PROSIDING SEMINAR NASIONAL

**DALAM RANGKA BULAN BAHASA DAN DIES NATALIS
UNIVERSITAS WIDYA DHARMA KLATEN KE-45**

**"Pembelajaran Bahasa
untuk Meningkatkan Kualitas
Manusia Indonesia yang Berkarakter
dalam Era Mondial"**

Klaten, 29 November 2014

**Editor:
Dr. D.B. Putut Setiyadi, M.Hum**

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UNDERSTANDING THE USE OF DIGLOSSIA IN THE DAILY COMMUNICATION CONTEXTS

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Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas tentang fenomena sosiolinguistik melalui konteks diglosia dan fungsi serta bagaimana kontribusinya dalam percakapan sehari-hari untuk pembelajaran bahasa di sekolah dan masyarakat. Hal ini memberikan penjelasan rinci tentang istilah diglosia dan menyoroti ciri khas penggunaannya di berbagai level komunikasi. Artikel ini juga membahas tentang istilah alih kode yang digunakan dalam komunikasi sehari-hari yang dipergunakan oleh masyarakat, antara murid dengan murid lainnya, dan murid dengan guru sebagai bagian interaksi dalam aktivitas pembelajaran bahasa.

Kata kunci: Komunikasi, diglosia (penggunaan simbol H dan L), gambaran interaksi

Abstract

This article discusses on a sociolinguistic phenomenon of diglossia context and function and how it contributes to day-to-day transactional conversation in the language teaching in schools and society. However, it goes on to give a detailed description of the diglossia term and highlights the distinctive features of diglossia situation in various communications. This article also discusses on the issue of possibly code-switching used which takes place in diglossic situations that exist in daily communication dealing amongst society members and particularly students–students and students–teachers interaction as part of the language teaching and learning activity.

Keywords: Communication, diglossia (H and L variety use), interaction portray

INTRODUCTION

Language policies have to take into consideration both functions of language, the symbol and instrument (Bassiouney, 2009). Strengthening the function for years ago, language kept apart come to influence each other phonetically, lexically, semantically and even grammatically much more than before (Fishman, 1967). According to Chioma (2010), the social context of using language consists of a number of other factors, such as the time and place of communication, the formality of the occasion, the topic under discussion, the degree of familiarity between interlocutors and so on to help persons determine their choice of language or variety of a language at any given time, which based on the background of social class, ethnic group, religious believes, values, age and sex.

This article attempts at exploring the function of diglossia through some relevant literatures and how it possibly contributes to day-to-day transactional conversation in the language teaching which consistently involves students–students and students–teacher interaction. To appoint this condition, the diglossia portray can be naturally small quoted from the Indonesian education cases in which, for instance students and teachers relatively either speak foreign language (e.g.: Arabic, English, French) or local language (e.g.: Banjarnese, Javanese, Sundanese) adopted as their lingua franca, commonly for those who dwell in the

suburb or rural areas when enrolling teaching and learning activities. But, in the another daily purpose of using diglossia, according to Kahane and Kahane (1979; Schiffman, 1997; Hudson, 2002; Snow, 2010) some particular cases relate to patterns that are sustained not only dealt with the variety of H (standing for high) that is regarded more appropriate for prestigious communication than L (standing for low) is, but also these two varieties conform with a social pattern in which opportunities to learn H are limited to an small elite group, which derives its power and position in society in part precisely from this literacy gap. Therefore, in the traditional cases of diglossia, the comparison between H and L merely tends to reflect a social stratum between the more and less privileged. Snow (2010) points out this condition will be an advantage to earn benefits from further elaboration. What we need to keep in mind is that in many societies, pre-modern cases of diglossia have disappeared as the prestige of H variety is certainly replaced in domains, such as education and publishing by local vernaculars (L) that become modern standard languages to the modern period. This change is generally driven in part by the fact that important aspects of modernization, such as promotion of mass education and literacy, are facilitated by establishment of a modern standard language that is similar to the daily speech of many or most of the population, hence relatively easy to learn. Furthermore, once a modern standard language is established in a nation, becoming the new prestige variety, it tends to move into all domains of language use, mainly including spoken domains, within the boundaries of the nation.

