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LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND LANGUAGE CHOICE AMONG STUDENTS IN YOGYAKARTA: A CASE STUDY AT UNIVERSITAS SANATA DHARMA

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Abstract

Yogyakarta is a multicultural city in which people from different regions and ethnicity live and well known as one of the best foreign tourist destinations in Indonesia. This situation gives an excellent opportunity for the community to communicate with others whose different cultural backgrounds, ethnicity, and language. Commonly, they talk in Javanese, the local language spoken in Yogyakarta. Meanwhile, due to the engagement with those who speak in different languages, Indonesian and English are gaining more frequent usage. Concerning this situation, this paper is to investigate the language choice among students in Yogyakarta. This study also scrutinises their language attitude toward English, colloquial Indonesian, and local languages. In achieving the objectives, a sociolinguistic questionnaire is given to 100 sample respondents who are the students of Universitas Sanata Dharma. The results show that the students have appreciative attitudes towards the colloquial Indonesian, English, and local languages. The investigation on the language choice indicates that the students choose to communicate using Indonesian. The dominance of Indonesian shifts the use of local languages.

Keywords: sociolinguistics, attitude, choice

Introduction

Linguists agree that language and society are related to each other. Wardhaugh (2006) says that language and society may have four different relations. The first one is linguistic structure and behaviour may be determined by social structure. The second is the opposite in which the linguistic structure defines the social structure of society. The third is that society and language influence each other. While the fourth is, there is no relation between the two. Each type of these possible relation results in different situations towards the existence of language, as Holmes (2013) said that economic, social, and political factors possibly lead a community to shift from using one language to using another.

The relation between social structure and linguistic structure is reflected in the daily life of society in Yogyakarta. Living in Yogyakarta, a multicultural city in Indonesia, enables people to meet and communicate with those whose different

language and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, the existence of Yogyakarta as an international tourist destination provides more opportunity for society to mingle with others from different countries. This situation influences the choice of the language spoken by the community. Choosing the most appropriate language to use is necessary for them. In general, people use Javanese language (one of the local languages in Indonesia) to communicate with those who are Javanese and Indonesian to communicate with those from different regions in Indonesia and English when they interact with foreigners.

Nowadays, there is a tendency that the colloquial Indonesian and English are gaining more intense usage, while the use of Javanese or other local languages is fading. This situation is supported by the language policy of the government, the education system, and the globalisation. Based on the linguistic phenomenon mentioned above, we would like to test the ethnolinguistic vitality of the colloquial Indonesian, English, and local languages.

As Holmes stated, the ethnolinguistic vitality of a language might be influenced by the status of the language that is indicated by the attitude of the people toward the language, the size of the group who uses the language and their distribution, and the institutional support (Holmes, 2013, p. 66).

This paper is intended to explore the possible language shift that occurs in Yogyakarta by investigating the language attitude and language choice among students in Yogyakarta, especially at Universitas Sanata Dharma. Universitas Sanata Dharma is one of the universities in Yogyakarta whose students come from different provinces and ethnicity. They also possess various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. At this university, both Indonesian and English are compulsory subjects for all students. English is the principal medium used in classes in the English Education Department and English Letters Department.

Sociolinguistics underpins the basic theory of this research. As stated by Kridalaksana, sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that studies the relation between society and language (Kridalaksana, 2008). Moreover, the definition of sociolinguistics in this research refers to the following: "It has strong connections with anthropology through the study of language and culture, and with sociology through the investigation of the role language plays in the organization of social groups and institutions. It is also tied to social psychology, particularly with regard to how attitudes and perceptions are expressed and how in-group and out-group behaviours are identified. We use all these connections when we try to analyse language from a social perspective" (Yule, 2006).

In sociolinguistics, examining the way how language is used in different social context is considered a useful way to determine not only the way language works, but also the social relationships in a particular society, as well as the way how people set up and express their social identity through the use of language (Holmes, 2013).

One topic frequently discussed in sociolinguistics is the relation between language attitude and language choice in multilingual societies. The connection between language attitude and language choice is arguable. Some sociolinguists argue that language attitude shapes and is shaped by language choice. On the other hand, others assert that language choice is the result of the language attitude of the speakers towards language. Regardless of these two opinions, language

attitude is closely associated with language choice. Holmes considers that there is no identical language attitude towards a particular language.

