Social Background Effect on The Choice of The Students Language

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the influence of social background on the choice of language varieties used in interactions in the STT Wastukancana Purwakarta campus environment.. This social background in question includes the following factors: Like the origin of the region, the level of education of parents, the work of parents, and the social environment. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with survey methods and interviews with 50 STT Wastukancana Purwakarta student respondents from various study programs. Data were analyzed through reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions based on sociolinguistic theory. The results of this study indicate that differences in social background greatly affect the variety of languages used by students, both in the context/formal and non-formal situations. Students from the urban environment and highly educated tend to use standard Indonesian in formal situations, while students from rural environments more often use mixed languages, namely regional languages and non-standard Indonesian language. These findings confirm that the variety of languages among students is not only determined by the situation of communication, but also by social factors that form language habits. This research is expected to contribute to the development of sociolinguistic studies that highlight the dynamics of language among tertiary students, especially in the context of higher education in the region.

Keywords: language variety; social background; students

INTRODUCTION

Language is the main means of communicating that not only serves to convey messages, but also reflects the identity, background, and culture of the speakers. In sociolinguistic studies, the selection of languages is not only influenced by the communication situation, but also by social factors inherent in speakers. One factor that plays an important role is the social background, which includes the origin of the region, the level of education and work of parents, and the environment of residence. Students as social groups have unique characteristics because they are in the phase of academic development while forming self-identity. In the college environment, especially at STT Wastukancana Purwakarta, students come from various regions and social backgrounds. This diversity can potentially create variations in the use of language,

both in formal/official contexts such as academic activities, or in non-formal contexts such as daily interaction.

Variety of languages is a variety of languages whose use is adjusted to the situation, place, purpose, and who is the interlocutor (Chaer, Sociolinguistics: initial introduction). Whereas according to (R. &. Wardhaugh) and (Holmes), Various languages are variations of language forms that arise due to differences in speakers (Dialects, Sociolects), situations (formal -non-formal), topics, and medium (oral -writing, face -to -digital). In the Indonesian context, variations are also seen in the use of standard/non-standard Indonesian language, regional languages (for example, Sundanese in Purwakarta Regency), as well as absorption/technical terms in the campus environment (Chaer & Agustina, 2010). The concept of Style-Shifting explains the transfer of speech styles of a speaker between the Situration and Audience (Labov). The selection of different languages can reflect adaptation to the environment, forms of group solidarity, and efforts to maintain cultural identity. For example, students who come from urban areas tend to be more accustomed to using a variety of standard Indonesian languages in formal interactions, while students from rural areas more often use regional or non-standard Indonesian languages or mixed languages (at the STT Wastukancana Purwakarta campus, the majority of Sundanese students).

According to (Dian) the sustainability of the Sundanese language among native speakers students is strongly influenced by family environmental factors, communication habits, and cultural identity inherent in them. The native Sundanese speakers are still trying to maintain their local language, mainly because of the encouragement of family environmental factors, communication habits, and inherent cultural identity. The findings are relevant to this research because they show that social background-such as family origins, language habits at home, and cultural views-significantly in student language choices. In the context of STT Wastukancana Purwakarta students, similar tendencies can be observed, namely the use of Sundanese as a form of cultural identity and means of building social solidarity, while Indonesian is more dominant in the academic and formal domain. Thus, the results of Puspitasari and Ayu's research are an important foothold in understanding how social backgrounds also influence the choice of students' languages in Purwakarta, which is in a region with a strong Sundanese cultural base.

Social factors such as age, gender, occupation, education level, and the environment of residence affect the way a person chooses and uses language (R. Wardhaaugh). This phenomenon is interesting to examine because it provides an overview of the dynamics of language in multicultural academic communities. The term social background here refers to a set of factors: class/social status, education (speakers & parents), career jobs/aspirations, regional origin/ethnicity, gender, social network, and media exposure. Sociolinguistic literature shows these factors associated with a choice of language (Eckert). Based on this background, this study aims to examine the extent to which social backgrounds affect the choice of the language of STT Wastukancana Purwakarta students, as well as identify the most dominant social factors in shaping the pattern of use of their language. Differences in the social background of the speaker will be reflected in the selection of the form of language used, both in formal and informal conversations (J. A. Fishman). The results of this study are expected to contribute to sociolinguistic studies, especially those related to the relationship between social factors and language variations in the higher education environment, and the development of sociolinguistic studies that highlight the dynamics of language among higher education students.

