



Diglossia: Keep Preserving High and Low Language of Javanese Varieties

Jumharia Djamereng
jumhariali@gmail.com
Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar

Received: 26 December 2021 Accepted: 31 December 2021

DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v9i2.2385

Abstract

The research intends to describe the use of diglossia among Javanese societies who are settling in Sukamaju Sub district North Luwu Regency. Diglossia is formed as a functional of language variety which is used by communities in interaction among others. In a speech community, people may bilingual and multilinguals, thus one language usually has standard and non-standard language. Standardized language or High variety is generally used in formal situation while non-standard language mostly used in daily interaction or informal situation. The research was designed in descriptive qualitative method as it intends to describe how Javanese people choose the High variety and Low variety when communicating with their family and fellows based on the situation. The instrument of the research was observation to gather data related to language use that were spoken by Javanese people in daily interaction. Interview was used to gather information related to the use of diglossia of Javanese language among Javanese people. The informants were 40 Javanese people that comprises 4 age groups; > 60 years old, 30-59 years old, 13-29 years old, and <12 years old. The research found there are still sustainable use of diglossia among Javanese societies who are living in Sukamaju Sub district, North Luwu Regency. The pattern of diglossia follows "bilingual with diglossia" because they are multilingual (Javanese language, local language "*Tae language*", Indonesian language) and also use functionally the High and Low varieties of Javanese language. The low variety are mostly used in all age groups in daily interaction. The <12 age group do not totally understand High variety, but they still use the Low variety of Javanese when communicating with friends and family.

Keywords: diglossia; Javanese variety; preserving

Introduction

The need of societies to interact each other force them to select the language that is used to build communication. It is inevitable that people as a part of social community need to develop communication among others. Certainly in a society, they have their own culture, value, belief that they share among communities that is known as heritage from their ancestor. Therefore they highly appreciate their culture in which a language is included as a media to communicate. Using the language is not simply spoken without any rule in its application.

Language and culture are highly tight each other so they can not be separated since language is a part of cultural manifestation. It may be said that culture manage how language is used by its speakers. In other word, culture can determine the kind of language which is used based on who speaks, where and when it is spoken, with whom do you speak. (Wardhaugh, 1987:212). All elements may produce variation of language use. Hudson (1980: 49) named it as the dimension in act of communication where Halliday (1978:33) defined them as three general types of dimension such as; *field*, *mode* and *tenor*. People will speak differently if they have a high position in the society or vice versa. People who appreciate and practice their culture and moral value in their society very well will highly notice how they use the language. They will be very aware in choosing an appropriate kind of language variation.

Societies generally is formed in social class structures which is grouped based on their noble, wealth, education, and power. This situation has been generated for a long time ago specially in the kingdom in the past time where the noble always tried to perform their existence that differ radically from common people. There is a convention in a society in language use which is obeyed among language users. This convention naturally forms language variation that spoken by differently by societies according to their social structure. This circumstance in accordance with what is called it *diglossia* as it was stated by Hudson (1980:53) that is a type of social restriction of items can be expressed in terms of large-scale 'of varieties'. Language and culture that are living side by side involve norms which are shared and obeyed by communities. Consequently, it forms a variety of language which is perceived and spoken based on background and status of individual and social terms as well.

Study on diglossia is interesting as generally every language is formed in high and low variety. The difference of both varieties might be formed naturally in the process of communication which is affected by speakers' background. People speak differently when they come from upper class as the intention to show their identity. In other side, it can be recognized when lower class speak language when interacting among them. Therefore there have been conducted many studies on the use of diglossia among language speakers all over the world. Sneddon (2003) studied "Diglossia in Indonesia" described the use of high and low variation of Indonesian

as national language in Indonesia. She found that the use of H used by educated such journalist, politicians, while the low variety (*Indonesian in Betawi dialect*) frequently used by Jakarta citizens in *conversation* rather than *interview* and *meeting*. Moreover, there is a continuum between the H and L extremes, at least in the speech of educated Jakartans. While there is a continuum a series of discrete stages cannot be identified; rather as the social situation becomes more formal H elements appear more and more frequently, though at an unpredictable rate, there being considerable variation in the speech of different individuals. Similarly Arjulayana (2013) also studied the use of code switching and diglossia in Indonesia where they are familiar in Indonesia as Indonesian scholars have their own local wisdom, and language varieties. Besides it is used to show their status in some social medias. He also found that using bilingual (H and L) may help them to interact appropriately with others in different situations.