“People generally do not hold opinions about languages in a vacuum. They develop attitudes towards languages which indicate their views about those who speak the languages, and the contexts and functions with which they are associated. When people listen to accents or languages they have never heard before, and their assessments are totally random. There is no pattern to them. In other words, there is no universal consensus about which languages sound most beautiful and which most ugly, despite people’s beliefs that some languages are just inherently more beautiful than others” (Holmes, 2013).

Furthermore, he elaborates that social and political factors have a significant influence on people’s language attitudes. “Attitudes to language are strongly influenced by social and political factors. Language varieties have indexing properties that all members of the community are aware of. Language planners must take account of attitudes when they select a suitable language for development as an official or national language” (Holmes, 2013).

Language attitude may also be determined based on how the community identifies and labels the language. When they have positive attitudes towards the language, they will select the language in most interactions. Meanwhile, they may be resistant to using the language when they have negative attitudes. “As a result, people develop either a positive or negative attitude to other languages based on how the community identifies and labels them. A language becomes appealing to the speakers who have a positive attitude towards it and prefer it in most interactions. On the contrary, if speakers have negative attitudes towards a language, they develop resistance in using it.” (Dweik & Qawar, 2015).

In terms of language choice, Sumarsono argues that the language choice of a speaker is dependent on some factors such as participants, settings, and topics (Sumarsono, 2013, p. 199-200). Another researcher, Meyerhoff, highlights the relation between language choice and ethnolinguistic vitality. He said, in multilingual communities, different languages may have different vitality in various domains, and that the selection of the language may affect the interactional force and may imply something about the situations or the speakers.

“That is, we will see that in multilingual communities, different languages have more or less vitality in different (institutional, social or personal) domains. In multilingual settings, the choice between languages carries interactional force or implies something about the situation or the interlocutors. One language may be used for some social functions or in a specific social context, while another language is reserved for other functions and contexts. This can be called diglossia, and we will look at some communities that have been described as diglossic, including speech communities with elaborated registers that are used in different situations and with different addressees.” (Meyerhoff, 2006, p. 103).

A good diglossic situation will put each of the languages in different domains. On the other side, when a language leaks into the areas which are previously reserved for the other variety, this leak may put the other array in an unfortunate situation. To be worse, this can result in a language shift. Language shift occurs when gradually one of the types spoken in a society displaces the minority language mother tongue (Holmes, 2013). When parents choose not to use their mother tongues to communicate with their children, the children will not be able to acquire their parents' mother tongues. If this situation happens continuously, it may lead to the extinction of the language, and it proves that language attitude and language choice influence the vitality of language. As said by Mohamed & Hashim (2012) "ethnolinguistic group with no or low vitality will likely lose the uniqueness of its group identity and the mother tongue".

Sasse, as quoted by Janse (2003), stated that more than half of the world's languages have died, and almost half of the remaining languages are dying. Based on the statistics published by Badan Pengembangan Bahasa dan Perbukuan, Kemendikbud RI, there are 750 languages spoken by Indonesian people. Among those languages, only 18 languages are secure (-, 2019).

This fact is an alarm for the society to be alert to language endangerment. According to Sallabank (2010), there are four factors that may trigger language endangerment. They are (1) natural catastrophes, disaster, famine, (2) war and genocide, (3) overt repressions, and (4) cultural, political, and economic dominance. The cause of language endangerment in a particular region may be different from other areas.

In general, the challenge we face today is that dominant languages (the languages with the most speakers) endanger minority languages. As revealed by Wamalwa & Oluoch (2013) they said that for about 90 per cent of the languages can be replaced by dominant languages. The threat posed by the "big five" (English, Russian, Mandarin, Hindu, and Spanish) is real and great, especially to the third world countries whose vast majority of languages are a minority. A Majority of the third world languages have not been described linguistically. The threat posed by English is underlined by its importance on the world stage in the 21st century.

Based on the criteria of who the user is, languages can be categorized as safe or endangered languages. For instance, safe languages have members of three generations. They are the children, the parents, and the grandparents who speak the language, whereas, critically endangered languages are infrequently spoken by the grandparents, or by the youngest speakers of the language (Johnson, 2011b in Carjuzaa, 2017).

