Language Convergence to Build Social Harmony in the Midst of Diversity: Evidence from Angantiga Village of Badung Regency, Bali

Ni Made Wiasti[1], Ida Bagus Putra Yadnya [2], Ni Made Dhanawaty [3]

[1,2,3] Faculty of Humanities, Udayana University, Denpasar
putrayadnya890@gmail.com

Abstracts - As a social being, people will socialize through communication using language as a medium. The decision to choose a language or use one of the language codes depends on the perceived cost or benefit he will get. This paper is intended to describe communication patterns and preferences for language use especially within a culture where another language is dominant. It is a sociolinguistic study using descriptive qualitative methods on the Muslim diaspora community in the village of Angantiga, Badung Regency who had lived in Bali province in Indonesia for more than a generation. The data were collected through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and direct observation. The results show that there is a relationship between language use in various domains and self-identity. As a diaspora community they are very accommodating and show language tolerance to maintain communication and interpersonal relationships. The language convergence is carried out in order to seek approval or social recognition from the surrounding community. It can foster tolerance to build social harmony in the midst of diversity.

Keywords: Diaspora community; Linguistic convergence; Language choice; Social identity; Social harmony

I. INTRODUCTION

As a social being, of course all humans in this part of the world will be socialized through communication patterns. Communication pattern is defined as a form of relationship between two or more people in the process of sending and receiving messages in an appropriate way so that the message in question can be understood. Thus, communication implies the choice and use of language as a medium in every interaction in various domains, settings and events.

In a multilingual society, there are various codes, both in the form of language, dialect, variation, and style for use in social interactions.

With the availability of these codes, community members will choose the available codes according to the factors that influence them. In daily interactions, community members constantly change variations in language usage. In language selection, there are three categories of choice. First, by selecting one variation of the same language (intra language variation). If a speaker of a language speaks to other people using the Balinese *Alus*, for example, then he has made the choice of this first category language. Second, by switching the code (code switching), which means using one language for one purpose

and using another language for other purposes in one communication event. Third, by mixing the code (code mixing) means using one particular language by mixing pieces of other languages.

The choice of language in bilingual/multilingual social interactions is caused by various social and cultural factors. Evin-Tripp (in Grosjean, 1982: 125) identifies four main factors as a speaker choice of language in social interaction, namely (1) background (time and place) and situation; (2) participants in the interaction, (3) conversation topics, and (4) the interaction function. The first factor can be things like breakfast in the family environment, family meetings, happy births in a family, college, and bargaining for goods at the market. The second factor includes things such as age, gender, occupation, socioeconomic status, and role in relationships with speech partners. Relationships with speech partners can be in the form of close and distant relationships. The third factor can be topics about work, children's success, actual events, and the topic of prices for goods in the market. The fourth factor is in the form of things such as offers of information, requests, routine habits (greeting, apologizing, or saying thank you).

As stated by Fasold (1984: 180) the choice of language is not as simple as imagined, in the sense of choosing a language as a whole in a communication event. The choice of language in the sociolinguistic paradigm meets not only with linguistic problems, but also with social, cultural, psychological, and situational problems. In the event of an interaction, the necessity to choose a language or variety of languages that are suitable for an interaction situation cannot be avoided because mistakes in choosing a language or variety of languages can result in losses for participants in that interaction (Giles and Coupland, 1991: 61). The communication pattern can be described from the following three points of view.
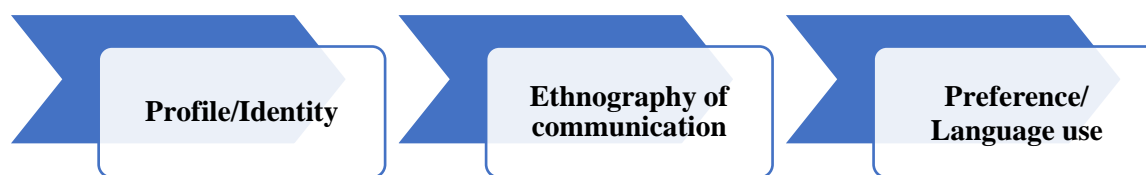
Graphic 1. Communication Pattern

Someone using language in interacting begins with self-reflecting to place himself against the interlocutor he is talking to and the speech environment. Communication patterns described through the three points of view above include the profile/identity of communication participants (speakers in terms of ethnicity, age, education, profession/occupation, etc.), ethnography of communication such as *who* (who is speaking or to whom is speaking), *what* (what is being discussed), *when* (when/in what broadcast), *where* (where/location) and *how* (medium or mode of speaking), and preferences for the choice of language use.

Migrant communities as a diaspora community always face challenges in the form of choices whether to maintain the use of their mother tongue in interactions, switch to using the host language, or use their ethnic language side by side with the local language in their new place. When a speaker experiences an interactive discourse process he may converge to the language of the interlocutor or diverge to the code of his own language. A person's decision in choosing a language or using one of the language codes depends on the perceived cost or benefit he/she will get (whether to use Balinese, Malay, Sasakese, Indonesian, or other languages).

