



Exploration of Diglossia in Ambon Languages: Social Dynamics and Language Change in Ferguson Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study explores social dynamics and language transformation through the phenomenon of diglossia in Ambon language based on the perspective of Charles A. Ferguson. Diglossia in Ambon is the result of complex interactions between Indonesian and Ambon, which are influenced by social changes and shifts in the context of language use. This study focuses on the analysis of four main aspects of diglossia, namely functional, grammatical, lexicon, and phonology, in order to understand how language variations develop in various communication situations. Research data was collected through observation, documentation, and interviews with IAIN Ambon students. The results of the analysis show that the phenomenon of diglossia in Ambon language occurs due to the mixing of Indonesian as a prestige language with Ambon language which is more used in informal interactions. The shift in the situation from the formal to the informal realm contributes to changes in the structure of the language, both in terms of grammar, vocabulary choices, and phonological patterns used by speakers. The findings of this study confirm that social dynamics have a significant role in shaping patterns of language use in society, reflecting how language adapts to evolving social and cultural contexts. This study not only provides new insights in sociolinguistic studies, but also enriches the understanding of the development of regional languages in Indonesia in the context of bilingualism and diglossia.

Keyword: Diglossia, Ambon language, language transformation, sociolinguistics

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi dinamika sosial dan transformasi bahasa melalui fenomena diglosia dalam bahasa Ambon berdasarkan perspektif Charles A. Ferguson. Diglosia dalam bahasa Ambon merupakan hasil dari interaksi kompleks antara bahasa Indonesia dan bahasa Ambon, yang dipengaruhi oleh perubahan sosial serta pergeseran konteks penggunaan bahasa. Studi ini berfokus pada analisis empat aspek utama diglosia, yaitu fungsi, gramatikal, leksikon, dan fonologi, guna memahami bagaimana variasi bahasa berkembang dalam berbagai situasi komunikasi. Data penelitian dikumpulkan melalui metode observasi, dokumentasi, dan wawancara terhadap mahasiswa IAIN Ambon. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa fenomena diglosia dalam bahasa Ambon terjadi akibat percampuran bahasa Indonesia sebagai bahasa prestise dengan bahasa Ambon yang lebih digunakan dalam interaksi informal. Pergeseran situasi dari ranah formal ke nonformal berkontribusi terhadap perubahan struktur bahasa, baik dari segi tata bahasa, pilihan kosakata, maupun pola fonologis yang digunakan oleh penutur. Temuan penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa dinamika sosial memiliki peran signifikan dalam membentuk pola penggunaan bahasa di masyarakat, mencerminkan bagaimana bahasa beradaptasi terhadap konteks sosial dan budaya yang terus berkembang. Studi ini tidak hanya memberikan wawasan baru dalam kajian sosiolinguistik, tetapi juga memperkaya pemahaman tentang perkembangan bahasa daerah di Indonesia dalam konteks bilingualisme dan diglosia.

Kata kunci: Diglosia, bahasa Ambon, transformasi bahasa, sosiolinguistik.



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1. Introduction

Language is a reflection of the social life of the people who use it (Jamil et al., 2023). In the context of Indonesia, which is known as a country with a very rich diversity of languages and cultures, the phenomenon of diglossia is an important issue that deserves research (Asbarin & Hasyim, 2020). Diglossia, termed by Charles A. Ferguson, describes a situation in which two or more varieties of language are spoken in a single community, with different social functions. We often find this phenomenon in several regions of our country, one of which is in Eastern Indonesia, especially in Maluku Province, which has 22 languages with different dialects (Luturmas et al., 2022).

This phenomenon of diglossia occurs due to the interaction between fellow speaking communities who have different forms of language and dialects (Hasyim et al., 2020; Muslimin, 2011). Along with the variety or variation of language, speakers are required to choose the variety of language to be used according to the context (Daniëls, 2018). This has implications for the emergence of a language situation that is diglossic in nature (Hudson, 2002). For example, in Indonesia there are two different languages with different functions: standard languages, which are used in formal settings such as education and writing, and non-standard languages, which are used in informal situations such as everyday conversation (Chaer & Leonie, 2014).