Language endangerment may lead to language displacement. May (2001) stated that language displacement might occur during four processes: (1) initial language contact that leads minority status of the historically associated language, (2) bilingualism, (3) recessive use of the old style which is mainly limited to the intra-ethnic communication, and (4) unstable bilingualism that leads to the monolingualism.

Research on language attitudes and language choices has been carried out by many researchers. Kumiasari and Mbato explored the relationship between the language attitudes of students studying English as a foreign language against English and Indonesian and studied the relationship between language attitudes

and educational backgrounds and study programs. In this study, it was found that respondents had positive language attitudes towards both Indonesian and English (Kumiasari & Mbato, 2018). Furthermore, the results of their study showed that respondents' language attitudes were influenced by their educational and occupational backgrounds.

Meanwhile, Dewi and Setiadi (2018), in a study entitled *Language Attitude and Language Choice in Bilingual Academic Learning Environment*, enhance language attitudes and language choices of English Language Study Program students at Bina Nusantara University. Their results show that students have a positive language attitude towards English because students consider that English is an international language and mastery of English will open up wider employment opportunities.

Through a language study in education conducted by Ting (2013) in Malaysia, he cites the results of the 2002 CLS survey of the perceived importance of English proficiency in social mobility among Chinese university students. The most popular languages that they considered as English with 78 per cent and 14 per cent for Chinese. The second most important language that they should learn is Chinese for 63 per cent and Malay for 18 per cent. Moreover, The third most important language is 73 per cent for Malay and 17 per cent for Chinese.

However, there is also a negative view of English users in Malaysia. Kim (2001), as quoted by Fei, W. F., Siong, L. K., Kim, L. S., & Yaacob, A. (2012) found resentment towards the use of English in Malaysia. Using English was perceived as an attempt to "show off", being "boastful", a relic of colonialism, as being elitist, and a betrayal of the Malay cultural identity and the Malay language. This resentment was also prevalent among the non-Malay students.

Different from Ting's research, Ying (2015) found that Malaysian and English do not have high vitality. Yet, vernacular languages are rated as having high vitality. It is suggested that ethnic languages dominantly shape ethnic identity.

This study is similar to the previous studies above in terms of the focus of research namely language attitudes and language choices. Nevertheless, this study differs from earlier studies because it observes the relationship between language attitudes and language choices of students at Universitas Sanata Dharma. Besides, this research does not only focus on English or Indonesian but also on the use of local languages.

Method

This research was a descriptive quantitative research, and was designed to answer the following research questions: (1) how the students value the local language, colloquial Indonesian, and English; and (2) what language do they use in a particular domain.

A questionnaire was designed to help the researchers obtain the data. This questionnaire includes closed questions related to the respondents' cultural background, language attitude, and language choice in particular domains. The respondents' direct self-reports based on their metalinguistic ability were applied. The design of this questionnaire is in line with what Milroy and Gordon said. "They are fundamentally metalinguistic tasks in that they rely on the respondents' ability to consider their linguistic behaviour" (Milroy & Gordon, 2003, p. 54). Therefore, the questions used in the questionnaire were categorised as closed

questions. The items were completed with some options indicating the language attitude and language choice that the respondents could choose.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part covered 17 questions which aimed to identify the respondents' language attitude towards the colloquial Indonesian, English, and local languages. The second part contained 12 items to find out the data related to the language chosen by the respondents to communicate in family, housing complex, social interaction, social media, and religious worship domains. The language options provided were the colloquial Indonesian, English, and local languages.

Linkert scales are used in questions related to the respondents' language attitudes. Every answer was given a score with a range from one to four, with a range from strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. Four was the highest score, and it indicated positive attitudes, whereas the lowest score, which indicated negative attitudes, was 1.

The respondents of this research are 100 randomly selected students of Universitas Sanata Dharma. This university is one of the universities in Yogyakarta whose students come from almost all provinces in Indonesia. Those students study in various departments and have different languages, ethnicity, and cultural backgrounds. The information on respondents' demographic factors such as gender, ethnicity, hometown, and mother tongue was also gathered.

Findings and Discussion

The first part of the questionnaire deals with the identification of the demographic factors that may influence the language attitude and language choice of the students. The following figures describe the distribution of the respondents based on the gender and place of origin.

