Bilingualism Phenomenon on Low Ethnic Complexity Speech Community in Border Region of Belu Regency and South Central Timor East Nusa Tenggara Province

CrossMark
click for updates

Gregorius Sudaryono [a]

Abstract

This paper describes the phenomenon of bilingualism on low ethnic complexity border region of Belu Regency and South Central Timor, East Nusa Tenggara Province. It is marked by its speakers understanding and using Tetun language (TL), Dawan language (DL) and Indonesian language (IL). Therefore, the phenomenon of bilingualism refers to the choice of language use and its factors. In order to obtain the expected data, the research involved 100 respondents. The data obtained through data collection techniques were analyzed by quantitative and qualitative methods. It was conducted based on the attitude of the language in the dimensions of language loyalty, language pride, and language awareness on norms in the domains of family, education, customs, neighborhood, government, and religion. The results show that the low ethnic complexity border region reflects the natural linguistic phenomenon in the dimensions of social life, and nation without leaving the democratic life within the framework of Timorese culture. Linguistic phenomenon characterized by the choice of TL, DL, and IL is influenced by their own cultural background, political and economic factors. Such the language situation is reasoned by the geographical location not be economically viable for migrants.

Author correspondence:
Gregorius Sudaryono,
Doctorate Program, Linguistics Program Studies,
Udayana University, Jalan P.B. Sudirman, Denpasar, Bali-Indonesia,
Email address : *gregoriussudaryono@yahoo.com*

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of bilingualism on low ethnic complexity border region of Belu Regency and South Central Timor refers to Tetun language (TL), Dawan language (DL), and Indonesian language (IL). The border region

---

[a] Doctorate Program, Linguistics Program Studies, Udayana University Denpasar, Bali-Indonesia

represents the border of Tetun and Dawan languages, geographically, it is a remote traditional society of Timor that refers to the strategy of the simple life without involving complicated technology (Neonbasu, 2013). In social interaction, the two speech communities (Tetun and Dawan) attached on the awareness of the oneness of Timorese culture that makes the two languages have a very important role and function in social interaction as the social system of Timor. Therefore, speakers of Tetun and Dawan choose and use TL, DL, and IL according to the situation and speech event that become social fact to put the language as symbol system or code, cultural behavior system, and pragmatics (Wijana, 1997: 5; and Stockwell, 2002: 8-9).

The term of TL-DL border implies border between ethnic groups of Belu/Tetun who speak TL and Dawan who speak DL. The speech communities differentiate their border in the term of Lotas Belu/Tetun and Lotas Dawan, that is, the term of Lotas Belu/Tetun and Lotas Dawan not only shows the administrative boundaries but also the border of TL and DL. Thus, the phenomenon of bilingualism in the region refers to the chosen language use, and the factors influencing it.

2. Research Methods

This study uses sociolinguistic approach referring to the subject of language in a social context with the targeted analysis regarding the group's behavior and not individuals. This research study used methods and techniques of data collection including observation or surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussion, recording, documentation, and techniques refer to note. In order to obtain the expected data, it involved 50 respondents for each speech community group.

The data obtained were processed in the quantitative method, then analyzed in qualitative method to explain the results. The analysis was conducted based on variables of attitudes in dimensions of language loyalty, language pride, and language awareness on language norms in the domains of family, education, customs, neighborhood, government, and religion.

3. Results and Analysis

3.1 The phenomenon of bilingualism

The phenomenon of bilingualism is characterized by the availability and mastery of at least two languages, namely the local languages and Indonesian language as the United language among ethnic groups in Indonesia. The language situation makes patterns of bilingualism which refer to the level of proficiency that could potentially be used as a means of social interaction. It implies phenomenon of choice of language in bilingual and multilingual speech communities which refer to the fact of languages availability in a speech community (Fasold, 1984: 180).