Based on the background of the problem that has been described, the problem of this research is formulated as follows: What is the form of a variety of languages used by STT

Wastukancana Purwakarta students in a formal and non-formal context? What social background factors affect the choice of students' languages? Which social background factor is the most dominant in determining the choice of students' languages? This study aims to: Describe the choices of the variety of languages used by STT Wastukancana Purwakarta students in various communication situations. Analyzing the effect of social background on the choice of students' languages. Identify the most influential social background factors in forming patterns of student language use. Some of the benefits of this research are the theoretical benefits of contributing to the development of sociolinguistic studies, especially regarding the effect of social background on language variations. Adding relevant academic references to similar research in the field of language and social. Practical benefits of providing insight for lecturers and campuses regarding student language diversity so that they can be used to support effective academic communication. Become a reference for students in understanding the importance of selecting various languages according to the social context. It is a material consideration in language development activities in the college environment.

Several studies on the choice of students' languages have been widely carried out by previous researchers, both at the national and local levels. This shows that the phenomenon of language variations among students is an important issue to be examined, considering that students are in a strategic position as agents of change, as well as the preservation of language culture. The following are some previous studies related to the study of the influence of social background on the choice of students' languages , including research from Wulandari showing that the intensity of the use of the Sundanese language among PBSI students is influenced by environmental factors, daily habits, as well as a strong tendency for cultural identity (Wulandari). Other similar research is (Fitriyah) examining students from West Java who study in Surabaya and find that they still maintain Sundanese in non-formal interactions with fellow students of ethnic fields, but switch to using Indonesian when communicating with different groups of backgrounds. Both research focuses on the Defense and Use of Regional Languages (Sundanese) by students as daily communication languages , both on campus and off campus. This research focuses on the discussion of how the influence of the language selection students use on the STT Wastukancana Purwakarta campus.

Of the three previous studies, it can be understood that social backgrounds such as the origin of the family, the environment of residence, communication habits, and cultural identity have a significant influence on the choices of student languages. Therefore, research on STT Wastukcana Purwakarta students is important to do, considering that the Purwakarta region is an area with a strong Sundanese cultural basis, thus allowing special dynamics in the use of various languages in the academic and non-academic environment. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the choice of students' languages is influenced by social background, communication situation, and cultural identity. However, research that specifically examines STT Wastukancana Purwakarta students is still not found. Therefore, this study is expected to fill the emptiness while providing an overview of how the social background of students affects the choice of languages in the academic and non-academic context, especially in Purwakarta City.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. The reason why the qualitative approach was chosen because the purpose of this study was to understand in depth how the social background of students influenced the choice of languages in the context of academic and non-academic communication.

The study was conducted at the Campus of the Wastukancana Purwakarta College of Technology. The research subjects are several representatives of students who are active in various study programs, semesters, and regional backgrounds. The selection of subjects is carried out through purposive sampling by considering the diversity of regional origin, mother tongue, and social factors such as parental work, family education level, and the environment of residence.

Research Variables (a) Independent variables (independent variables): Student social background (regional origin, mother tongue, parental work, parental education level, social environment, and daily relationships) and (b) Dependent Variable (Dependent Variable): Choice of Student Language Variety (Standard Indonesian, Non-Baku Indonesian Language, Sundanese Language Dialek Purwakarta, Sundanese Language Variety of Loma/Smooth, Mix Indonesian - Munda Code).

Data obtained through several techniques, namely: (1) Questionnaire - used to identify the social background of students and the tendency of the variety of languages used in various situations, (2) In-depth interviews - conducted with several respondents selected to explore the reasons behind the selection of languages, (3) Participatory Observation - Observing the conversation of students in class, organization, and the informal campus environment, and (4) 4. Documentation - Collecting data in the form of recording conversations or notes of student interaction as supporting data.

The analysis is carried out with the following steps: (1) Reduction of data - selecting and grouping data based on the category of social background and the variety of languages that emerge, (2) Data presentation - presents results in the form of frequency tables, diagrams, and narrative descriptions, (3) Withdrawal of conclusions - comparing empirical findings with sociolinguistic theory (Chaer, Wardhaugh, Holmes, Fishman) to see the social background relationship with the choice of student languages.