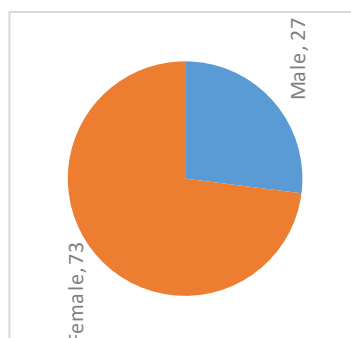


Figure 1. The distribution of the respondents based on the gender

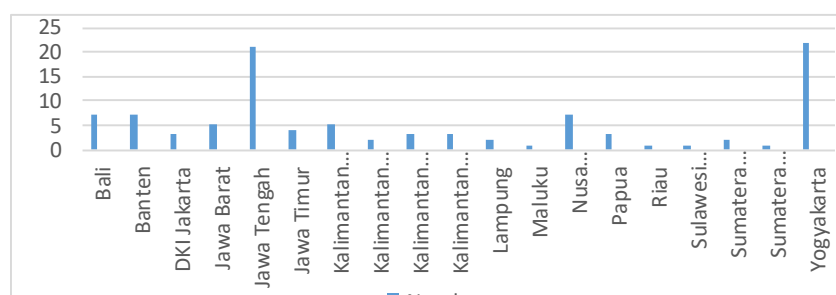


Figure 2. The distribution of the respondents based on the origin

Table 1. The demographic distribution of the respondents

Mother tongue	Local Language	30
	Indonesian	70
	English	0
Local language mastery	Yes	97
	No	3
Ethnicity background	Mono-ethnic	73
	Multi-ethnic	27
Language background of the parents	Monolingual (the mother and the father have the mother tongue)	52
	Indonesian	27
	Multilingual (the parents have different mother tongue)	21
Where to live in Yogyakarta	Boarding house with friends from different regions	67
	Boarding house with friends from the same region	3
	Living with parents	22
	Living with relatives	7

Table 1. shows that the respondents acquire different mother tongues. The dominant one is colloquial Indonesian (70%). Compared to the mother tongues of their parents, this finding is intriguing. The number of students whose parents' mother tongue is Indonesian is only 27%. It implies that more families chose to introduce Indonesian as the first language to their children, although the parents speak in local languages (52%) and come from the same ethnic groups (72%).

This condition is also reflected in the data related to the respondents' language choice, as described in the following figures.

