

MULTILINGUALISM IN BUGIS LANGUAGE CONTEXT: A CASE STUDY ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING INTERACTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the intricate dynamics of multilingualism within the Bugis language context and its impact on English Language Teaching (ELT) at The Technical Implementation Unit of State Elementary School Unit 251 Pae-Pae. With a focus on the Bugis community in Indonesia, the research delves into the complexities of language interaction in daily life and the teaching process. The Bugis language, embedded in rich cultural heritage, coexists with Indonesian and English, presenting a unique multilingual tapestry. The study employs a qualitative case study approach, including in-depth interviews with an English teacher. Findings reveal variations in language use within the family, community, and classroom contexts. Challenges arise in understanding nuanced meanings between languages, particularly in higher grades. The English teacher supports a multilingualism approach in teaching, emphasizing its role in enhancing students' adaptability and cultural sensitivity. The study contributes valuable insights to the broader discourse on language education and multilingualism in a globalized world, affirming the significance of a multilingual pedagogical approach in preparing students for diverse communication scenarios.

Keywords: Communication and Interaction, English Language Teaching, Multi-Cultural Education,

INTRODUCTION

Multilingualism, the coexistence of multiple languages within a particular community or context, has emerged as a significant area of study in the field of linguistics and language education (Andini 2021; Herlina Kusuma Ningrat 2019). In this globalized era, where communication transcends borders and cultures, the exploration of multilingualism becomes imperative for understanding the intricate dynamics of language interaction (Botes, Dewaele, and Greiff 2020). One such context that warrants attention is the Bugis language environment, where the interplay of various languages shapes the landscape of English language teaching.

The Bugis community, primarily residing in the coastal regions of Indonesia, boasts a rich linguistic heritage with the Bugis language at its core (Saleh, Rahman, and Hasyim 2021). However, the contemporary linguistic scenario in Bugis communities is marked by a mosaic of languages coexisting and influencing one another (Andini 2021). English, as a global lingua

franca, plays a pivotal role in this multilingual tapestry, especially in educational settings (Köylü and Tracy-Ventura 2022).

This case study delves into the intricate dynamics of multilingualism within the Bugis language context, with a specific focus on its impact on English Language Teaching (ELT). Understanding how other languages interact with English in the Bugis linguistic milieu is crucial for educators, researchers, and policymakers seeking to enhance language education in this diverse and dynamic environment.

As globalization continues to connect societies and facilitate cross-cultural interactions, the Bugis language context provides a unique lens through which we can examine the multifaceted nature of multilingualism (Hasnawati, Abdul, and Darlina 2021). By unraveling the complexities of language interaction in the realm of ELT, this case study aims to contribute valuable insights to the broader discourse on language education and multilingualism in a globalized world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Multilingualism

Multilingualism, or the ability to use and comprehend more than one language, encompasses situations where individuals or communities possess proficiency in multiple languages. It extends beyond mere bilingualism, involving the capacity to communicate in three or more languages with varying degrees of fluency (Berthele 2021; Duff 2019; Stavans and Porat 2019). Multilingualism can manifest at both individual and societal levels. On an individual level, it may involve a person continuously acquiring proficiency in various languages throughout their life, while at the societal level, a community can be considered multilingual when its members collectively command more than one language (Gramling 2021; Schissel, Leung, and Chalhoub-Deville 2019).

In a multilingual context, languages often interact with each other, leading to phenomena such as word borrowing, the adoption of phrases, or the blending of elements from different languages. The proficiency of an individual in different languages can be context-dependent, varying based on the situation, whether formal or informal, professional or everyday life (Duff 2019; Gramling 2021). The importance of multilingualism becomes particularly evident in a globalized world, where cross-border interactions necessitate communication with diverse cultures and communities (Berthele 2021).

