

## A Diglossia Phenomenon in Sasak Language Spoken by the Noblemen of Mambalan

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### Abstract

This study aims to determine the language used and the diglossia situation among the members of the aristocracy of Mambalan Village, Gunung Sari District, West Nusa Tenggara. The approach used in this study is descriptive qualitative, which applies descriptive methods. Data collection techniques in this study are literature, observation, interviews, recording techniques, and note-taking. Data on diglossia are seen from seven domains: family domain, social domain, buying and selling transaction domain, religious domain, government domain, education domain, and profession domain. Based on research findings show that the aristocracy of Mambalan Village is bilingual and multilingual. This can be seen from the variety of languages used, namely Sasak alus language, Sasak jamak language, and Indonesian. This condition supported the occurrence of the diglossia situation among them. The study's results based on the family domain show that the aristocracy of the Mambalan village still uses the Sasak alus and Indonesian as a high language (H). In the buying and selling transactions, it can be seen that the Sasak alus language and Indonesian are the high language (H) and most dominant languages used by the noblemen of Mambalan village. In the religion domain, especially when sermons in the mosque are more dominant in using Indonesian as a high language (H). While in the government, education, and professional domains it is more dominant in using Indonesian as a high language variety (H).

**Keywords:** Diglossia; Mambalan; Noblemen; Sasak Language.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a big country consisting of many tribes with different local languages. The national language as a legal and formal language is Bahasa Indonesia. The multi-local languages not only make Indonesian people bilingual in their daily lives but also make Indonesia known to other countries as a rich country.

UNESCO defines Indonesia as the country with the fourth largest population in the world, with a population of around 260 million spread across 34 provinces. This is the reason for Indonesia's diversity, from ethnicity and culture to language. Based on the research results, 718 regional languages have been identified in Indonesia. This proves Indonesia's linguistic diversity is rich (Setiawati, 2019).

Language as a national identity may not be separated from sociocultural studies. There are many societies and languages in line with a country's development. Without any language, people may not interact and send

messages to anybody. This belief assumes that language in Indonesia has a very urgent and potential function. Based on the number of languages used in society, some language communities use one language or more or even more than two languages.

A language community that uses one language is called monolingual, and a language community that uses two languages or more is called bilingualism. Because of language variations or varieties, Indonesian speakers must be able to sort out which language to use when speaking. This language diversity arises because of the shift in the language code used by each member of society, which in this case is called diglossia.

Diglossia refers to a situation in which two distinct varieties of a language are used by a speech community in different social contexts, often with one variety being considered more "prestigious" or formal and the other being used in informal, everyday situations.

Arokay et al. (2014) point out that diglossia is a functionally differentiated coexistence of formal and informal language varieties, the variety which is acquired by formal education and used for written literature and formal spoken purposes have the status of a high variety, in contradistinction for ordinary conversation the low variety is used. It means that the function of selected variety of language can be used in informal and formal spoken or it can be used for ordinary conversation.

Suandi (2014) also presents another opinion about diglossia. Diglossia is a situation in which stable language variations are used because language provides freedom in carrying out its function.

Diglossia is a language situation with a division in function in the speech community. In this situation, there is a difference between formal and informal variation. Examples of diglossia can be seen, such as in Indonesia, where there are differences between written and spoken language.

Ferguson first introduced the term diglossia (Moon & Selviani, 2019) by discussing that there is a higher language variety, which we can symbolize with H (High), and vice versa, a lower language variety symbolized by L (Low). This happens because of clarifications such as paying attention to topics, functions, prestige, literary heritage, acquisition, standardization, stability, grammar, lexicon, and phonology.

Ferguson in Chaer (2018, p. 84) uses the term diglossia to describe a society in which two variations of one language live side by side, each with a specific role. The term diglossia does not only refer to two languages used in the same situation; it can also refer to the use of the same language but with different varieties.

Further, Ferguson in Chaer (2018) stated that diglossia was that the two varieties are in a diglossic relationship with each other and are closely related. Therefore, diglossia is not bilingualism. In his defining examples, he points out that the "High" variety is always an acquired form, and that some educated native speakers might even deny that they use the "Low" variety. An important component of diglossia is that the speakers have the personal perception that the "High" variety is the "real" language and the "Low" variety is "incorrect usage." In Arabic, people talk about the "High" variety as being "pure" Arabic and the dialects as being corrupt forms.

The use of the term diglossia was expanded by Fishman (1967) as he hypothesized that diglossia could occur in any situation where two language varieties, even unrelated ones, are used in functionally distinct ways.