However, in reality, the majority of people in Indonesia, even in official situations, are often inseparable from the use of non-standard languages or regional languages, either consciously or unconsciously (Asbarin, 2020). On the IAIN Ambon campus, this phenomenon is very visible in the learning process, where the use of a variety of everyday languages of the people of Ambon city reflects the use of a variety of high languages (T) and a variety of low languages (R), namely Indonesian (T) and Ambon languages as well as regional languages (R). Thus, in interactions between speakers, these two languages are often used together.

In general, according to Ferguson, diglossia is a situation in which there are two variations of a language that coexist, with each variation having a different role depending on the specific circumstances (Chaer & Leonie, 2014). In Fishman's perspective, diglossia exists not only in societies that officially recognize several languages, but also in societies that use functionally different dialects and varieties (Fishman, 1967). There are several topics of discussion about diglossia according to Ferguson's perspective, such as function, prestige, literary heritage, acquisition of standardization, stability, grammatical, lexicon, and phonology (Chaer, 2004).

Although there have been a number of studies that have addressed the phenomenon of diglossia, the focus of previous research has been limited to the speech of students and the community in certain sections only (Halim & Md. Yusoff, 2016; Kurniasih & Zuhriyah, 2017; Muslimin, 2011; Putra, 2017; Suwito, 2020; Veniaty, 2021). This study aims to examine the phenomenon of diglossia based on the perspective of Charles A. Ferguson in Eastern Indonesia, especially in Maluku Province, which is one of the regions in Indonesia with 70 regional languages, ranking third in Indonesia, as reported by <https://sekolahnews.com>.

This study aims to explore the phenomenon of diglossia in Maluku Province, especially in the use of Ambon language, with a problem formulation that includes how the phenomenon occurs, the role and function of each variety of languages, as well as its impact on social interaction and cultural identity of the community. With this research, it is hoped that it can make a theoretical contribution to linguistic and sociolinguistic studies, provide practical information for policymakers and the public about language dynamics, and become a reference for further research on diglossia in a broader context.

2. Method

This research will use a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the phenomenon of diglossia in the Ambon language in Maluku Province. The data needed consists of primary and secondary data, where the primary data includes the speech of IAIN Ambon students, while the secondary data includes scientific articles, theses, dissertations, and national and international journals that are relevant to the focus and objectives of the research.

The data collection process will be carried out through observation, interviews, and document reviews. Observation will be used to see how students make presentations in front of the class and interact with lecturers and peers. Interviews will be conducted with students who have two mother tongues and come from different regions to classify the language and dialect differences between them. In addition, document reviews will be used to document student discussion processes that sometimes inadvertently use low-variety language in

formal situations.

The data obtained will be analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, in which researchers will identify themes that emerge from interviews and observations, and relate them to the theory of diglossia according to Ferguson. To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation will be applied by comparing information from various sources and techniques, while reliability will be improved through systematic recording and documentation of the research process. Through this method, it is hoped that the research can provide a comprehensive understanding of social dynamics and language transformation in the situation of diglossia in the Ambon community.

3. Result and Discussion

This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of diglossia in the speech of IAIN Ambon students obtained through interviews and questionnaires. The main focus of this study is to identify the use of R (non-formal variety) and T (formal variety) in the context of communication in various departments, such as Sharia Economic Law, Islamic Religious Education, Islamic Religious Education Management, and others. The results of the study show that there are variations in the use of language based on different communication situations. Here is a detailed explanation of the diglossia topics found:

Table 1. Diglossia Topics

<i>Diglossia Topics</i>	<i>Number of Speeches</i>
<i>Function</i>	5
<i>Grammatical</i>	2
<i>Lexicon</i>	5
<i>phonology</i>	3

Function

Function is one of the main topics in the analysis of diglossia based on Ferguson's perspective. Speakers must be able to choose the right variety of languages according to the context. Here are some examples found in student speech:

The Word “seng”

The word "seng"¹ is one of the words in the Ambon language that should be used in informal speech situations, but in its application speakers use it in formal situations. The examples are as follows:

Data [1]

“Beta seng setuju dengan pendapat yang saudara paparkan (I do not agree with the opinion that Saudara has expressed)” (Ambon, 24/09/2024).