Furthermore, multilingualism is not solely about linguistic skills; it also involves an understanding and appreciation of the cultures associated with the languages spoken (Schissel et al. 2019). In the era of globalization, multilingualism is becoming increasingly normalized as individuals and societies recognize its value in shaping identity and enriching communication experiences in an interconnected world (Stavans and Porat 2019). Thus, multilingualism goes beyond language proficiency; it is a dynamic and culturally significant aspect of human communication that contributes to the diverse tapestry of our global society (Berthele 2021).

Bugis Language

The Bugis language is spoken by the Bugis community, an ethnic group residing in the coastal region of South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Its rich historical roots reflect the extensive development of the Bugis people in the area and their involvement in the Austronesian language family, specifically within the South Sulawesi language group. With a diverse phonological system, the Bugis language features a distinctive combination of consonants and vowels, while its intricate grammar encompasses rules related to word formation, sentence structure, and morphology (Andini 2021; Saleh et al. 2023; Sandi Untara and Sri Rahayu 2021).

The Bugis language is preserved through the traditional writing system known as Lontara script, which has become an inseparable part of Bugis culture and history (Sandi Untara and Sri Rahayu 2021). Utilized in various contexts, from literature to historical documents, the Lontara script plays a crucial role in the transmission of Bugis cultural heritage. Beyond being a means of communication, the Bugis language holds significance as a cornerstone of local wisdom and cultural identity. In the multilingual context of South Sulawesi, Bugis individuals often possess the ability to speak more than one language, including Bugis and Indonesian (Hasnawati et al. 2021; Saleh et al. 2023).

The importance of the Bugis language is evident in its pivotal role in strengthening the Bugis community's identity and preserving their cultural richness. Despite facing challenges posed by modernization and globalization, the Bugis language remains a vital element in safeguarding and passing down cultural heritage and traditional knowledge from one generation to the next (Andini 2021; Muhsyanur 2020). With its unique history and characteristics, the Bugis language stands as an inseparable aspect of the diverse life and cultural heritage of the Bugis community.

English Language Teaching

English Language Teaching (ELT) encompasses a comprehensive set of practices and processes dedicated to instructing individuals in the English language. This dynamic field integrates various language acquisition theories, including behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism, to inform teaching methodologies. Central to ELT is the development of structured curricula addressing language skills, grammar, vocabulary, and cultural nuances, tailored to the proficiency levels and needs of learners (Schissel et al. 2019; Tavares 2021).

In the realm of ELT, a diverse array of teaching methods and approaches is employed, ranging from traditional grammar-translation methods to more communicative and task-based strategies. The choice of method is often contextual, shaped by specific learning goals and the characteristics of the learners. An emphasis is placed on enhancing the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—through activities and exercises that foster proficiency in each domain (Gramling 2021; Stavans and Porat 2019; Tavares 2021).

Assessment and evaluation are integral components of ELT, with teachers utilizing various tools such as tests, quizzes, and projects to gauge students' language proficiency and monitor their progress. Additionally, the integration of technology, including language learning software and multimedia resources, has become a prominent feature in modern

ELT, offering interactive and engaging platforms for language practice (Iskandar et al. 2022; Lee 2021; Tavares 2021).

Cultural competence is another key aspect of ELT, aiming not only to develop language proficiency but also to instill an understanding of the cultural context of the English language. This cultural awareness contributes to effective communication and language use (Schwarzenthal et al. 2020). Furthermore, ELT recognizes the importance of continuous professional development for teachers, keeping them abreast of language acquisition research, educational technologies, and innovative teaching methods. As English continues to serve as a global medium of communication, ELT plays a pivotal role in facilitating cross-cultural interactions, supporting academic pursuits, and enhancing career opportunities for language learners on a global scale.

METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach (Hollstein 2015) through a case study to delve into the phenomenon of multilingualism in the Bugis language context, specifically within the framework of English Language Teaching in UPT SP SDN 25 Pae-Pae, Wasuponda. The primary focus of the study is to depict the interplay of languages occurring in the process of teaching English within the Bugis community. In-depth interviews conducted with English teacher, providing profound insights into the influence of multilingualism on the teaching process.