Other research also conducted by Saddiyah and Rohman (2018) who studied diglossia in Javanese-Indonesia among students in Senior High School in Tegal regency. They found that students use of standardized Indonesia in formal situation while non-standardized Indonesia (L) mostly used in informal situation. The current study tried to describe the Javanese variety which is consist of H (*kromo*) and L (*ngoko*) spoken by Javanese people who are living in North Luwu regency. Pertiwi et.al. also conducted the similar research in which they found there three varieties of diglossia of Javanese in Sitiung Darmasraya namely; Kromo, Madya and Ngoko. The first generation frequently speak the H variety "*Kromo*", while the second generation use "*Madya*, and the third generation use the low variety "*Ngoko*" lexicon. It is different from other studies since it simultaneously observed the maintenance of high variety of Javanese although they are not living in Javanese island. Parent are still aware of teaching their children high language when speaking with older people in communication with family and Javanese fellows.

The emerge of language phenomena currently developed among language users as an effect of language contact. This circumstance is inevitable since people need to develop communication and expand their channel. Therefore, as a media to communicate, people choose a language to communicate among them although they generally speak more than one language. *Diglossia* is a characteristics of speech community rather than individual. (Holmes, 2008). Individual may speaks more than on language that is bilingual while communities shared linguistic varieties of one language that is H and L varieties. Almost all languages are divided into high and low language which is called diglossia. It is assumed that language variety are formed as a result of cultural aspect where people commonly have their own identity as individua and ethnic group. By speaking a language, it may perform identity as individual and which ethnic they are belong to. Culture which is shared together among society will influence them to acquire the way of using language that is acceptable in their cultural group.

Some experts are still contradicted with the term diglossia as a kind of sociolinguistic situation as Ferguson (1959) in Hudson (1980) stated that it

becomes its counterpart in societal bilingualism. It concerns with the relationship between complementary functional of variety of language and language function. So, it is difficult to determine when people choose H or L language, whether it is used as language variety or as a language function because it is choosing contextually on formal or informal situation. Therefore, she formulated diglossia into two basic dimensions of language variation namely dialect variation which relates to the position of speaker in the community and register variation relating to occasions of use, as a result, the H and L varieties of diglossia can be identified as register variants, not dialect variants. (Ferguson, 1991:222)

Ferguson mentioned diglossia as a primary dialect of a language which is a relatively stable language situation that means that the use of language variety will constantly applicable in the same situation, i.e., high variation which called *standard* commonly used in formal situation while people choose low variety or *regional dialects* in informal situation. She also stated that the standard is a very divergent and also highly systematic in the grammatical term. Standard variety is arranged based of linguistic rules and sometimes it is called superposed variety. It is mostly used as a language in the body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community. Besides, it becomes the language which is learned largely in formal education and mostly used in written and formal spoken purposes. Otherwise, the standard is seldom used by any domain in which involves as ordinary conversation among communities (Ferguson (1959) in Hudson, 1987).

Generally high (H) variety used in formal situation as Ferguson (1959) mentioned previously. Holmes (2008) also described the example of the pattern of variety which is used in Eggenwill, a town in the Aargau canton of Switzerland. There are two pattern of code use or variety used in different places. Local Swiss German is used in everyday interactions while standard German which is learnt in school, used in newspaper, lecturing at the university, broadcast national tv news, church, and novels also use this H standard. Based on the example, it can be recognized the places where standard language which is known as German and local Swiss German as L variety. The variety pattern has been described with the term of diglossia where the use of this term can be in a narrow and broader sense. Thus, Holmes (2008) characterizes three essential features of the narrow or original sense of diglossia

1. There are two different varieties used in the community namely a high (H) and low (L) variety.
2. H and L varieties are used for different functions, but they are complementing each other.
3. H variety is seldom used in daily interaction.