The use of the word "seng" in this sentence suggests that the speaker is mixing the R variety into a formal situation. Supposedly, in a formal context, speakers are expected to use more standard vocabulary such as "tidak/no." This reflects students' tendency to use colloquial language in academic situations, which can reduce the professional impression of communication.

The particle “su”

The particle "su"² is often used to express the state of "already" although it has a clear meaning, its use in formal situations can have different meanings and functions. Examples:

Data [2]

Apakah ose su mengerti kah belum tentang materi yang telah dijelaskan? (Do you understand the material that has been explained earlier?) (Ambon, 24/09/2024).

¹ The word “seng” in Ambon means no, not zinc which is usually used for the roof of the house

² "su" is another word for "sudah" in indoesian language, and it is customary for Easterners to abbrevite some words, such as: "Kau", so "ko", and the word "jangan" is abbreviated as "jang"

In the research findings, these particles are used by IAIN Ambon students in formal communication conditions, namely during the discussion process between groups. While the word /already/ is different from the word /already/ which we understand in Indonesian. For example: ayo! Buat sudah (Come on, please do it), so the word /already/ in the sentence above means more command. Thus, based on the topic of the function of diglossia in Ferguson's perspective, the phenomenon is a form of diglossia on the topic of the function of a variety of languages.

The word “kamong”

The word “kamong”, is a word used by a speaker to an older speaking partner. For example, in Indonesian, especially those who have or are learning Arabic. We often meet, to say /you/ to an older person, usually replaced with the word /antum/, according to Kholison in his book Semantics, saying that the transfer of the word /you/ to /antum/ is a form of ta'zim (glorifying) someone older than him (Kholison, 2016). Researchers also found this term in the speech of IAIN Ambon students when they were talking to a speaking partner who was older than him. Examples:

Data [3]

Kamong ini harus melaksanakan perintah Allah (You must carry out the commands of Allah SWT (Ambon, 24/09/2024).

The above sentence was said by a student while talking to his friend. In the research findings, the word "kamong" is used by IAIN Ambon students in non-formal communication conditions. Thus, based on the topic of the function of diglossia in Ferguson's perspective, the phenomenon is a form of diglossia on the topic of the function of a variety of languages.

The word “beta”

Based on the findings in interviews and student responses in learning, the students have actually tried their best to continue using the language or variety T. However, several times in the teaching and learning process, either during presentations or discussions, researchers found that some of the uses of the words /I/ and /you/ shifted or changed to the variety R in one situation.

Data [4]

Dari pendapat yang saya dengar tentang diskusi. Menurut beta itu diskusi adalah sebuah pendapat yang belum mendapat hasil akhirnya. (In my opinion, a discussion is an opinion that has not yet received a final result) (Ambon, 24/09/2024).

The use of "beta" in place of "I" in this sentence indicates a speaker's reluctance to use the T variety. Although "beta" is a more familiar form, its use in formal situations indicates that the speaker may feel closer to the interlocutor, or may feel that formalities in communication can be relaxed. This is a reflection of a more egalitarian social interaction among students.

Partikel “Par”

The particle "par" serves to signify an end or intent, similar to "for."

Data [5]

Beta Mau Tamang tamang samua kumpul dolo par katong bahas Planning par jalan jalan ni (I want all my friends to get together to discuss plening for a trip) (Ambon, 24/09/2024).