FINDINGS

After conducting interviews with the English teacher at SDN 251 Pae-Pae, the researcher observed variations in the language used by the teacher across different contexts, namely, at home, and in the community. The research findings indicate that in the home contexts, the teacher tends to use the Bugis language more frequently, while in the community setting, Indonesian is more predominant. NF as the English teacher of SDN 251 Pae-Pae stated that:

"Very different. In my family, we often communicate using the Bugis language, while in the community setting, we use Indonesian in our daily lives."

This reflects the differences in language use in the respondents' daily lives. Within the family scope, the Bugis language is frequently employed, reflecting traditions or customs within the family environment. Conversely, in the community, Indonesian is chosen for everyday interactions, possibly influenced by the need for communication in a broader social context. This provides insight into how respondents navigate two distinct languages, reflecting linguistic and cultural dynamics in Indonesian society.

The researcher then inquired about the level of comfort and frequency of using the English language. NF answered that:

"Yes, I feel very comfortable using the English language. I often use English in specific situations, such as when communicating with friends, students, and others who can understand or speak English."

The respondents expressed their comfort in using the English language. This statement reflects that English is a comfortable choice for communication among the respondents.

Furthermore, the respondents also explained that the use of English is not only limited to common situations but also frequently occurs in specific contexts, such as when talking to friends, students, and others who can understand or speak English.

However, it turns out that most of the students at The Technical Implementation Unit of State Elementary School Unit 251 Pae-Pae. come from the Wasuponda area itself, with other areas including Toraja. This presents a uniqueness and a challenge for the English teacher who is only proficient in the Bugis language. However, after further conversation with the respondents, the researcher found that the students' regional origin does not affect their understanding of the Bugis language. This is because many of their neighbors use the Bugis language, leading their families to also communicate in Bugis.

Next, the researcher asked how many languages are used in the classroom, and NF responded:

"I have several languages that I use, including English, Indonesian, and Bugis. I sometimes use Bugis during class hours, especially as an icebreaker, to create a more relaxed classroom atmosphere and entertain students while learning English."

From the respondent's answer above, it was found that the use of Bugis language in this context serves not only as a means of communication but also as a strategy to enhance social interaction and students' comfort in the English language learning process. This reflects a creative approach in using language as a tool to achieve communicative and educational goals.

The respondents also stated that their ability to understand and learn English is slightly influenced by multilingualism. For example, when speaking, they sometimes experience language confusion, wherein they mix words A and B in their expressions. Also, the respondent has encountered difficulties in understanding the meanings of words or phrases in English that have different meanings in their local language. This was expressed by NF:

"In the lower grades, like 1st and 2nd grade, I never experienced difficulties because I used words or phrases as simple as possible to be understood. However, in higher grades, like 4th and 5th grade, I have encountered situations where there is a difference in understanding phrases or words, for example, the word 'mengiris,' which in English is translated as 'slice,' as in the sentence 'My sister slices the apple = saudaraku mengiris buah apel.' It should be noted that the meanings of the words 'mengiris' and 'memotong' are different in English, but in the local language, especially among elementary school children, the meaning of the word 'mengiris' is considered the same as 'memotong.'"

Such understanding reflects the challenges that students may face in interpreting and transferring the meaning of words or phrases between the local language and English. These challenges become more complex, especially at higher levels of education, where students' ability to master the differences in meaning between languages becomes increasingly important in the context of English language learning.

The interview was then concluded with the respondent's support that English language teaching at The Technical Implementation Unit of State Elementary School Unit 251 Pae-Pae. could better leverage the students' multilingualism. NF stated:

"Yes, multilingualism is very important and beneficial for students, especially for teachers. Therefore, personally or with other fellow teachers, I make every effort to integrate multilingualism into teaching, so that students can become accustomed and not feel surprised or

shocked when communicating with others from different backgrounds. This approach is expected to broaden the students' overall communication scope."

