaire was designed to help the researchers obtain the data. This questionnaire included closed questions related to the respondents' cultural background, language attitude, and language choice in particular domains. The respondents' direct self-reports based on their metalinguistic ability were applied. The design of this questionnaire was in line with what Milroy and Gordon (2003: 54) said, that they are fundamentally metalinguistic tasks in that they rely on the respondents' ability to consider their linguistic behavior. Therefore, the questions used in the questionnaire were categorized as closed.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part covered 17 questions to identify the respondents' language attitudes towards the colloquial Bahasa Indonesia, English, and regional languages. The second part contained 12 items to find out the data related to the language chosen by the respondents to communicate in family, housing complex, social interaction, social media, and religious worship domains. The language choices were the colloquial Bahasa Indonesia, English, and regional languages.

Linkert scales were used in questions related to the respondents' language attitudes. Every answer was given a score ranging from one to four, with a degree from strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. Four was the highest score, indicating positive attitudes, whereas the lowest showed negative attitudes. The respondents of this research were 58 randomly selected students of IKIP Saraswati. Those students study in various departments and have different languages, ethnicity, and cultural backgrounds. The information on respondents' demographic factors such as gender, race, hometown, and mother tongue were also gathered.

DISCUSSION

Sociolinguistics underpins the basic theory of this research. Kridalaksana (2008) states that sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between society and language. Moreover, the definition of sociolinguistics in this research refers to the following: "It has strong connections with anthropology through the study of language and culture and with sociology through the investigation of the role language plays in the organization of social groups and institutions. It is also tied to social psychology, particularly concerning how attitudes and



perceptions are expressed and in-group and outgroup behaviors are identified. We use all these connections to analyze language from a social perspective” (Yule, 2020).

In sociolinguistics, examining the way how language is used in different social contexts is considered a valuable way to determine not only the way language works but also the social relationships in a particular society, as well as the way how people set up and express their social identity through the use of language (Holmes & Wilson, 2022). One topic frequently discussed in sociolinguistics is the relationship between language attitude and language choice in multilingual societies. The connection between language attitude and language choice is arguable. Some sociolinguists argue that language attitude shapes and is shaped by language choice. On the other hand, others assert that language choice results from the speakers' language attitude towards language.

Furthermore, he elaborates that social and political factors significantly influence people's language attitudes. Social and political factors strongly influence language attitudes. Language varieties have indexing properties that all community members are aware of. Language planners must take account of attitudes when they select a suitable language for development as an official or national language (Holmes & Wilson, 2022).

Language attitude may also be determined by how the community identifies and labels the language. They will select the language in most interactions when they have positive attitudes towards the tongue. Meanwhile, they may resist using the language when they have negative attitudes. People develop either a positive or negative attitude to other languages based on how the community identifies and labels them. A language becomes appealing to speakers with a positive attitude towards it and prefers it in most interactions. On the contrary, if speakers have negative attitudes towards a language, they resist using it (Dweik & Qawar, 2015).

In terms of language choice, Sumarsono (2013: 199-200) argues that the language choice of a speaker is dependent on some factors, such as participants, settings, and topics. Another researcher, Meyerhoff (2006), highlights the relationship between language choice and ethnolinguistic vitality. He said in multilingual communities, different languages may have additional vitality in various domains and that the language selection may affect the interactional force and imply something about the situations or the speakers.

A good diglossia situation will put each of the languages in different domains. On the other side, when a language leaks into the previously reserved areas for the other variety, this leak may put the other array in an unfortunate situation. To be worse, this can result in a



language shift. Language shift occurs when one of the types spoken in a society gradually displaces the minority language's mother tongue (Holmes & Wilson, 2022). When parents choose not to use their mother tongues to communicate with their children, the children will not be able to acquire their parents' mother tongues. If this situation happens continuously, it may lead to the extinction of the language, and it proves that language attitude and language choice influence the vitality of language. As Mohamed & Hashim (2012) said, "ethnolinguistic group with no or low vitality will likely lose the uniqueness of its group identity and the mother tongue."

Our challenge today is that dominant languages (with the most speakers) endanger minority languages. Wamalwa and Oluoch (2013) said that about 90 per cent of the languages can be replaced by dominant languages. The threat posed by the "big five" (English, Russian, Mandarin, Hindi, and Spanish) is accurate and significant, especially in third-world countries whose vast majority of languages are a minority. A Majority of third-world languages have not been described linguistically. The threat posed by English is underlined by its importance on the world stage in the 21st century.

Based on the criteria of who the user is, languages can be categorized as safe or endangered languages. For instance, safe languages have members of three generations. They are the children, the parents, and the grandparents who speak the language. In contrast, critically endangered languages are infrequently spoken by grandparents or the youngest speakers (Carjuzaa, 2017).