There is a clear cut in the position of using H varieties as the two varieties are kept apart functionally (Wardaugh, 1987) It means one is used in a set of certain circumstances and the other in entirely different set as they are mentioned by Ferguson (1959) in the case of Eggenwill. H variety is not used in the circumstance for calling an L variety because it will be heard odd by others, neither does H variety

will not be used when L variety is called for. Shortly, people manage the use of diglossia functionally based on the situation they experienced. Therefore, they need to recognize H and L varieties and make themselves familiar with its use. Wardaugh (1987) also emphasized that H and L varieties certainly are different specially in the term of learning both varieties. As in the study of Haitians, all children learnt the L variety. Although some may learn H variety but others prefer learning L variety at all.

In fact, all the understanding of the “*diglossia*” stated by some experts previously are almost similar including the Fishman’s theory (1972 in which he used the term “*diglossia*” can refer to any degree of linguistics difference from the most subtle stylistics differences within a single language to the use of two totally unrelated language. It can be seen that Fishman more emphasize on the use of some varieties of one language, he does not restrict to only two varieties but even those varieties are not related to the original one as long as they are used in a one speech community. He also reveals the degree of individual bilingualism in the society may become an important affect to the typological criterion. Therefore he assumes that bilingualism can strongly influence the use of H and L. Diglossia cannot be separated from bilingualism since it is functional distribution of H and L (Fasold :1987).

People who are bilingual or multilingual are not certainly have diglossia. They may speak more than one language but no guarantee they understand H and L variety of language since it needs a long experience to use language functionally. In order to have diglossia without bilingualism, two disjunct groups within a single political, religious, and/or economic entity are required. One of varieties is called as High language that is usually only spoken by the ruling group while other that normally a much larger group, has no power in the society. Such situation was particularly occurred before the World War I in Europe, but they are no longer found in the recent time (Fasold, 1984).

Thus, Fishman in Fasold (1987) and Holmes (2008) describes the relation between bilingualism and diglossia. First, *both diglossia and bilingualism*, it describes situation where society is diglossic and H and L language can distribute to all domains, and most individual are bilingual. Second, *bilingualism without diglossia*, is description of situation where individuals are bilingual, but the community do not understand and use the language in functional difference. Third, *diglossia without bilingualism*, it describes political situation in which where two languages are used for different situations, but mostly spoken by different speech community. Fourth, *neither diglossia nor bilingualism*, describes the situation where societies only speak one language or monolingual. It occurs in isolated ethnic society where there is a limited contact with other linguistic communities. Considering the relation of diglossia and bilingualism, it seems that the first one is commonly experienced in the recent time although not all individuals can fulfill this circumstance.

Methods

The research was designed in descriptive qualitative method which is aimed at describing the use of diglossia among Javanese people. The data were taken from 40 Javanese people who are living in transmigration area Semakau sub district North Luwu Regency. They are categorized into 4 group ages such as;

- 10 informant for the group age >60 years
- 10 informants for the group age 30-59 years
- 10 informants for the group age 13-29 years
- 10 informants for the group age <13 years

Thus, the instruments of the research are observation is used to gather data related to language use that are spoken by Javanese people when interacting among others (family and neighbors. Other instrument is interview to gather information related to the use of diglossia of Javanese language in daily communication. The data were collected through observation followed by interviewing the informants related to their language use. Thus, they were analyzed to find out the description of language variety "diglossia" spoken by Javanese ethnic based on some related theories as they are written on the introduction.

Results

As it is stated in the research method, the data gathered from the informants are categorized as follows:

▪ The Age Group >60

It is commonly found in sociolinguistics studies especially in the language use, this age category is usually identified as the first generation, are very aware in using their mother tongue. Based on the observation, most of informants from this age group speak Javanese language to interact with families and other Javanese societies. They feel that speaking the language make their relation can be closer as the Javanese societies in that area where the location is very far from their home town.

It is known that Luwu Regency had been one area that becomes the transmigration location since 1991. This place is settled by various ethnics who had been living there for a long time while some also just live in short time for working temporarily. The ethnics are Javanese, Balinese, Buginese, Torajanese, and local people. Since this research took Javanese as the informants, so Sukamaju sub district is chosen as the research location, where they have been living for a long time. They speak Javanese but the variety they mostly used is "ngoko" which is known as low variety of Javanese language. Some of them still understand the high variety "kromo" although they seldom use it in daily interaction. Based on the interview, the informant meets other Javanese, she said:

"*Arep endi?*" (where are you going?)