UNDERSTANDING DIGLOSSIA

The word ‘diglossia’ is derived from a French word ‘*La diglossie*’ and is academically accommodated into English language use by Ferguson in 1959. He describes diglossia as a linguistic situation, where two varieties of a language exist side by side in a speech community, with each having a definite role to play. In a diglossic situation, the two varieties are distinct. One of the varieties is the standardized high variety (H) but the other variety is the low variety (L), which may or may not be standardized (Chioma, 2010). According to Toufexis (2008), Ferguson observes in such diglossic settings a distinct functional differentiation in language use—a typologically more complex variety is used for all formal purposes (education, administration etc.) and is thus super posed upon the spoken varieties of the speech community to refer to the different varieties used amongst the diglossic communities. Then, Árokay, Gvozdanović, and Miyajima (2014) further point out that diglossia is a functionally differentiated coexistence of formal and informal language varieties, such that a codified super posed variety is acquired by formal education and used for written literature and formal spoken purposes where it has the status of a high variety, in contradistinction to a low variety used for ordinary conversation. Diglossia may develop from various origins and eventuate in different language situations (Ferguson, 1959). It is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation (Sayahi, 2014).

In diglossic community there is a highly valued of H (high) variety which is learned in schools and is not used for ordinary conversations, whereas the L (low) variety is the one used in conversations. Diglossia is a relatively stable phenomenon. It is implied that if a society is changing and diglossia is beginning to fade away this will have specific signs, such as mixing between the forms of H and L, and thus an overlap between the functions of H and L. The following are situations in which H is appropriate: (1) sermon in church or mosque; (2) speech in parliament, political speech; (3) personal letters; (4) college or university lecture; (5) news broadcast; (6) newspaper editorial, news story, caption on picture; and (7) poetry. Meanwhile, situations in which L is the 'only' variety used: (1) instructions to servants, waiters, workmen and clerks; (2) conversation with family, friends and colleagues; (3) radio 'soap opera'; (4) caption on political cartoon; and (5) folk-literature (Bassiouny, 2009). According to Fishman (1967) the separation was most often along the lines of an H (high) variety, utilized in conjunction with religion, education and other aspects of high culture, and an low (L) variety, on the other hand, utilized in conjunction with everyday pursuits of heart, home and work. As an illustration, a sample listing of possible situations is provided in table 1, with indication of the variety normally used (Ferguson, 1959).

Table 1. Sample Listing of Possible Situations with Indication of Variety

Contributing Aspects	Variety	
	High (H)	Low (L)
Sermon in Church or Mosque	√	
Instructions to servants, waiters, workmen, clerks		√
Personal letter	√	
Speech in parliament, political speech	√	
College or university lecture	√	
Conversation with family, friends, colleagues		√
News broadcast	√	
Radio 'soap opera'		√
Newspaper editorial, news story, caption on picture	√	
Caption on political cartoon		√
Poetry	√	
Folk literature		√

Myhill (2009) also supports that the term diglossia has generally been used to describe a situation in which the spoken language in a community, known as L (for 'low') differs significantly from its written language, known as H (for 'high'), with the understanding that in some cases L may have some limited written usages (e.g.: for folk poetry, songs, children's books, etc.) while conversely in some cases H may have some spoken usages (e.g.: in television news, the language in which teachers speak to students in the formal situation, etc.). The reference of diglossia term may be limited to cases in which H and L are considered to be versions of the same language and H is not the everyday language of anyone in the same country, for instance: Standard Arabic (H) versus Colloquial Arabic (L) in Syria, or it may also be used to refer to cases in which H is spoken as the everyday language of some geographically or ethnically distinct group in the same country, such as Italian (H) versus

Sicilian (L) in Italy or standard English (H) versus Black English (L) in the United States). In Deterling's perspective (1998), one variety concerns with the H-variety (standing for 'High'), is adopted as the standard variety and is used in official situations, such as government broadcasts, religious services, and teaching; and the other, the L-variety (for 'Low'), is used in informal situations, such as local markets and conversations between friends.