The use of "par" in a formal context indicates that the speaker combines vocabulary derived from the R variety into sentences that should be more standard. This shows the difficulty in separating the variety of languages according to the context, as well as reflecting the influence of daily habits carried over to academic communication.

Grammatical

In grammatical analysis, the difference in syntactic structure between the T and R varieties is an important highlight. This is due to differences in syntax or grammar found in the two varieties. The following is an

explanation of a few sentences from the researcher's findings on the speech of IAIN Ambon students in communicating with others.

The word "sapa"

The word "sapa" was found in the speech of IAIN Ambon students in communicating between peers and close relatives. This word is also often used by a speaker to ask something to a speaking partner, for example; *sapa pung ini* (who owns this).

Data [6]

Dia pung nama sapa e? (What is his name) (Ambon, 24/09/2024).

In a formal context, this sentence should be pronounced with a more standard structure, such as "What's your name?" The use of "sapa" indicates that speakers feel more comfortable using familiar vocabulary, even in formal situations. This can create the impression of less seriousness in academic communication, where speakers should be more careful in choosing words.

The word "bagemana"

The word "bagemana" in Ambon is the same as the word -sapa in the analysis of point (a) above. This word serves to ask about a person's circumstances or condition.

Data [7]

Seng pung kabar bagemana sodara? (How are you doing, my brother) (Ambon, 24/09/2024).

The use of "bagemana" at the end of a sentence indicates that speakers are more likely to use the structure they are used to in everyday communication. In a formal situation, this sentence should be asked in a more formal way, such as "How are you?" The use of non-standard language can lead to confusion or the impression of being less professional in an academic context. In the R variety language, using the word question is usually at the end of a sentence, if we force it at the beginning of a sentence like Indonesian, it will look ambiguous and funny to hear. For example; *bagaimana ose pung kabar?* If it is heard by a native speaker, it will seem inappropriate.

Lexicon

Lexicons or vocabulary in the T variety and the R variety are mostly the same. However, there are some vocabulary of the T variety that does not have a word equivalent that corresponds to the R variety, or vice versa. For example, a characteristic that can be known in diglossia is the presence of paired vocabulary, one for the T variety and one for the R variety, but the similarity is only a general concept. for example, in Indonesian we will also find vocabulary that pairs between the T variety and the R variety.

The word "seng"

In the vocabulary of the Ambon (R) language, researchers often find zinc words spoken by speakers to speaking partners.

Data [8]

Beta sependapat deng sodara suhardin, karna apa yang dia bilang tadi itu, sesuai dengan fakta yang ada dan seng (tidak) salah lai. (I agree with Brother Suhardin, because what he said earlier is in accordance with the existing facts and *seng* (not) wrong anymore) (Ambon, 24/09/2024).

Here, "seng" serves as a vocabulary that should be used in the R variety but appears in a formal context. This reflects the tendency of students to use everyday vocabulary, which may be the result of the influence of their social environment. In an academic context, the use of the word "no" should be more appropriate to maintain the formality of communication.

In Indonesian, the equivalent of the word zinc is the word /not/. Because in Indonesian the word /seng/ is also found, but in its use and meaning it is very far apart. /Seng/ in the Ambon language means /not/, while /seng/ in the large Indonesian dictionary is interpreted as thin iron coated with tin and used as the roof of the house. In addition, the word zinc in the sentence if matched with Indonesian, will be equivalent to the word

/not/. Because in Indonesian there is also a word that corresponds to /seng/, namely the word /nggak/. However, the word /no/ is usually used in informal situations.

The word “beta”

In addition to the word “seng” in the analysis of the points above, the researcher also found the word beta in the Ambon language. The explanation is as follows:

Data [9]

“Beta kurang setuju dengan pendapat yang saudara paparkan” (I don't agree with the opinion you expressed) (Ambon, 24/09/2024).