II. METHODS

This sociolinguistic study was conducted with a qualitative descriptive method supported by a quantitative method to find out the linguistic characteristics of diaspora communities in Bali, including the language choice and attitude of the diaspora in daily communication. This research describes "as it is" about a variable, symptom or circumstance in the diaspora settlements in Bali, Angantiga Muslim diaspora community in Badung Regency. From a time perspective, the community has long been in existence, and settled in Bali for more than a generation

In the process of collecting data, survey methods, interviews, and participatory observation were used supported by focus group discussion. The survey method was carried out

through the distribution of structured and detailed questionnaires to obtain information from informants who were considered representative of the study population. In collecting data the research team was assisted by field staff who had been previously trained and observed and were involved in community activities in the community. To get answers to language preference and language choice questions from the community, the sociolinguistic questionnaire was distributed to 25 respondents. The sociolinguistic survey was in principle designed based on Fishman (1964, 1966), Dweik (2000), Freed and Collentine (2004) and Al-Khatib and Al-Ali (2005) which of course had been adjusted for this study. The questionnaire consists of three sections including demographic data about their background, the language used in different domains including home, school, neighborhood, workplace, religion, media and self-expression, and their attitudes towards mother tongue, the national language (Indonesian) and the host language (Balinese).

The interviews were done directly by making contact or conversation with the informant as the resource person using Indonesian and Balinese to get information about the profile and historical background of their existence, communication patterns including the profile/identity of communication participants, ethnography of communication, and preferences for the choice of language use.

By making direct observations, researchers can find out how the activities of the local Muslim community in Angantiga are in their social life. In this study, the participatory observation method is carried out by participating in the conversation and listening to the conversation conducted by conversing with the speaker. To maintain the validity and reliability of the data a focus group discussion was carried out, as a means for data triangulation. It was carried out by inviting linguists, anthropologists, and cultural experts as well as community leaders in the research locations This forum was meant to make some sort of data verification and obtaining additional information and expert judgment for revision and betterment of the result of the analysis.

Data analysis combines qualitative and quantitative methods using communication ethnographic theory (Hymes, 1972), language choice theory (Evin-Tripp in Grosjean, 1982), language accommodation (Giles & Coupland, 1991). The application of communication ethnographic theory is intended to base the argument that the event of interaction using language is something culturally shaped in the context of social life. Language choice theory is applied to describe the choice of languages of Muslim Angantiga in interacting in a multilingual Bali area. With the availability of several languages, each speaker is able to choose the language according to the communication situation. The application of accommodation theory is intended to understand the adjustment made by the diaspora community verbally by modifying the speech so that it becomes similar or may be increasingly different from the interlocutors. The result of the analysis is presented with interpretative descriptive explanations. Descriptive explanations are presented in the form of narrative exposures about the quality of various symptoms that are studied extensively and deeply. While interpretative explanations are intended as an effort to interpret various phenomena that are examined using relevant theories.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The existence of the Angantiga Islamic village in the midst of the Hindu community on the island of Bali is quite interesting. The Muslim community in Angantiga is part of the Muslim community in the province of Bali, which is historically included in the early generations entering the island of Bali. This Angantiga Islamic Village has existed since 1442 based on the Lontar Purana manuscript stored in Puri Carangsari. The Angantiga community is categorized as a pluralistic society, consisting of two ethnic groups with different backgrounds, namely the Bugis who are Muslim and the Balinese who are Hindus. Living conditions in the community are very harmonious. They have a high awareness of mutual cooperation, so that social solidarity is created between them. In daily interactions, the two tribes do not see differences in ethnicity and religion, for them religion provides the basis of life, and each adheres to the teachings they believe in, so that it does not become a barrier to mutual respect, cooperation, and activities. In social interaction between indigenous villagers there is a bond of awareness of the unity of the use of Balinese language as the main means of communication.

Mc Quown (1978) sees language as the main instrument of human beings in integrating

themselves both internally and externally as functioning individuals and active participants in human groups or societies. In a cultural context, language can not only be seen as a means of individuals or groups to express thoughts, feelings, opinions, hopes, anxieties, love, hatred, opinions and so on to other individuals or groups, but can also be seen as a resource to disclose mysteries of culture, ranging from language behavior, identity and life of speakers, utilization and empowerment of language to the development and preservation of cultural values. When a speaker experiences an interactive discourse process he may converge to the language of the interlocutor or diverge to the code of his own language. Giles and Coupland (1991) use the terms convergence to refer to the process when there are two or more speakers who change their speech to suit the interlocutor and divergence to refer to the way a person maintains his speech, both verbal and non-verbal, in order to distinguish himself from other speakers. In real communication, speakers apply basic assumptions about the linguistic potential of their interlocutors in a bilingual or multilingual society. A person's decision in choosing a language or using one of the language codes depends on the perceived cost or benefit he will get.