In 1967, Fishman presented a modification of Ferguson's (1959) original concept and rather strict definition of diglossia. He proposed an expansion of Ferguson's diglossia in two respects. A diglossic speech community is not characterized by the use of two language varieties only. There may be more than two language varieties used within a linguistic community. According to Fishman (1967), diglossia refers to all kinds of language varieties that show functional distribution in a speech community. Diglossia, as a consequence, describes a number of sociolinguistic situations, from stylistic differences within one language or the use of separate dialects (Ferguson's 'standard-with-dialects' distinction) to the use of (related or unrelated) separate languages.

Fishman notes that diglossia serves more as a social role and argues that any speech community that uses two different varieties or two different languages for different social functions can be classified as diglossia.

As cited in Simanjuntak et al. (2019), Fishman stated that diglossia applies not only to differences between H and L varieties of one language but also to languages that are divided into unrelated languages or two different languages. This phenomenon is really close to our daily lives, but it happens unconsciously, and sometimes, we do

not realise this kind of phenomenon.

According to Khukhuni, diglossia is the occurrence of a situation when there are two varieties of the same language by the same speaker (Khukhuni et al., 2020). Diglossia is a language community that has one language with two varieties (high and low) that have their respective roles. The use of two or more languages is a common phenomenon in Indonesia, especially in areas that still maintain their local languages, such as the Mambalan village in the eastern part of Indonesia, precisely in the Gunung Sari area, West Lombok, and West Nusa Tenggara. Compared to the other villages at Gunung Sari, Mambalan is a small, unique, and interesting village. The unique thing of Mambalan village can be seen in the population who inhabit that village, which consists of members of the aristocracy and the ordinary people.

Although they live with their different statuses, they can live side by side in peace. The togetherness of the aristocracy of Mambalan village and the ordinary class can be seen in their daily lives. They help each other in every activity, especially in traditional events and religious ceremonies.

In communicating to each other in their daily life, Mambalan society use local language called Sasak language which is divided into two levels. They are high Sasak language (Sasak alus) and low Sasak language (Sasak jamak). Besides speaking the Sasak language, Mambalan society also uses Bahasa Indonesia, especially when communicating with strangers and in formal situations. This condition proves that the Mambalan Village is a diglossic speech community. Even though there are differences in the use of means of communication, these differences illustrate the uniqueness and diversity or plurality of language systems as an ancestral heritage that is still preserved, even as the first language or mother tongue in daily communication. In accordance with this, the writer is interested in researching the diglossia phenomenon among the members of the aristocracy of Mambalan village.

Studies on diglossia have been conducted by many researchers, such as a study conducted by Amin and Badreddine (2020) found that High variations in diglossia situation are used in official situations, and low variations are used in non-official situations Official situations such as in education, government, while non-official situations are used in the family, friendship, and others.

Pertiwi et al. (2017) found that there were 3 respondents who used different varieties of Javanese depending on the purpose of communication. When the purpose of communication was to report something important, they might use the H variety but when the purpose was to tell a joke among close friends, the L variety might be chosen. For the topic of discourse and the medium of communication, there was 1 respondent thought that it also affected their choice of language variation in communication.

The other studies that have successfully been published commonly focus on diglossia in Indonesian contexts, such as by Nisa et al. (2022), who scrutinize diglossia in social media. Sugita et al. (2015) reveal the use of diglossia by teachers in teaching in a classroom context. Andini and Simatupang (2020) as well as Azizah and Sudiran (2015) took a novel to scrutinize the use of diglossia by a character in the novel, while Nurhayati (2019) and Candra (2014) use a film for the same purpose). Shofyah (2021) took the Sumenep people as an object to reveal the use of diglossia, while Yance (2017) analyzed the use of diglossia in the Bonai ethnic in Riau. In international contexts, studies on diglossia are done by Hossain and Fatema (2022) in Bangladesh to reveal diglossia as a symbolic capital in the country.

Almost all the studies that have been conducted focus solely on the phenomenon of diglossia in general communities without addressing other aspects of the diglossic situation. Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in examining the linguistic situation and diglossic situation within the noble community. This is the first study conducted on the noble community in Mambalan village, located in the Lombok region of West Nusa Tenggara.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a qualitative method with the data source taken from Mambalan society. The selection of Mambalan society as the location of the research is based on the determination that Mambalan is inhabited not only by ordinary people but also by the members of the aristocracy. This condition, of course, will be affected by

language variation, especially diglossia occurrences. The samples of this research consist of 100 Respondents and are taken from the member of the aristocracy of Mambalan village and domiciled in Mambalan village by the age ranged from 25 to 60 Years old.