"*Kondi kowe?*" (where have you been?)

This variety is known as low language where it is mostly used in informal situation and also when the relation between the speakers is very closed. Most informants speak “*ngoko*” frequently because they do not very familiar the “*kromo*” which has many differences in some lexical forms. It certainly happens due to their existences as Javanese societies who live very far from their ancestor land. Nevertheless, some informants still know the high variety of Javanese as a result they use it in certain situation such as wedding and engagement party, religious speeches, or speaking with “noble” Javanese.

For examples, when this informant asking his wife to have lunch or dinner, he said:

“*Mak, ayo mangan se!* (let’s have a lunch or dinner)

“*Ndang mangan.*”

Although he knew the high variety, such as;

“*Mak, monggo nedi rien.*” or

“*Monggo dahar.*”

Another informant said:

“*Ajeng teng pundi?*” (*Where are you going?*)

“*Ayo, ngewangi pae kerjo*” (Father asking his son to help doing something)

However she could adapt which variety she might use, as she said:

“*Bade tidak pundi*” is high variety instead of saying “*Nyile duite?*” (*Can I borrow your money?*) in low variety.

She also utters the low variety ‘*ngoko*’ when borrowing something from her neighbor, such as:

“*Nyile pisone.*” (*Can I borrow your knife?*) and “*Aku nyileh sapune.*”

although she understand the high variety “*kromo*”.

▪ **The Age Group 30-59**

It is different from the group age >60 years old, not all people from this age group understand the high variety of Javanese language. Therefore they usually speak the low variety of Javanese language with other Javanese fellows. For example, when meeting each other, they may say :

“*Ko nendi*” or “*ate nendi*”

When she wants to borrow something, they may say:

“*Aku ate nyileh.....*”

Another informant says;

“*Mbah nyileh sapune se’ yo?*”

She only uses the low variety although she still understand the high one when borrowing something by saying :

“*Mbah, kulo nyambut sapune sampeyan nggeh?*”

“*Aku arep nyileh piring*”.

Those kinds of H variety seem too formal to use in that situation. She seldom use that variety as they have been very closed as neighbor. The area is located in the small district such as in transmigration area where their houses are very closed each other (even in other ethnic i.e. Buginese, any others), so they feel free to communicate each other by using low variety of Javanese language.

Thus she will say, "*Aku emoh*" or "*Ra iso, aku repot*" when refusing for doing something. This statement is generally spoken by most Javanese people when doing the same thing. As the group age >60 years old done, this age group also rebuke the children when making mistake, for example:

"*Ojo ngono*" and "*Ojo ngono kui*" or "*Ora entok ngonowi*".

She also rebukes her child who only playing all the time by saying, "*Ojo dolanan wae nak*"

This informant also speaks the low variety when she asks her husband for eating lunch and dinner, i.e. "*Ayo mangan, Pak*". Other informant says:

"*Kak, ending mangan, wes matang, Pak*"

Based on analysis previously, it might say that the Javanese societies of this group age seldom understand the high variety "*Kromo*". In other side, they often use the low variety "*ngoko*" when interacting each other in the domains such as market, office, public health service, any others. Although a few of them still use "*kromo*" but only for daily interaction, particularly when speaking with parents or older people. The high variety is only used when there is a marriage ceremony with the same Javanese people. However some also use Indonesian language as the media of communication in the marriage process.

▪ **The Age Group 13-20 years old**

This group age seems different from the previous age where they seldom speak Javanese language in their daily activities. Based on the data, they use Indonesian language instead of their first language *Javanese languages* their alternative language in communicating with others. Although they understand their mother tongue, they use it in restricted domains such as among families and neighborhood. They commonly speak Javanese language (but speaking more low variety) when speaking with older Javanese people. One informant says that it will be more polite to speak Javanese language with the older Javanese except parents and other families.