According to Chioma (2010) the diglossia concept has serious implications for the language teaching and learning in the classroom. First and foremost, diglossia emphasizes the importance of matching the right variety with the appropriate situation. This is also important in the language teaching and learning. Learners should be taught to use formal language in formal situations and informal language in informal situations. For instance, a child should learn how to greet people in the village in his or her local language and not in foreign language. In addition, the concept of diglossia relates mainly to oral communication. Herein, Sayahi (2014) emphasizes that diglossia describes the coexistence of two words, i.e., vocabulary doublets, in a given language to refer to the same concept or entity. The fact that in diglossic cases, the speakers are aware of the relatedness of their L variety to the H variety plays a role in their attitude towards both varieties and how they go about usage and transmission.

Therefore, the language teachers should give more attention to oral communication in the classroom. The emphasis should be on teaching relevant themes as they are used for communication in natural situations of daily living, for different purposes and functions. The situation should provide learners with learning activities that reflect real-life experiences. Learners should also be given opportunities to practice the linguistic forms and structures they learn in the classroom, as they are actually used in real-life situations (Chioma, 2010). One of the most striking differences between H and L in the defining languages is in the grammatical structure, where H has grammatical categories not present in L and has an inflectional system of nouns and verbs which is much reduced or totally absent in L (Ferguson, 1959) and diglossia phenomena in any languages can be detected at all levels of grammatical analysis as well (Tambouratzis et al, 2004).

Diglossia should be understood as a case of register variation, correlating with or triggered by occasions of use, and not dialectal variation, correlating with the place of the speaker in the community. This general distinction does not mean that the choice of linguistic code has no social dimension, but that diglossia is primarily defined not as an individual phenomenon at the speaker level but as a social phenomenon at the speech community level. Within the same speech community there exist two main language systems: High (H) and Low (L). L is used for 'normal' everyday and thus mostly oral use, while H is never used as a vernacular (at least not in a casual way) and is reserved for more formal purposes including most, if not all, written registers (Toufexis, 2008). The Importance of using the right variety in the right situation can hardly be overestimated. An outsider who learns to speak fluent, accurate L and then uses it in a formal speech is an object of ridicule. A member of the speech community who uses H in a purely conversational situation or in an informal activity like shopping is equally an object of ridicule as well (Ferguson, 1959).

Diglossia also seems to be accepted and not regarded as a 'problem' by the community in which it is in force, until certain trends appear in the community. These include trends towards (1) more widespread literacy (whether for economic, ideological or other reasons),

(2) broader communication among different regional and social segments of the community (for economic, administrative, military, or ideological reasons), and (3) desire for a full-fledged standard 'national' language as an attribute of autonomy or of sovereignty (Ferguson, 1959). What characterizes these communities and distinguishes them from other societies in which two or more linguistic varieties are used is a constellation of social and linguistic characteristics. Specifically, all communities feature a Low (L) variety acquired as a mother tongue by (virtually) all speakers and used in informal social settings. Superimposed to the L variety is a High (H) variety learned later in life, whose use is reserved for formal settings. This functional complementary distribution of the H and L varieties is considered by many to be the single most important component of diglossia (Villeneuve and Auger, 2013).

BRIEF DISCUSSION: CONTRIBUTING TO SOME FACTS

Diglossia is a relatively rare phenomenon in the contemporary world (Hudson, 2002), and it appears to be especially rare in societies that have been significantly impacted by the social changes normally associated with modernization, especially the promotion of mass education and literacy (Snow, 2010). In such societies, most or all people have a substantial command of both the H and L varieties (unlike most cases of diglossia, in which H is only commanded by a limited elite group). In modern diglossia, the H variety is a modern standard language rather than an ancient prestige language. In fact, the power and appeal of H is based on its utility value as both a written and spoken language, which is, in turn, based squarely on the fact that it serves as the standard language of a powerful nation towards a much greater degree than is true in many cases of diglossia (Snow, 2010).