In collecting the data, the writer uses tools such as questionnaires, recording, and taking notes. The primary data of this research is mostly words and sentences taken from informants with aristocratic status and domicile in Mambalan village. Communication in various social domains such as family, religion, trading, etc., occurs naturally.

The steps taken in analyzing the data are as follows.

- a. Collecting data obtained from observations, interviews, recordings and documentation, then analyzing the language conditions of the speech community.
- b. Analyzing the diglossia situation in the speech domains of the speech community. Then, the analyzed data is classified based on the data collection table.
- c. Drawing conclusions from the data that has been analyzed.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of interviews with Sasak speakers in this case the nobility of Mambalan village, Gunung Sari sub-district, West Lombok, it can be categorized that the nobility of Mambalan village can choose and determine the language used in certain situations and conditions that can create a diglossic language situation. This diglossic situation can be seen in various utterances in various domains below.

#### 3.1. Conversation in Family Domain

##### Conversation 1

- Son : *Arak pelungguh nyerioang sepatu futsal tiang inaq?* (Don't you see my shoes mam)?  
Mother : *Kan leq rak sepatu taok side toloq?* (I think you put on them in the shelf)  
Son : *Ndek arak niki nike inaq.* (I can not find them Mam)  
Mother : *Coba kenaan ntan pete!* (Look for carefully, please)  
Son : *Sampun inaq, laguk ndek man bau kendaitan niki.* (I have looked for them but I can not find them)  
Mother : *Sang kek side lupak nyinggaang leq sai?* (May be you forget and lend them to someone)  
Son : *Nane coba tiang inget-inget malik inaq.* (let me try to remember it carefully)

The conversation above is a conversation between a mother (52 years old) and a son (23 years old). The conversation took place at home. In the conversation above, both of them used base Sasak alus. Based on observations when the son spoke to his mother, it can be seen that the child uses Sasak alus language by using the pronoun pelungguh (H) which means you, and this pronoun is commonly used by the nobility. Likewise, when the mother uses the word side which means you in the speech above, it is a form of base Sasak alus (H).

##### Conversation 2

- Father : *Sudah dijemur baju yang ibu cuci tadi pagi bu?* (Have you dried the clothes Mam)?  
Mother : *Sudah semua pak.* (Yes, already done).  
Father : *Ardi, sekolah nggak hari ini? Kalo masih sakit istirahat aja dulu!*  
(Will you go to school today Ardy? If you are still sick please have a rest!)  
Son : *Sekolah pak. Ini masih nunggu Dika jemput.* (Yes dad. I am waiting for Dika pick me up).

The conversation above is between a father (43 years old) who works as a teacher, a mother (40 years old) who works as a nurse, and a son (20 years old). The couple is the nobility of Mambalan village and has a higher education background. They were talking to their son. Based on the results of observations, in daily communication,

this member of the aristocracy family uses Indonesian. Indonesian, which is said to be a high language variety (H) in the family domain, is used by highly educated families; they prefer Indonesian for daily communication. The variables that need to be considered in the selection of languages used by members of the aristocracy in the family domain in this study are age, education, and occupation.

### 3.2. Friendship Domain

The language used by the nobility of Mambalan village when speaking with close friends of the same tribe is more dominant in using base Sasak biase.

Diglossia can be seen in the speech between the two friends below.

#### Conversation 3

- Yadi : *Mbe taok dik beli manuk Mad?* (Where did you buy the chickens Mad)  
Ahmad : *Leq peken* (In the market)  
Yadi : *Pire aji sekek?* (How much each?)  
Ahmad : *Satus due pulu. Mele dik?* (One thousand and twenty. Mele dik?)  
Yadi : *Mele sih, laguk ndekman arak kepeng.* (Of course, but I don't have money).

The conversation above is a conversation between two people of noble descent, namely (Yadi 27 years old) and Ahmad (27 years old). Both are neighbors and peers. Based on the results of the speech event, it is seen that Yadi and Ahmad, descendants of Mambalan village's nobility, used base Sasak jamak. This condition can be seen from the pronoun *dik* which means you. The speech above shows that Diglossia occurred in the neighbors or friendship domains, the nobility uses base Sasak jamak or low language variety (L) in order to establish the familiarity and a sense of kinship between them.