The respondent believes that the use of more than one language (multilingualism) is a crucial key, not only for the development of students but also for teachers. By incorporating multilingualism into teaching, the respondent and fellow teachers strive to create an environment where students can become accustomed and not feel surprised or shocked when communicating with individuals from different language backgrounds. This approach is expected to enhance students' communication skills in interacting with people from diverse backgrounds, supporting their holistic growth.

DISCUSSION

In the interview results, the respondent conveyed information covering aspects of language use in daily life and its implications for the learning process, particularly in the context of teaching English at The Technical Implementation Unit of State Elementary School Unit 251 Pae-Pae.. The respondent explained that within their family environment, Bugis language is frequently used. This linguistic preference could be indicative of a deep-seated family tradition or a habitual mode of communication within the familial setting (Wang, McConachy, and Ushioda 2021). The choice to consistently employ the local language within the family suggests a cultural or heritage-based approach to interpersonal communication (Andini 2021). The family, as the primary social unit, plays a crucial role in shaping linguistic preferences, and the routine use of the local language underscores its significance within the familial dynamics (Lee 2021; Saleh et al. 2021). This linguistic context within the family environment not only reflects cultural continuity but also contributes to the development of a shared linguistic identity among family members.

In community and classroom interactions, both Indonesian and English serve as the predominant languages, with an increased emphasis on English usage in higher grades, notably 4th and 5th grades. Challenges arise at these educational levels, as students grapple with understanding words or phrases carrying nuanced connotations in English compared to the local language. The linguistic dynamics observed align with existing research (Berthele 2021; Chen et al. 2020; Schissel et al. 2019), emphasizing the prevalence of Indonesian and English in these contexts. However, difficulties in connotation comprehension align with findings by Forbes et al. (2021), underscoring the necessity for nuanced vocabulary understanding, particularly in educational settings where language proficiency plays a crucial role. Ideally, the teachers could facilitate the students to take advantage of multilingualism experience at school (Rustan et al. 2023).

Furthermore, the interviewee advocates for the adoption of a multilingualism approach in teaching English at The Technical Implementation Unit of State Elementary School Unit 251 Pae-Pae.. They posit that employing more than one language in instruction can acclimate students, mitigating surprise when communicating with individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds. This methodology not only facilitates linguistic adaptability but also aligns with scholarly research (Baso and Agussalim 2021). Exposure to varied languages in the educational setting not only augments language proficiency but also fosters increased cultural sensitivity and open-mindedness (Chen et al. 2020; Sabirova and

Khanipova 2019; Tompo, Sahraini, and Magfirah Thayyib 2023). Additionally, students gain practical language skills for real-world, cross-cultural interactions, cultivating comfort and confidence in diverse linguistic contexts (Iskandar et al. 2022). Ultimately, this pedagogical approach resonates with the overarching objective of equipping students with the necessary skills and adaptability for our increasingly interconnected and multicultural global society.

This support provides insight into ways to enhance teaching effectiveness and prepare students for broader and more heterogeneous communication situations. In conclusion, the interview results reflect the complexity of language use in daily life and provide ideas for improving English teaching at the school through a multilingualism approach.

CONCLUSION

This research unveils the complexity of language use in daily life and instruction at The Technical Implementation Unit of State Elementary School Unit 251 Pae-Pae.. The respondents reflect the dynamics of Bugis language usage within the family, transitioning to Indonesian and English in community interactions and the classroom, with challenges in understanding the meanings of words or phrases at higher educational levels. The respondent's support for the multilingualism approach in teaching English highlights its benefits in shaping language adaptability skills and cultural sensitivity in students. Relevant research provides a theoretical foundation for this strategy, reinforcing the urgency of using more than one language in educational settings. Thus, the conclusion of this research affirms that the multilingualism approach can enrich students' learning experiences, preparing them to communicate in an increasingly interconnected and multicultural global society.

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