The discussion of the phenomenon of bilingualism on speech community in the region showed positive language attitude of speakers, not only to their languages, but also the national language according to domains of language use. Language attitude shown by the speech community provides opportunities every available language developed in accordance with its role and function.

3.2 Language Choice

In the perspective of sociolinguistics, the domain of language use is closely associated with bilingual society, which implies the speakers of the speech community of Tetun and Dawan in the border region choose and use the appropriate language or variety of language according to the applied socio-cultural norms that attached to them. In associated with the location which involved two groups of the major speech communities, the linguistic phenomenon related to the use of language choice is seen based on the language situation in the domains of family, education, customs, neighborhood, government, and religion. The language situation refers to the phenomenon of bilingualism that applies bilingualism patterns refers to the level of mastery of languages that could potentially be used as a means of social interaction; TL-DL, TL-IL, and DL-IL.

In family domain, it showed that children communicate with: (1) grandpa/grandma in TL 43%, DL 39%, and IL 18%, (2) parents in TL 41%, DL 37%, and IL 22%, (3) siblings in TL 38%, DL 27% and IL 35%, (4) other tenants in TL 43.75%, DL 56.26% and IL 0%. Whereas, parents communicate with (1) children in TL 39.51%, DL 38.27%, and IL 22.22%, (2) other tenants in TL 50%, DL 50%, and IL 0%. Based on the percentage of the use of any language, then there is the phenomenon of bilingualism which refers to the variety of different languages. It describes the use of choice of different language variations, of course providing an opportunity to apply patterns of bilingualism, such as diglossia, code-switching, code-mixing, and cross-code (Baker, 2001: 2).

It implies the choice of two or more languages used interchangeably in accordance with the speech situation and cultural background of native speakers.

In education domain, the choice of language use is dominated IL in the percentage of 100%, as shown in the interaction between students with school principals, teachers, staff, and class/schoolmates. In addition, the choice of TL and DL shows the percentage of 93% in the interaction among students. The emergence of the same percentage in the choice of TL and DL is due to respondents admitted to using two languages alternately in accordance with interlocutors' language background. The speech event provides an opportunity to happen bilingualism patterns, such as diglossia, code-switching, code-mixing, and cross code.

In a customary domain, the language choice refers to the customary rituals of marriage, pregnancy, death, and agriculture. Data show the speech communities choose to use their own language in a customary ritual in the percentage of TL 50% and DL 50%. The percentages reflect the consistency of Tetun and Dawan speech communities to choose their own language in the domain of custom to enable to survive TL and DL. It does not imply the implementation of bilingualism through using two languages interchangeably.

In neighborhood domain, social interaction between speakers and the same age interlocutors, the choice of TL shows 57%, DL 43%, and IL 0%. In the social interaction between speakers and older interlocutors, the choice of TL shows 47%, DL 53%, and IL 0%. In the social interaction between speakers and younger interlocutors, the choice of TL shows 62%, DL 36%, and IL 2%. The data illustrate that the speakers and interlocutors understand and use TL and DL well in social interaction, while the choice of IL shows very low percentage. Thus, the phenomenon of bilingualism which implies language competition shows the presence of TL and DL is still positive because each member of the speech communities has a positive attitude to their own languages.

In government domain, the communicative interaction between speakers and interlocutors in IL shows 100% and 81%. While the choice of TL shows a low percentage of 14% and DL 5%. Thus, the language situation shows bilingualism phenomenon is characterized by the use of at least two languages in social interaction.

In religion domain including Catholic, Protestant, and Islam, the choice of language is dominated by IL in the percentage of 100%. Thus, the language situation describes the phenomenon of monolingual (Manafe, 2004: 8-10). That is, the choice of IL implies religious messages that can't be replaced by any other language.