### 3.3. Selling and Buying Domain

Based on the results of interviews with speakers of refined Sasak who are sellers and buyers in the market, it can be seen that the language choices of Sasak speakers in the domain of transactions vary. If the trader is someone who is not known to the buyer, the buyer used Sasak alus (H) and Indonesian. The language used with buyers who were known was Sasak jamak (L). This diglossic situation can be seen in the speech below:

#### Conversation 4

- Seller : *Ayo bu beli dagingnya!* (please buy the meat!)  
Buyer : *Mpak ape ne?* (What kind of meat is this?)  
Seller : *daging sapi, gak ada campuran.* (This is real beef, no mixture).  
Buyer : *Pire sekilo?* (How much for one kilogram?)  
Seller : *Satus telong dase doang.* (One thousand and three hundreds).  
Buyer : *Amun sak becampur pire?* (What about the mixed beef?)  
Seller : *Satus sepulu.* (one thousand and ten)  
Buyer : *Beli sekilo ya tapi yang dicampur.* (I buy one kilogram of the mixed beef)  
Seller : *Mok.* (Okay).

In the above speech, it can be seen that the seller is a man of noble descent from Mambalan village (52 years old) and the buyer is an ordinary person (43 years old). The language used in the speech above is predominantly Base Sasak jamak and Indonesian. Traders who are of noble descent use the Sasak jamak language and a mixture of Indonesian. The use of Indonesian and Sasak jamak languages can be a seller's strategy to attract buyers. That way, the seller and buyer have an emotional closeness. The variety used in this buying and selling transaction is a business variety and can be said to be semi-formal. Based on the data that has been obtained, the phenomenon of diglossia occurs in the speech above. Sasak jamak language functions as a low language (L) and is used in buying and selling transactions by the nobility in Mambalan village with the aim of attracting buyers and facilitating the

bargaining process in the buying and selling process. It can be said that Indonesian and plural Sasak languages are used as the language of buying and selling transactions in the market by the nobility of Mambalan village.

### 3.4. Religion Domain

At Friday prayers in Mambalan Village, the preacher who acts as the sermon giver usually used base Sasak alus and Indonesian. Based on the interview results, base Sasak alus is used in Friday prayer sermons with the aim of respecting the congregation who listen to the sermon while the use of Indonesian aims so the generation who listen to the sermon can understand the contents of the sermon better.

Furthermore, based on interviews with speakers of Sasak alus language, the use of Indonesian is a high variety (H) in Friday sermons, making it easier for all levels of society to understand. So, it can be said that the diglossia situation in the religion domain, namely sermons in the mosque are more dominant in using Base Sasak alus and Indonesian which functions as a formal situation and builds an official atmosphere.

#### Conversation 5

A : *Arak pak kades Li?* (Where is the head village Li)?

B : *Arak lek dalem, Arak ape jak? Penting gati ruen?* (He is inside, it looks so important)

A : *Endeng tandé tangan doang kadu urus sertifikat tanak ne.*

(Just want to ask signature for the land certificate)

The head office go out from his room

C : *Butuh saya? Ada yang bisa saya bantu?* (do you need me? What can I do for you?)

A : *Mau minta tanda tangan pak untuk sertifikat tanah pak.* (I want to ask signature for the land certificate sir)

C : *Tanah yang Dimana ni?* (Which land)?

A : *Yang di daerah buwuh itu pak.* (In Buwuh area sir)

In the above conversation, it can be seen that at first speaker A as a member of aristocracy was looking for the village head to ask for a signature related to the land certificate by using Sasak jamak language with speaker B who is a staff at the village office. Speakers A and B know each other or can be said to be friends (of the same tribe) with their age range not much different. Therefore, they use the Sasak jamak language to make the conversation more intimate and relaxed. Then, when the village head came out of his room, it was seen that speaker A was doing code switching because there were other participants. So, the diglossia situation is also determined by the interlocutor (participant). Indonesian is considered more prestigious, respectful and polite when used for people with higher positions (social status) and also depends heavily on the place, namely in the village office (government agency). Therefore, in the government domain, Indonesian functions as a high language (H) that builds a formal and official atmosphere.

This study differs from previous research, which only focused on the diglossic situations occurring in general communities. This research identifies language variations and the diglossic situation within the noble community of Mambalan village.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation of the result and discussion above, it can be concluded that the use of Sasak language among the nobility in the Mambalan village area, Gunung Sari sub-district, West Lombok, recognizes the level of language use, viewed from the background of the speakers such as age, education level, and situations when the Sasak language is spoken. In everyday life, they use two varieties of Sasak language: Sasak alus language and Sasak jamak language. In addition, in certain situations, they also use Indonesian, especially in formal situations. All of these language varieties are equally recognized, but their functions and areas of use are different, such as the areas of family, education, government, buying and selling, religion, and social circles. The use of more than two varieties of language influences the formation of a diglossic society that distinguishes one language as a High language and the other as a Low language. Both H and L languages have their own varieties or dialects, each of



which is also given the status of H variety and L variety, both for Sasak alus language, Sasak jamak language, and Indonesian.

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