Another informant says that she understand Javanese language in both high and low varieties, but in fact she mostly use the low variety (*Ngoko*) when communicating with friends in domains likes mosque, market, and other places, whereas she does not master the high variety (*Kromo*). However she prefers speaking Indonesian language when meeting teachers in the school. It is similar to the informant previously, she also speak Javanese language with the older Javanese

people although it is only in the low variety. For example, when refusing parent's requests or commands politely, she may say;

"Gak iso aku, Ma". (I can do that, Mom)

Thus she will say the following utterance when asking friend for playing.

"Ayo dolanan". (Let's play)

There is also another informants whose age are 22 years old and 27 years old. Both of them can speak Javanese language even in the high and low varieties. However they uses the low variety (*Ngoko*) when chatting with friends, families and neighbor.

When refusing mother's request they will say;

"Gak iso aku, ise enek tak kerjo". (

They also will say:

"Kulo njalok sepurane lak kulo enten salah". It is kind of *Kromo* when parents angry with them.

They usually great their parents by saying:

"Teng koe ndikoe?" (Where are you from?)

"Ajerem pudi?" (Where are you going?)

As the other group age done, this group frequently speak Javanese language either when communicating with the older for the shake of appreciating or honoring them.

▪ **The Age Group <12 years old**

It is commonly found in Sociolinguistics studies that children are group age who seldom speak their mother tongue. This condition occurs as result of parents do not speak their ancestor language intensively when communicating with children in their home. Therefore they tend to use other language instead of their first language. Some children do not recognize their mother tongue because they have never heard the language in their language acquisition.

Based on data, most of them do not speak Javanese language in daily communication. There are only few informants who can speak the low variety of Javanese language. They do not understand the high variety of the language at all. Indonesian language as their language choice they used when interacting with others includes families, friends and teachers. Family and school are domains where they usually mix Indonesian and Javanese language as media of communication, especially when playing with friends. For examples:

"Ayo dolanan". (Let's play)

"Njile bukumu". (Borrow me your book)

Thus, this informant says:

"Ma, aku arep sekolah" or

"Mama, aku arep budal sekolah aku njalok duet," when asking her mother that she wants to go to school.

She also says :

“*Engko Ma*” when refusing mother’s request.

“*Dasar koe kemayu!*” when someone disturbing her.

Based on the data, there are some children who can speak Javanese language only in the low variety (*ngoko*) of Javanese language in very common situation. They generally use that variety to their parents and other people who is older than them. It is similar with other condition where most groups use the high variety (*kromo*) deliberately to appreciate others.

Discussions

Having presented the data, it can be seen the description of diglossia among Javanese ethnic in Sukamaju subdistrict, North Luwu Regency are still spoken by almost age groups. However, the functional difference of two kinds of varieties namely H and variety do not show any significant difference since the informants were only interviewed in their daily activities in home and neighborhood. As Holmes (2008) states that Low variety mostly used in daily interaction, also similarly stated by Ferguson (1959) in Hudson (1987)) that people choose low variety or *regional dialects* in informal situation. For instance, in the >60 age group, husband preferred saying “*Mak, ayo mangan se!* (let’s have a lunch or dinner) instead of saying “*Mak, monggo nedhi rien.*” to his wife. Although he knew the high variety, but he just spoke in low variety. She said that it sounds so serious and formal if she speaks in such variety to her husband. Almost all informants in this age group still understand *kromo* in Javanese language, but they seldom use it except in the certain situation such as marriage and religion ceremonies. As Ferguson (1959) said that H variety or *standard* commonly used in formal situation. The result is similar to what Pertiwi et. al. (2017) found that the first generation High variety and Madya variety in communication, while the second generation use the three varieties depends on with whom they speak.

It is different from the >60 age group, the 30-59 age group do not understand more the H variety of their mother tongue, specially in the age 30-40. based on the interview, they are not familiar with the H language “*Kromo*” because most of them were born in North Luwu Regency. Parents frequently speak Low variety when interacting with children. Nevertheless, there was still a little number of informant who still understand the H variety, although they only used it conditionally. As she wanted to borrow something from neighbor, she uses L variation by saying “*Mbah nyileh sapune se’ yo?*” not saying in H variety such as; “*Mbah, kulo nyambut sapune sampeyan nggeh?*”. Considering that most Javanese societies who are living in Sukamaju subdistrict are low classes while the rest are middle classes, so they have been familiar with the low language which is they used as media of interaction in in daily life. It can be said that the language pattern that is found in Javanese societies in this place is “bilingualism with diglossia” (Fishman

in Fasold (1987), Holmes (2008). Besides speaking Javanese language, most of them also speak Indonesian and local language "*Luwunese language*" that is popularly called as *Tae language*".