Many researchers have researched language attitudes and language choices. Kurniasari and Mbato (2018) explored the relationship between the language attitudes of students studying English as a foreign language against English and Bahasa Indonesia. They studied the relationship between language attitudes and educational backgrounds and study programs. This study found that respondents had positive language attitudes towards Bahasa Indonesia and English (Kurniasari & Mbato, 2018). Furthermore, the results of their research showed that respondents' language attitudes were influenced by their educational and occupational backgrounds.

The first part identifies the demographic factors that may influence the students' language attitude and choice. The following figures describe the distribution of the respondents based on the gender.



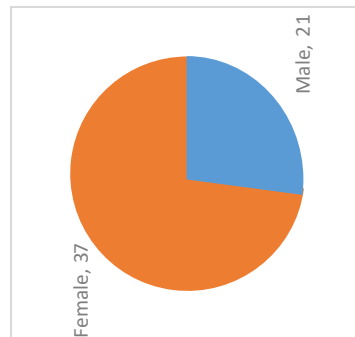


Figure 1. The distribution of the respondents based on the gender

Figure 1 shows that this study mainly used female respondents in the data collection. It refers to the high number of female students at IKIP Saraswati.

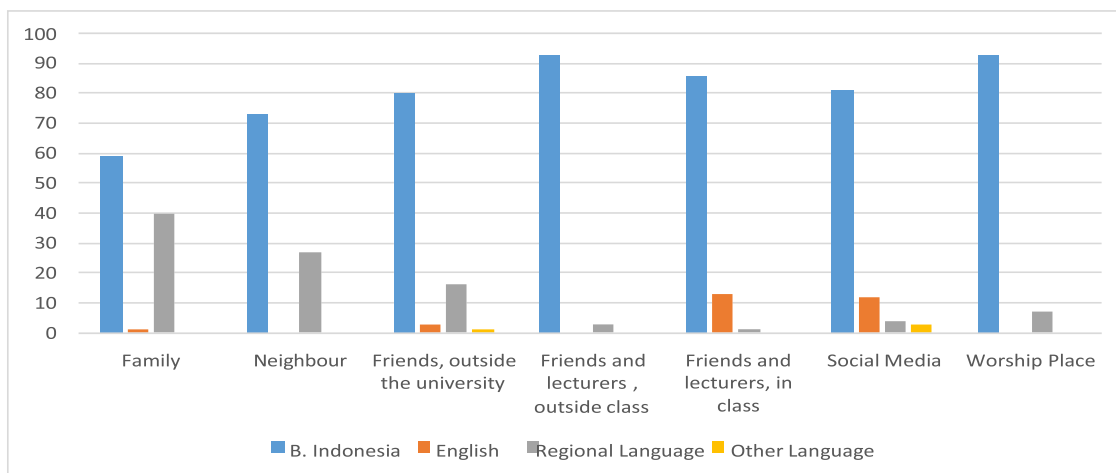


Figure 2. Language choice in particular domains

Figures 2 show that Bahasa Indonesia is dominant in all fields and functions. English is mainly used in class and social media, whereas regional languages are used to communicate with their family, neighbors, and friends.

The fair use of regional languages shows that regional languages tend to get closer to personal matters, especially to family, neighbors or friends. It tends to be supported by the

tendency of females to use personal feelings, considering that most of the respondents to this study were female (Temaja & Purandina, 2022). English is also used in social media, considering that most information is conveyed in English.

The second part of the questionnaire shows that the students have positive language attitudes towards Bahasa Indonesia, English, and regional languages though there are some points we need to highlight. The following table summarizes the data calculation on language attitude.

The study results show that students appreciate the everyday language of Bahasa Indonesia, English, and regional languages. An investigation into the choice of language shows that students prefer to communicate using Bahasa Indonesia. The dominance of Bahasa Indonesia shifts the use of regional languages.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that colloquial Bahasa Indonesia, English, and regional languages are valued positively for different reasons. They are essential for studying, daily life, international communication, and future life. Meanwhile, regional languages are appreciated because they are necessary for regular communication. Regarding language choice, colloquial Bahasa Indonesia gains the most dominant usage since it is Indonesia's national language and lingua franca. This dominance is influenced by social, political, educational, and economic factors. Though this situation helps increase the vitality of Bahasa Indonesia, it may endanger the existence of regional languages because the number of speakers is decreasing. The analysis results imply that being multicultural does not guarantee that the person will also be multilingual. This study needs further elaboration since it only applied the direct approach and observed only the students in one university. Further research might be conducted using the match-guise technique and surveying more respondents.

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