3.3 Factors Influencing the Language Choice

The language choice in bilingualism patterns by speakers can determine the existence of a language that leads to the maintenance, shift, and even the death of a language (Gal, 1979; Grosjean, 1982: 107; Sumarsono, 1993: 27; and Lukman, 2000: 87). Therefore, the existence of a language depends on the attitude of its speakers associated with the level of loyalty to their language. Geographically, the border region is remote which its society is strongly attached to the tradition of Timorese culture, then the initial bilingualism refers to TL and DL.

Factors influencing the choice of language use, according to Garvin (1968) and Chaer (1995: 200) include language loyalty, language pride and awareness of language norms. The three factors characterize the attitude of languages that collectively shown by speech communities' positive or negative attitude to their own languages. More broadly, the choice of language used by speakers can also be influenced by political and economic factors (Grosjean, 1982: 125).

The discussion on factors influencing language choice illustrates that Tetun and Dawan speech communities have high loyalty to both TL and DL. The data showed Tetun speech community in the statements of always transmit/teach TL to the next generation 88% and DL 54%, frequently transmit TL 8% and DL 36%, sometimes transmit TL 4% and DL 10%. The attitude in the dimension of high language loyalty is also indicated by the behavior of Dawan speech community choose and use DL and TL as social interaction. Whereas, Dawan speech community in the statements of always transmit/teach DL to the next generation 82% and TL 34%, often transmit DL 14% and TL 6%, sometimes transmit DL 4% and TL 22%. Thus, the loyalty factor can influence language choice of to interact socially that implies the existence of language and ethnic identity of its speakers.

The linguistic fact in relation to political factor influences language choice on Tetun and Dawan speech communities is in accordance with domains of language use. The facts showed that (1) the choice of TL in family domain is 61% and neighborhood domain 83%; (2) the choice of DL in family domain is 87% and in neighborhood domain 83%; (3) the choice of TL and DL in domain of custom is 100% on each speech community; and (4) the choice of IL was 100% in the domains of education, government, and religion, but on neighborhood domain is 7%. Thus, the language situation implies fostering and developing of language by both speech communities that included in the scope of language politics is the determinant factor of TL and DL existence.

In connection with language policy in the scope of national language politics, the language situation determined by the attitude of the speakers through positive behavior on the choice of IL implies the development of IL also attached to both speech communities. Thus, the linguistic fact occurred in the border region indicates bilingualism leads to the phenomenon of language contact product and language political factor.

In relation to the economic factor, the border region economically does not encourage migrants. However, an economic factor which can provide an opportunity for speakers to choose and use TL and DL happens within the scope of sale and purchase transactions in the market. The language choice of TL or DL economically benefits to its speakers since being applied in the domain. In this case, the same languages used, except IL characterizes social closeness that affects the price of commodities tends to be cheaper than it should be.

4. Conclusion

It can be concluded that: *Firstly,* the phenomenon of bilingualism in the border region characterized by group members of Tetun and Dawan communities comprehend TL and DL are obtained simultaneously. The presence of IL as a national language in the speech communities has extended vocabulary mastery of the other language. Furthermore, the mastery of IL can be used by speakers to interact socially with any other domains, such as domains of government, religion, occupation, and wider social interactions.

Secondly, in the context of bilingualism, the choice of TL or DL for social interaction in the domains of the family, custom, and neighborhood is influenced by behavior, views, and attitudes of speakers demonstrating social harmony among Timorese ethics in the framework of the unity of East Timorese culture. Meanwhile, the choice of IL is influenced by language policy in the political aspect as the language of education and government. The factors closely related to the attitude of the language become important elements for maintaining the ethnic identity of Tetun and Dawan. The linguistic phenomenon in the context of bilingualism on the speech communities in the border region is attached to every native speaker upholding the significance of social harmonization within the framework of Timorese culture. The significance of social harmony in social relations, in which there are characteristics of linguistic forms and meanings, and traditional expressions have functioned as guiding moral and ethical guidelines for the Timorese people. The cultural tradition of the people of Timor is still adhered and inherited from generation to generation.