To ensure the validity of the data, the triangulation technique is used and the method. Data from the questionnaire will be compared with the results of interviews and observations, so that a more valid picture is obtained regarding the phenomenon under study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Language is not just a communication tool, but also a reflection of the user's social and cultural identity. In the context of student life, the choice of various languages used daily is inseparable from the influence of various social factors, such as family, social environment, economic background, to academic experience. This phenomenon shows that language is always dynamic and is adjusted according to the social conditions that surround the speaker. STT Wastukancana Purwakarta students present from various social backgrounds. Differences in regional origin, the level of parental education, and variations in socio-economic status create heterogeneous communication patterns in the campus environment. In formal situations, they are required to use standard Indonesian in accordance with academic demands, whereas in non-formal situations, the language used is more fluid, with the tendency of the emergence of slang, a mixture of Indonesian with regional languages, or even shifts between languages in one conversation. Code-switching phenomena (code-switching) and code mixing (code-mixing) often appear as a communication strategy to adjust to the other person and certain situations. This shows that social background not only forms language habits but also directs students in making linguistic decisions in accordance with communication needs.

Thus, the discussion of data analysis in this study was directed to examine how the social background of STT Wastukcana Purwakarta students played a role in determining the choice of

their variety of languages. Understanding of this phenomenon is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between social variations and language practices, as well as enrich the study of sociolinguistics in the tertiary environment. The following data that the author successfully collected in the field:

1. Form of data

a. In-depth interviews → with students from various social backgrounds (economics, parental education, mother tongue, regional origin)

b. Observation → How students communicate in class, canteen, organization, and social media

c. Documentation → Conversation records, discussion transcripts, digital uploads.

2. Qualitative Analysis Techniques

Using thematic analysis (thematic analysis) or Miles & Huberman (data reduction, data display, drawing conclusions).

Steps:

1. Data reduction → grouping quotations or observations according to the category of social background

2. Data Display → Arranging in a narrative table, for example:

    a. Middle to upper economic students → tend to use standard Indonesian in presentations, but relaxed in informal conversations.

    b. Migrant students → more often use local languages to maintain group identity.

    c. Active Students of Organizations → accustomed to switching between standard and non-standard languages

3. Withdrawal of conclusions → see the pattern of linkages between social background and a variety of languages.

3. Examples of findings (narrative)

    a. Family economy → students from middle to upper families tend to be more confident using standard Indonesian, especially in formal situations

    b. Parental Education → Children from highly educated parents more often use formal language in academic discussions

    c. Mother/Regional Language → Sundanese students use Sundanese outside the classroom to strengthen social ties, but turn to Indonesian when talking to non-Sundanese students

d. Friendship Environment → Student groups, the majority of which use slang more often, use code mix (Indonesian + Regional Language + Foreign Terms)

e. Media Exposure → Students who are active on social media use more NonBaku language and popular terms (slang)

f. Cultural Identity → Some students are proud to display regional identity through language, so as to maintain local dialects even in the academic room.

4. Conclusion Qualitative Analysis

The choice of STT Wastukancana Purwakarta student' language variety is significantly influenced by their social background. Parental education factors and economic status encourage tendencies in formal languages, while maternal language factors, friendship environment, and exposure to media are stronger in encouraging the use of non-formal variations, regional languages, or code mixing. Thus, language functions not only as a communication tool, but also as a representation of students' social and cultural identity. In general, code-switching (code-switching) and code mixing (code-mixing) are the most frequent phenomena. For example, a student speaks with a lecturer using standard Indonesian, but when talking to friends, directly uses Sundanese or slang. This shows that STT Wastukcana Purwakarta students have adaptive abilities in language, which enable them to adjust to a variety of languages in accordance with the social context they face.

Table 1: Language use based on social background

Social Background Category	Quote of Interview/Observation	Interpretation
Family economy	In the presentation in class, I try to use standard Indonesian, because it looks more professional. But if you hang out, then just go back to the slang and the language of it. " (Student A, from the upper-middle family)	Students from middle -to high-income families are more flexible, tend to maintain authority with standard language in official forums, but are relaxed in a non-formal situation
Parental education	My parents are teachers, so from childhood I was accustomed to talking politely and standard. So if my group discussion automatically uses more formal Indonesian." (Student b)	Parental education affects language awareness; students with highly educated parents tend to be more consistent.