First, and foremost, each of the two varieties has a set of functions distributed across the different domains. The H variety is the one used in educational, administrative, and religious discourse, while the L variety is often restricted to personal circles and transactional interactions (Sayahi, 2014). Ljosland (2007) supports that in a diglossic situation, the H variety or language has higher prestige, and is felt to be appropriate in high-status domains. On the other hand, the Low or L variety, has lower prestige, and is used in settings such as the home and in informal conversations. Again, according to Sayahi (2014) the H variety is highly valued by the members of the community, whether they are fully competent in it or not. As a matter of fact, it is considered to be the "real" language they speak or should be speaking while the vernacular is considered a transitory and corrupt version of it and one that came about primarily because of lack of education. Third, the entirety of the literary body that a community records in the written form is in the H variety. Oral poetry and narratives may be produced in the vernacular as long as they are not recorded or published in written form. Fourth, the L variety is the variety that is transmitted naturally and children start to formally learn the H variety only when they start school. The L variety is the native language of all members of the community while nobody has native competence in the H variety. The majority of the speakers never attain higher levels of competence in H variety, especially in societies with high rates of illiteracy. Fifth, the H variety is fully described and dictionaries and grammar books are available for its teaching and learning while the L variety remains under-described. Speakers often have the impression that the grammar of the L variety is the same as that of the H variety but obscured and corrupted by the lack of knowledge of the "correct" forms. Sixth,

diglossia is a stable phenomenon that does not change over a few generations. Both varieties can exist alongside each other for long periods of time. The H variety sees little change from when it was codified based on the written sources while the L variety continues to evolve like any other languages that is acquired and transmitted naturally. Seventh, the grammar of the L variety is considerably less complex than the H variety's grammar, which tends to follow a set of conservative rules that reflect the high attention to it through the centuries. Few people have native-like competence in the H variety and profound familiarity with its grammar is interpreted as an index of high levels of education. In this respect, Villeneuve and Auger (2013) argue that if the relationship between an H and an L variety meets many classic criteria for diglossia (acquisition, functional differentiation in contexts of use, level of prestige, literary tradition, etc.), it does not exclude the possibility that the two varieties represent, structurally, different points on a standard-to-dialect continuum rather than a true diglossic situation, where sharp differences⁴ that go beyond a formal and/ or informal continuum.

CONCLUSION

Diglossia is a daily natural term used to classify communication situations amongst members of society that make complementary use in the exchanges of two distinct varieties (**high** and **low**). In fact, there is a diglossic situation in a way of society's life view towards the communication, for instance, a contrast amongst English, Indonesia, and local language (e.g.: Javanese) used in term of their intended meaning and function to synchronize the relationship links to users (e.g.: teachers, colleagues, and friends, etc.) when being facilitated in either formal or informal activities reflected in the public. Generally, the diglossic situation refers to a particular position where the use of language will trigger stumbling blocks whereby in one position, the variety is regarded as high (H), whilst another which is considered 'low' with the former being used in communication situations considered as 'noble' (e.g.: education, international conferences, businesses, summits, and other formal usage) and the latter being used in more informal circumstances (e.g.: top-down conversation between teachers and students, communication amongst close family, friends or colleagues, etc.). Hence, diglossia is regarded as a common phenomenon in the world today even some people are not able to be conscious of it. In the case of Indonesia society members who are some multilingual at least with the local languages and have varied diglossic situations regard this situation consciously or unconsciously from one language or variety to another. It is important that Indonesian inhabitants become aware of the diglossic situations in order to reflect and use the right language or variety in the appropriate situation, where this situation may be initiated by the language teachers who should emphasize appropriateness of form and function whenever engaging language teaching and learning activity.

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