Thirdly, the choice of language used in the border region is influenced by social and cultural factors of Tetun and Dawan within the framework of Timorese culture in dimensions of language loyalty, language politic, and language economic determines the survival of TL and DL. Loyalty level of Tetun and Dawan speakers to their own languages can be seen from the behavior of language choice influenced by other factors that provide benefits and individual development of speakers, such as political and economic factors. Thus, the language choice is not only influenced by the attitude of the language in the dimension of language loyalty, the language pride and awareness on language norms but also political and economic factors.

References

Baker, C. (2011). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism* (Vol. 79). Multilingual matters.

Collins, J. T., Pastika, I. W., Malini, N. L. N. S., & Murni, S. M. Resensi: The International Phonetic Association Handbook of the International Phonetic Association: Guide to the Use of the International Phonetic Alphabet Diresensi oleh Rindu Parulian Simanjuntak................................... 201.

Fasold, R. W. (1984). *Introduction to sociolinguistics* (Vol. 1). Blackwell.

Gal, S. (1979). *Language shift: Social determinants of linguistic change in bilingual Austria*. Academic Press.

Garvin, P. L. (Ed.). (1970). *Method and theory in linguistics*(Vol. 40). Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG.

Gilroy, P. (2005). The Tyrannies of Unanimism. *Postcolonialisms: An Anthology of Cultural Theory and Criticism*, 220-47.

Grosjean, F. (1982). *Life with two languages: An introduction to bilingualism*. Harvard University Press.

Gutiérrez, R. B. O., & Moreira, L. M. Z. (2018). The Profile of Executive Secretaries and Their Relationship with Labor Demands. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (IJSSH)*, *2*(1), 75-83.

Ifeanyichukwu, C. D., & Peter, A. (2018). The Role of Sensory Marketing in Achieving Customer Patronage in Fast Food Restaurants in Awka. *International Research Journal of Management, IT and Social Sciences (IRJMIS)*, *5*(2), 155-163.

Iriani, D. H. (2018). The Effect of Early English Learning on Psychology. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (IJSSH)*, *2*(1), 65-74.

Lukman, S. (2000). Manajemen kualitas pelayanan.

Neonbasu, G. (2013). An Outline of Humanity: A Travel Back into the Local Context. *Anthropos*, 163-172.

Stockwell, P. (2002). *Sociolinguistics: A resource book for students*. Psychology Press.

Syarifaturrahman, W. K., & Hanafi, N. (2017). The Inflection of Sasak Language in Kuripan Village. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (IJSSH)*, *1*(3), 155-181.

Trudgill, P. (2000). *Sociolinguistics: An introduction to language and society*. Penguin UK.

Wijana, I. D. P. (2013). Pemakaian Bahasa Dalam Karya Ilmiah Populer. *JURNAL ARBITRER*, *1*(1), 19-36.

Biography of Author

Education: I am studying at Doctorate Program, Linguistics Program Studies, Udayana University Denpasar, Bali-Indonesia. **Occupation**: The head and a lecturer at the Institute of Foreign Languages Studies Cakrawala Nusantara Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara Province. **Book**: English Structure IV Handbook; Independent English Learning for Elementary and Intermediate Learners. **Research**: Helong Language in West Kupang District, Kupang Regency, East Nusa Tenggara is Shifting Toward Death; Pemertahanan Bahasa Helong di Kecamatan Kupang Barat, Kabupaten Kupang, Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur; Bilingualism Phenomenon on Low Ethnic Complexity Speech Community in Border Region of Belu and South Central Timor East Nusa Tenggara Province; Metabahasa Semantic Alami (MSA) Bahasa Jawa.

Sudaryono, G. (2016). Bilingualism phenomenon on low ethnic complexity speech community in border region of Belu regency and south central Timor east Nusa Tenggara province. International Journal Of Linguistics, Literature And Culture (IJLLC), 2(4), 156-161. doi:10.21744/ijllc.v2i4.312