"Beta" and "I" indicate the use of different lexicons among the languages. In formal situations, speakers are expected to use "I" to maintain politeness. However, the use of "beta" suggests that students feel more comfortable using non-formal varieties in situations that should be formal, which may reflect more egalitarian social interactions among students.

The word “bilang”

The word “bilang”, researchers also found in the speech of IAIN Ambon students in communicating with each other, both in formal and informal environments. The examples are as follows:

Data [10]

Beta kan subbilang, jika ingin menjadi yang terbaik, maka buatlah yang terbaik dalam hidup to (I have said, if you want to be the best in life, then do your best) (Ambon, 24/09/2024).

"bilang" serves as a substitute for "say" and reflects the shift between the R and T variants in speech. The use of this word in a formal context can reduce the level of formality and professionalism expected in an academic situation. It also shows how college students often prioritize the comfort of their communication rather than following formal language norms.

The word katong

The word katong is also a form of lexicon on the topic of diglossia.

Data [11]

Katong ini harus melaksanakan perintah Allah (we must carry out the commands of Allah SWT) (Ambon, 24/09/2024).

The use of "katong" in a formal context suggests that speakers mix the R variety in situations where they should be using the T variety. This reflects a situation where students feel better about using vocabulary they are familiar with, albeit in a formal context, which can ultimately create the impression that they are not adhering to academic norms.

The word “Tamang-tamang”

The word tamang-tamang is also a form of lexicon on the topic of diglossia.

Data [12]

Beta mau tamang-tamang samua kumpul dolo par katong bahas Planning par jalan jalan ni (I want all of you to gather first to discuss planning for the trip) (Ambon, 24/09/2024).

The use of the word "tamang-tamang" here indicates a shift from the formal variety to the informal variety. In an academic context, this sentence should be delivered more formally to maintain a professional impression. The use of the word indicates the inability of students to separate formal and informal situations, which is a hallmark of the phenomenon of diglossia.

Phonology

On the topic of phonology, there are structural differences between high and low varieties, some of which are quite far and some are quite close. Based on Ferguson's perspective, the high and low variety sound systems

essentially have the same system, but the standard reference is the T phonology, while the R phonology, which has various varieties, is a subsystem or parasystem in the phonology of its use.

Based on the findings of this study, there are several words that are written the same as Indonesian, but phonologically have different sounds. This phenomenon, researchers found in several words in the speech of IAIN Ambon students, the explanation is as follows:

The word “mengerti”

The word understand is one of the words that researchers found on the topic of diglossia phonology in the speech of IAIN Ambon students in a formal situation, namely when the discussion process is ongoing. The explanation is as follows:

Data [13]

“I agree with Brother Suhardin, because what he said earlier is in accordance with the existing facts and is easy Understand” (Ambon, 24/09/2024).

In the sentence above, it is one of the diglossian phenomena that occurs on the topic of phonology, namely the word /mengerti/ (understand). In writing, there is no difference at all between Ambon and Indonesian, but if we analyze phonologically, we will find the difference very clearly. In Ambon, almost all vocabulary words that have the phoneme /e/ will be read with the vowel /a/. For example; the word /mengerti/, in the word there is a vowel /e/, but in Ambon, the vowel /e/ changes to the vowel /a/, so that the word /understand/ is read /mangarti/. So that this has implications for the accent of IAIN Ambon students who use lahjat or various Ambon languages in their daily lives.

The word “Setuju”

The word agree is one of the words that the researcher found on the topic of phonology in diglossia in the speech of IAIN Ambon students in formal situations in the classroom, as for example as follows:

Data [14]

Beta tidak setuju dengan pendapat yang saudara paparkan, (I don't agree with the opinion you expressed) (Ambon, 24/09/2024).

In the speech above, an example of the phenomenon of diglossia is found in the phonological aspect. The first sentence, "I disagree with the opinion you express," reflects the more informal use of the R variety, while the second sentence, "I disagree with the opinion you express," represents the more formal and academic context of the T variety.