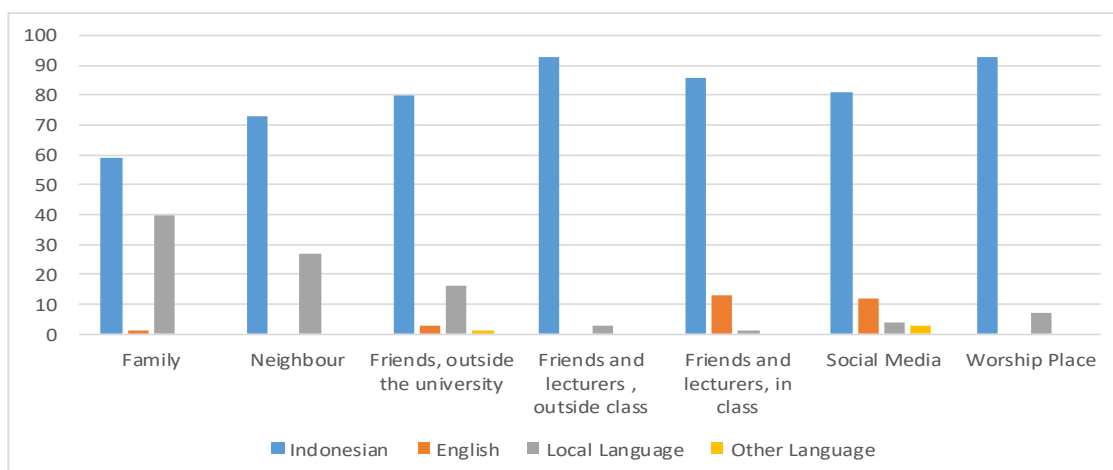


Figure 3. Language choice in particular domains

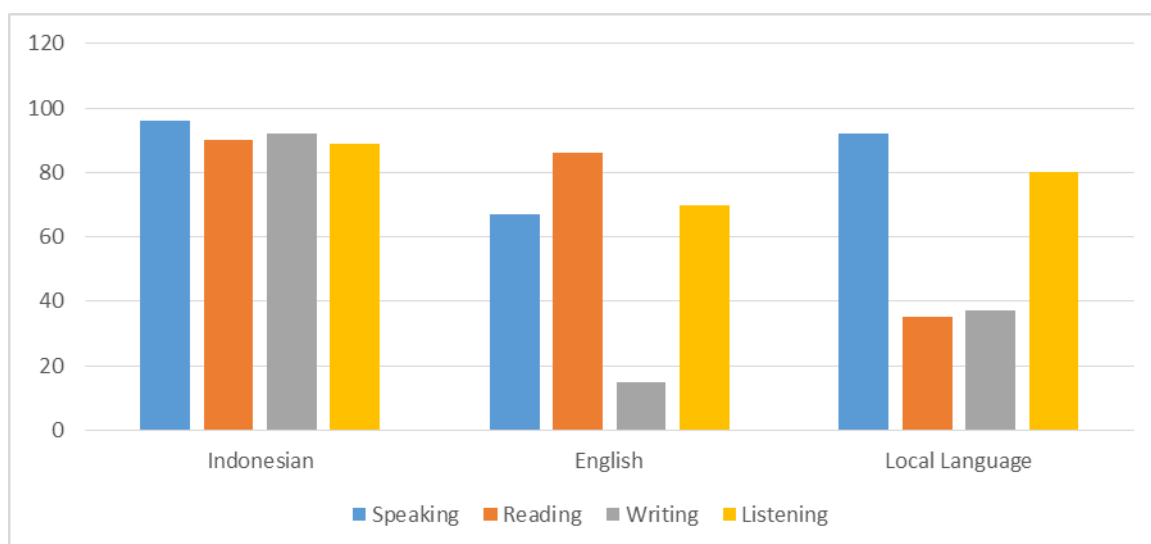


Figure 4. Language use based on the functions

Figures 2 and 3 show that Indonesian is dominant in all fields and functions. English is mostly used in class and social media, whereas local languages are used to communicate with their family, neighbours, and friends.

The second part of the questionnaire shows that the students have positive language attitudes towards Indonesian, English, and local languages though there are some points we need to highlight. The following table describes the summary of the data calculation on the language attitude.

Table 2. Language attitude

No	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Indonesian is very important for my life because it supports my study	0	1	21	88
2	Indonesian is very important for my life because it is necessary for my daily communication	0	2	25	73
3	Indonesian is very important for my life because I need it to reach my dream	0	8	30	62
4	Indonesian is very important because it is needed for international communication	6	28	40	26
5	Indonesian is very important because it can increase my prestige	17	41	32	10
6	English is very important for my life because it supports my study	0	4	37	59
7	English is very important for my life because it is necessary for my daily communication	3	22	44	21
8	English is very important for my life because I need it to reach my dream	1	5	31	63
9	English is very important because it is needed for international	0	3	17	80

	communication				
10	English is very important because it can increase my prestige	16	31	35	18
11	The local language is very important for my life because it supports my study	8	47	32	13
12	The local language is very important for my life because it is necessary for my daily communication	3	21	47	29
13	The local language is very important for my life because I need it to reach my dream	7	53	30	10
14	The local language is very important because it can increase my prestige	15	50	27	8
15	Indonesian, as the national language, should be prioritized	0	4	28	68
16	English, as an international language, should be learned	0	5	23	73
17	Local languages should be preserved by using it in daily conversations	0	4	14	82

The first point has related the importance of colloquial Indonesian, English, and local languages toward their daily life, education, and future life. The students consider Indonesian and local languages necessary for their regular communication, but Indonesian gains more appreciative language attitude. The local languages are not regarded as essential to support the respondents' study and future life, and the mastery of the local languages will not influence their prestige.

The language that the students think can increase their prestige is English. Milroy (Milroy J. 2007, 137) stated, "Speakers tend to confer prestige on usages that are considered to be those of higher social classes." In Indonesia, those who can speak in English are regarded as more educated than those who cannot. On the other side, the establishment of ASEAN Economic Community and globalisation provide more opportunity for Indonesian people to mingle with others from different countries and at the same time, force them to compete with more competitors due to the open labour market. This situation encourages Indonesian people to master English since it is needed for international communication.