Based on the analysis of the language choices and attitudes of the Mualim community in the research location, the choice of language is the way the local community maintain their identity. They feel that there is a relationship between language use in various domains and self-identity. From the data on 15 domains of language use, as a whole, the majority of respondents in the Angantiga Muslim community use Balinese in various domains and situations, especially it is used in the family domain and when the interlocutor comes from the same ethnic group as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 4.1. Use of Language by the Muslim Diaspora Community in Angantiga

No	Domain of use	Bali n/%	Jawa n/%	Arab n/%	Indonesia n/%	lain n/%
1	The language used when talking to family members at home	25/100	2/8		17/68	4/16
2	The language used when talking to relatives	23/92			12/48	
3	The language used when speaking at school	21/84			25/100	
4	The language used when giving school instructions	20/80			25/100	
5	The language used when talking to neighbors of one ethnicity	25/100	1/4		9/36	2/8
6	The language used when talking to neighbors of different ethnicities				25/100	
7	The language used when talking to coworkers comes from one ethnicity	24/96	1/4		1/4	
8	The language used when talking to co-workers of different ethnicities				25/100	
9	The language used in formal/official situations	2/8			25/100	
10	The language used in informal/informal situations	25/100			16/64	
11	The language used when worshiping at a mosque/church/temple	22/88		20/80	14/56	
12	The language used when praying/requesting	14/56			20/80	
13	The language used when speaking in meetings outside the mosque/church/temple?	15/60			20/80	
14	The language used when writing SMS?	23/92			23/92	
15	The language used when writing letters/e-mails?				25/100	

Description: **n= 25 = 100%**

The Muslim community in Angantiga uses Balinese (25/100%) when talking to family members including father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, and sister/brother. This shows that the Angantiga community has considered the Balinese language as part of their identity. The Balinese language is again the main choice when communicating with relatives, as many as 23 (92%) respondents claim to use Balinese. Likewise, the language used when talking to neighbors of the same ethnicity. all respondents (25/100%) use Balinese. The same tendency is also seen in the use of Balinese when talking to colleagues of the same ethnicity, which is 25 (100%). The use of Balinese to worship in mosques also shows a high number, which is 22 (88%) slightly higher than Arabic (20/80%). This shows that the use of Arabic is more directed to a more formal realm in religion, such as reading the holy book or reciting religious poetry. However, when asking after praying and speaking in a meeting outside the mosque, the use of Balinese and Indonesian languages seemed balanced by 14 (56%) and 20 (80%). This shows that linguistically the Angantiga Muslim community is very accommodative.

The language convergence shows language tolerance of the Angantiga community to maintain communication or interpersonal relationships. From the data above, it can be seen how the Angantiga community chooses the use of Balinese language in ethnographic communication. In the realm of family and closeness, they tend to use Balinese as their mother tongue. In the formal realm and communicating with non-ethnic speech participants, they tend to accommodate using Indonesian (25/100%). The language used when talking to neighbors of different ethnicities is Indonesian, the national language, so that it is more neutral and socially safe, which is 25 (100%). Likewise, the language used when talking to coworkers of different ethnicities, they tend to switch to using Indonesian (25/100%). In formal/official situations, it is clear that they choose to use the official Indonesian language, such as the language used when speaking at school, 25 (100%). The language used when giving school instructions is also Balinese (25/100%). Likewise, the language used when writing letters/e-mails tends to use Indonesian, which is 25/100%.

Language convergence made by the Angantiga community is so prominent. In general, these linguistic convergences are carried out in order to seek approval or social recognition from the surrounding community. This is done to show closeness or increase ethnic intimacy. This often happens in conversations with close friends. Language convergence here can foster tolerance in the midst of diversity. Another factor that encourages linguistic accommodation is the desire to foster a sense of security. They state that there is a sense of confidence and security if they can adjust linguistically to the speech partner. This of course will eventually get social recognition. This reciprocal convergence adaptive attitude, which is a characteristic of Balinese people as the bearers of the host culture, makes the diaspora community in Bali able to adapt to the environment, both natural and heterogeneous social environments.

IV. CONCLUSION

Language convergence is the embodiment of a pride in or preference for a particular language resulting in a continued use of it, especially, demonstrated by a speech community or any of its members within a culture where another language is dominant. Language convergence is embodied through language attitude and behavior. That is why language attitude is considered to be a factor of language shift. There is a relationship between language activation in various domains and self-identity. They see mother tongue in addition to being an important tool for maintaining identity, language is also a predictor of success for intergenerational retention. It is stated that the preservation of the mother tongue is very necessary between generations to preserve the mother tongue.

The Angantiga community feels that passing on the Balinese language to the next generation is an obligation to maintain their identity as an ethnic Balinese Muslim so that there is no conflict with other Balinese people. Various efforts have always been made to use the mother tongue in various fields of activity. In all spheres of social activities in the community, they always use Balinese language to maintain ethnic harmony. Nevertheless, they indicate the need for Indonesian as a unifying

and national language that must be used in a formal or inter-ethnic interaction.

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