In terms of writing, there is no obvious difference between the two sentences other than the choice of first-person pronouns: "beta" in the R variety and "I" in the T variety. Students from Ambon often pronounce this word with stress on the vowel /e/ at the beginning of the syllable, so that it sounds like /se-tu-ju/ with a longer or slightly different vowel sound of /e/ than in the T variety.

The word “Bagaimana”

The word /bagaimana/ also found that there is a difference in terms of phonology with the T variety in the speech of IAIN Ambon students. The examples are as follows:

Data [15]

How about friends, are there any other questions? (Ambon, 24/09/2024).

In writing, there is no difference, but if we look at phonology, we will find the difference very clearly. In Ambon, there are several words that have the phoneme /a/ to be read with the vowel /e/. For example; the word /how/, in the word there is a vowel /a/, but in Ambon, the vowel /a/ changes to the vowel /e/, so that the word /how/ is read /bagemana/, even the phoneme /i/ in the word is deleted. So that this has implications for the accent of IAIN Ambon students who use lahjat or various Ambon languages in their daily lives. Based on this, according to Ferguson's perspective, the phenomenon in the above sentence is a form of diglossia on the topic of phonology of a variety of languages.

Causes of the phenomenon of diglossia in the speech of IAIN Ambon students

Based on the results of the analysis on diglossia topics according to Ferguson's perspective above. There are two factors behind the occurrence of the phenomenon of diglossia in the speech of IAIN Ambon students:

Consequences of mixing the R variety and the T variety

The regional language or mother tongue is the language used by a child since he was born and raised, and is the first language used in communication (Marni et al., 2021; Putri, 2021; Rulyandi et al., 2014). In the city of Ambon, the Ambon language is not only the language of the community, but there are also many variations of other regional languages. For example, students from the West Seram area mostly use a variety of Buton languages, while students from Eastern Seram use the Geser or Gorong language more in communicating (Dewi Hapsari, 2020; Wahab, 2013; Wirawan & Shaunaa, 2021).

So that in formal situations, most speakers still use several words derived from the variety R. The many varieties or variations of the language have implications for the occurrence of the phenomenon of diglossia in the speech of IAIN Ambon students. The use of informal variations in formal situations creates an inconsistency in expected communication, which ultimately becomes a unique characteristic of student speech.

As a result of shifting the situation from formal to informal

In the analysis of the diglossia phenomenon, the communication situation plays an important role in determining the variety of languages used (Asbarin et al., 2018). The T variety should be used in formal situations, while the R variety is used in informal situations. However, in some speech situations, the use of first- or second-person pronouns that initially use a variety of formal language, then shifts to a variety of non-formal language.

For example, the use of the pronoun "I" changes to "beta," and "you" becomes "kamong." This indicates the existence of awareness or habits of speakers who are influenced by the social and cultural context around them, where a variety of informal languages are allowed to be used in situations that usually require a variety of formal languages. This change creates a very striking phenomenon of diglossia among IAIN Ambon students, which can be seen from the mixture of vocabulary and sentence structure in their communication.

4. Conclusion

The results of the study show that the phenomenon of diglossia in IAIN Ambon reflects the complexity of language use among students. The inconsistent selection of language variations in formal and informal situations illustrates the social and cultural shifts that affect the way students communicate. The mixing of R and T variations, as well as shifts in the communication situation, are the main causes of the phenomenon of diglossia among IAIN Ambon students. This research makes an important contribution to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of language and communication in the context of higher education in Indonesia. This research makes an important contribution to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of language and communication in the context of higher education in Indonesia, as well as enriching discussions on language use among the increasingly diverse younger generation.

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, if it is necessary for the researcher to provide suggestions to the researcher afterwards, the phenomenon of diglossia in this study is only limited to four topics. There should be other research that discusses all the topics of diglossia at all levels of education, or bilingual society in order to get more comprehensive results.

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