However, the data showed a very limited number of code mixing in their statements. When they speak Javanese, they seldom mix with some local words of "*Tae language*". It was only found a little Indonesian words spoken by the age group <12 years old in their utterances such as:

"Njile bukumu". (Borrow me your book)

"Ma, aku arep sekolah" (I want to go to school)

Certainly, they speak in such variety as the conversation occurred in informal situation . i.e. at home. This circumstance is in line with what Saddiyah and Rohman (2018) find in their study that non-standardized language Indonesia and Javanese languages or L variation are used in non formal situation and they are also in accordance with Holmes (2008), and Ferguson's theories (1959).

Data analysis indicates the use of diglossia among Javanese people in all age groups are still maintained although the <12 age group sometimes mix with Indonesian language. It is a proof that parents are concern with their mother tongue presevation as the intention to show their ethnic identity as Javanese people. They think it is important to encourage children to speak Javanese language in order to preserve their ancestor language. Considering they settled as permanent residents in this sub district as minority, so they need to preserve their identity as Javanese people.

Conclusions

Having discussed the data, it can be concluded that there are still sustainable use of diglossia among Javanese societies who are living in Sukamaju Sub district, Noth Luwu Regency. Although most of them are bilingual even multilinguals as they are living in that area as minority, they still keep using Javanese language in interacting among Javanese societies. Therefore the pattern of diglossia follow "*bilingual with diglossia*", because they are multilingual (Javanese language, local language "*Tae language*", and Indonesian language) and also functionally use the High and Low varieties of Javanese language based on the situation. The unstandardized Javanese or the low variety are mostly used in all age groups to communicate with others in daily interaction. Although the <12 age group do not totally understand High variety, but they still use unstandardized Javanese or the Low variety when communicating with friends and family. This circumstances give a light insight that High and Low varieties of Javanese language are still being used among its speakers in the place where it is far from the ancestral land.

References

- Arjulayana. 2018. *Bilingualism: Diglossia and Code Switching in Indonesia Scholars*.
<http://journal.unhas.ac.id/index.php/jish>
- Edwards, J. 1985. *Language, Society, and identity*. London: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Fishman, Joshua. 1968. *The Sociology of Language*. Netherland. Mouton & Co. The Hague.
- Fasold, Ralph. 1984. *The sociolinguistics of Society*. England: Basic Blackwell Inc.
- Fasold, Ralph. 1990. *The Sociolinguistics of Language*. Oxford. Basic Blackwell Inc.
- Holmes, J. 1992. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. New York: Longman Publishing.
- Hudson, R.A. 1980. *Sociolinguistics*. Great Britain: Cambridge University Press.
- Iryani, Endang. 2017. Diglosia antar Bahasa Jawa dan Bahasa Sunda.
<http://journal.thamrin.ac.id/index.php/jipmht/article/view/1/1>.
- Mesthrie, R.et.al. 2000. *Introducing Sociolinguistics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Pertiwi, M et.al. 2017. *Profile of Diglossia of Three Generations of Javanese Descendants in Sitiung Dasmasya*. E-Journal of English Language and Literature.Vol.6. No.2.
<http://ejournal.unp.ac.id/index.php/ell/article/view/9812/7240>
- Saddiyah, Chalimatus & Fathur Rokhman. 2018. *Diglossia of Javanese in Senior High School education Domain*. Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia. 7(1) 2018 : 9-17
- Sneddon, J. *Diglossia in Indonesia*. 2003. *Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of South Asia and Ocenia*. 159 (4)519-549.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275063053_Diglossia_in_Indonesian
- Spolsky, B. 1998. *Sociolinguistics*. New York: Oxford University press.
- Trudgill, P. 2002. *Sociolinguistics Variation and Change*. Great Britain: Georgetown University Press.
- Wardaugh, Ronald. 2002. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.