The respondents agree that Indonesian, as the official language of the Republic of Indonesia, should be prioritised. This point is in line with Milroy's statement that "all standard languages have to be given some form of legitimacy, and have to be maintained and protected through authority and doctrine of correctness" (Milroy J. 2007, 138).

In terms of preserving the local languages, 96% of the students think it is necessary to protect local languages by using the language in daily communication. This attitude is also reflected in the fact that 97% of the students also use the local languages in the spoken communication.

Based on the results described above, it can be seen that colloquial Indonesian is dominant and gets positive attitude. Colloquial Indonesian is chosen more because of the dominance of the social, political, economic, and education factors.

The social element that can be identified in this research is the community does not maintain the ethnic language but they prefer to choose the national language.

The choice not to introduce local languages as the mother tongue is not by virtue a coincidence. The analysis of the respondents' hometown, parents' ethnicity and the mother tongue of the parents implies that this choice is taken for some reasons. Most respondents who acquire the colloquial Indonesian as their mother tongue live in big cities, and some of the parents seem to have moved to another town where they are required to use Indonesian. As an example, some respondents whose parents who speak Javanese (a local language spoken in Yogyakarta and Jawa Tengah) do not acquire Javanese language because their parents had moved to live in DKI Jakarta, Jawa Barat, or Sumatera Selatan. Because the parents choose not to maintain their first language, they do not introduce their ethnic language as the mother tongue of their children. As a result, the children acquire colloquial Indonesian as their mother tongue.

The dominant use of colloquial Indonesian is also the result of the government language policy that puts Indonesian as the official national language as established in the Law no 24/2009 on the National Flag, Language, Emblem, and Anthem. This political factor provides more room for Indonesian to be promoted and protected since this law enforces the use of Indonesian as the official national language used in state official documents, education institutions, international and domestic forums, working environments, company reports, names, and mass media. Moreover, Indonesian is also taught in school. It is a compulsory subject from elementary schools to high education levels. Benedict Anderson, as cited by Gal (Gal 2007, 152), explains that centralised education, general conscription, press capitalism, and national labour markets influenced the creation of standard languages that may lead to homogeneity across the national territory. This opinion is valid regarding the fact that 70% of the respondents use Indonesian as their mother tongue.

Acquiring the colloquial Indonesian gives the respondents more opportunities for their future education and jobs. It may make their life more comfortable since Indonesia is the most common language spoken by society. They will be able to communicate with others who are from different regions easily. The data shows that 67% of the respondents live in a boarding house together with friends from different areas. When they communicate with their friends, they prefer to use colloquial Indonesian than English or their local languages.

Comparing English and local languages, it can be seen that the use of local languages is more dominant than it is of English in the family, neighbourhood, and friend domains. The respondents use local languages in these domains because they considered it more intimate when they use local languages to communicate with their family, neighbours, and friends. Local languages are mostly used in speaking and listening functions. It means that they are only used in spoken discourse, and the exposure to the use of local languages is minimal. Local languages are only taught in elementary schools, junior high schools, and senior high schools.

Meanwhile, the use of English is more dominant than the use of local languages in the classroom and social media domains. This situation is triggered by the fact that in some departments at Universitas Sanata Dharma, English is used as the language of instruction in the classroom. Moreover, in this millennial

era, the use of social media enables people to interact with other people from different parts of this world.

The linguistic phenomenon occurring at Universitas Sanata Dharma shows that the colloquial Indonesian gradually displaces local languages. This situation may endanger the local languages, and if the community does not see the importance of maintaining local languages and do nothing to preserve them, we may lose them. And when we lose them, we may lose the world as Steiner said, "When a language dies. A possible world dies with it." (Steiner, 1998).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the students value colloquial Indonesian, English, and local languages positively for different reasons. Indonesian and English are given positive value because they are essential for their study, daily life, international communication, and future life. Meanwhile, local languages are appreciated because they are necessary for their regular life communication.

In terms of language choice, colloquial Indonesian gains the most dominant usage since it is the national language and lingua franca in Indonesia. This dominance is influenced by social, political, educational, and economic factors. Though this situation is useful to increase the vitality of Indonesian, it may endanger the existence of local languages because the number of speakers is decreasing. The result of the analysis implies that being multicultural does not guarantee that the person will also be multilingual.

This study needs further elaboration since it only applied the direct approach and observed only the students in one university. Further research might be conducted by using the match-guise technique and observing more respondents.

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