Based on the results of the analysis of research data on the effect of social background on the choice of STT Wastukancana Purwakarta Student Language, it was obtained that social factors have a significant role in determining the variations of the language used by students in various communication contexts. First, the family background made a strong contribution to student language patterns. Students who come from families with higher education backgrounds tend to use standard Indonesian language more often, especially in formal situations such as class discussions, presentations, seminars, and scientific writing. Conversely, students from

families with secondary or low education backgrounds are more dominant in using a variety of non-standard languages and mixed with regional languages (Sundanese) in daily communication. This is in line with the view (J. A. Fishman) that the family environment becomes the initial domain and is very instrumental in the formation of individual language behavior.

The second is that socio-economic status also affects the tendency to choose a variety of languages. Students with higher economic status tend to be more confident using a variety of standard Indonesian languages because it has broader access to the source of reading, the media, and habituation in the family. Conversely, students with the middle to lower economic status use a greater variety of non-standard languages that are practical, fast, and efficient in social interaction. And finally, academic factors play an important role in shaping student awareness of language norms. The lecture process, scientific assignments, and interactions with lecturers encourage students to master the variety of standard languages. However, the results of the analysis showed that there were quite high code-switching (code switching), where students often changed between standard languages, slang, and regional languages according to communication needs.

This phenomenon reflects the dynamics of sociolinguistics as stated by (R. Wardhaugh, language choices are the result of social negotiations that depend on situations, interlocutors, and communication goals. In general, the results of the analysis confirm that the choice of students' languages is not permanent, but rather situational. Students choose a variety of languages according to the context, interlocutors, and social background that shapes their identity. Social diversity in the campus environment makes language variations more dynamic, while reflecting the ability to adapt students to managing communication.

Thus, it can be concluded that the social background has a real influence on the choice of various languages of STT Wastukancana Purwakarta students. Students do not use a form of language permanently, but rather do variations that are influenced by family, environment, socio-economic status, and academic factors. This phenomenon shows that social diversity among students creates dynamic variations of language, while at the same time showing the adaptive ability of students in adjusting to the variety of languages in the context of communication.

In the end, this research shows that STT Wastukancana Purwakarta students use several different languages in their daily communication activities. In formal academic situations, students tend to use standard Indonesian because it is considered more polite, clear and in accordance with academic norms. Meanwhile, in informal situations, students more often use non-standard Indonesian and regional languages (Sundanese). Apart from that, the use of code mixing and code switching was found, especially between Indonesian, Sundanese and foreign terms. This use occurs spontaneously and adapts to the interlocutor and the communication situation. The main factors that influence language choice are the communication context (formal or informal), the interlocutor, cultural background, and communication goals. STT Wastukancana students consciously adjust the language used so that the message can be well received. So we can see that the impact of choosing the right language variety has a positive impact on communication effectiveness. The use of standard language increases clarity and professionalism in academic activities, while the use of non-standard language and regional languages creates a more intimate atmosphere and strengthens social relations between students.

The findings in this research that differentiate it from other previous studies are that this research shows that STT Wastukancana Purwakarta students have adaptive abilities in choosing language varieties according to communication situations. The choice of various languages not

only influences the fluency of communication, but also plays a role in building social relations in the campus environment, especially in the STT Wastukancana Purwakarta campus environment.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that the social background of students had an important role in determining the variety of languages chosen when interacting on campus and outside the classroom. The origin of the region and the first language become the dominant factor. Students from the Sundanese region tend to maintain Sundanese in non-formal conversations, while students from outside the region use more Indonesian as the main means of communication

The condition of the education and work of parents also forms a tendency to speak. Students with highly educated family backgrounds are more accustomed to using standard Indonesian, while those who come from families with lower secondary education levels are more flexible in using non-standard Indonesian or mixed with regional languages.

The social environment on campus also affects the choice of language. In the context of lectures and official activities, Indonesian raw variety dominates. However, in daily conversations between peers, the Sundanese language variety of Loma and Mixed Sundanese Code-Indonesia is more often used as a symbol of intimacy.

In general, students use language as a means of building social identity and solidarity. Sundanese is chosen to show cultural closeness, while Indonesian is used as a cross-regional liaison and in formal situations. Thus, it can be concluded that the choice of the language of STT Wastukancana Purwakarta students is influenced by a combination of social, cultural, and situational factors. This finding confirms that language not only functions as a communication tool but also as a representation of identity and social dynamics in campus life.

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