

Exploring Language Dynamics: a Study of Students' Utilization Patterns of Local Languages within Santo Thomas Catholic University's Campus Environment

Karisma Erikson Tarigan¹, Mikael Sinaga²

^{1,2}Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Katolik Santo Thomas

e-mail: sinagamichael37@gmail.com

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis pola penggunaan dan persepsi penggunaan bahasa daerah di kalangan mahasiswa Universitas Katolik Santo Thomas, mengevaluasi dampaknya terhadap interaksi sosial, komunikasi, dan identitas budaya. Berdasarkan pemahaman bahasa lokal sebagai ekspresi identitas budaya yang kuat, penelitian ini menggali bagaimana siswa membangun rasa memiliki dan membangun hubungan dengan warisan budaya mereka melalui penggunaan bahasa. Berdasarkan teori multibahasa dan identitas budaya, penelitian ini menganalisis kekuatan transformatif bahasa lokal dalam membangun empati dan pemahaman antar budaya di antara sesama. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi penelitian deskriptif, yang menggunakan alat pengumpulan data kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Kuesioner digunakan untuk memperoleh data kuantitatif mengenai tren penggunaan bahasa, sementara wawancara mendalam memberikan perspektif kualitatif mengenai motivasi dan pengalaman siswa. Populasi penelitian mencakup siswa dari berbagai spesialisasi akademik, memastikan sampel yang representatif melalui stratified random sampling. Temuan menunjukkan gambaran beragam penggunaan bahasa lokal di kampus, dengan variasi frekuensi dan sikap antar mahasiswa. Meskipun banyak siswa melaporkan terbatasnya penggunaan bahasa ibu dalam situasi akademis formal, seperti presentasi di kelas, mereka mengekspresikan rasa keterhubungan budaya melalui kontak sehari-hari yang santai. Selain itu, pendapat mengenai pengaruh bahasa daerah terhadap interaksi sosial dan pemahaman akademik berbeda-beda di antara para responden, yang menunjukkan adanya interaksi yang kompleks antara faktor-faktor linguistik, budaya, dan kontekstual. Studi ini menggarisbawahi perlunya pemahaman yang lebih mendalam mengenai dinamika bahasa dalam konteks pendidikan tinggi, memberikan wawasan untuk meningkatkan kebijakan dan kegiatan inklusif. Dengan menghormati dan mempromosikan keragaman bahasa siswa, institusi dapat membangun lingkungan belajar yang lebih inklusif dan beragam budaya. Studi lebih lanjut didorong untuk mengeksplorasi proses mendasar yang menentukan pilihan bahasa dan konsekuensinya terhadap komunikasi dan interaksi sosial di kampus.

Kata kunci : *Bahasa Daerah, Identitas Budaya, Interaksi Sosial*

Abstract

This research analyses the usage patterns and perceptions about local language utilization among students at Santo Thomas Catholic University, evaluating its consequences for social interaction, communication, and cultural identity. Grounded in the understanding of local languages as potent expressions of cultural identity, the study digs into how students establish their feeling of belonging and build links with their cultural heritage through language use. Drawing on theories of multilingualism and cultural identity, the research analyses the transformative power of local languages in building empathy and intercultural understanding among peers. The study utilises a descriptive research methodology, employing both quantitative and qualitative data gathering devices. Questionnaires are deployed to acquire quantitative data on language usage trends, while in-depth interviews provide a qualitative perspective on students' motivations and experiences. The research population covers students from multiple academic specialties, assuring a representative sample through stratified random sampling. Findings demonstrate a diverse picture of local language use on campus, with variations in frequency and attitudes across students. While many students report limited usage of native languages in formal academic situations, such as classroom presentations, they express a sense of cultural connection through casual everyday contacts. Moreover, opinions of the influence of local languages on social interactions and academic comprehension vary among respondents, indicating the complex interplay of linguistic, cultural, and contextual factors. The study underlines the need for a deeper understanding of language dynamics in higher education contexts, delivering insights to enhance inclusive policies and activities. By respecting and promoting students' linguistic variety, institutions may build a more inclusive and culturally diverse learning environment. Further study is encouraged to explore the underlying processes determining language choices and their consequences for communication and social interaction on campus.

Keywords : *Local Languages, Cultural Identity, Social Interactio.*

INTRODUCTION

Students at Santo Thomas Catholic University employ the languages spoken in their communities, which serves as a diverse expression of their cultural identity and plays a crucial part in influencing the social dynamics that occur on campus. The purpose of this project is to conduct an in-depth investigation into the ways in which students make use of local languages within the context of the university setting. The study will investigate the ramifications of this phenomenon with regard to social interaction, communication, and the building of bridges between persons who come from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

The understanding of local languages as powerful manifestations of individual and collective cultural identities is at the heart of this inquiry. Local languages are not only instruments for communication; rather, they are powerful expressions of cultural identities. In the middle of a melting pot of many nationalities and cultures, students at Santo Thomas Catholic University discover ways to establish and maintain their cultural heritage by looking at it through the prism of linguistic variety. The purpose of this research is to investigate the

complex ways in which students can assert their sense of belonging and cultivate a deeper connection with their cultural roots through the frequent use of local languages during their daily lives (Gutentag, 2018).

The concept that multilingualism promotes cross-cultural understanding and improves the fabric of social interaction within the community of the institution is crucial to the discussion that is taking place. Drawing on foundational studies, the study highlights how the adoption of local languages makes it easier to have nuanced conversations, which helps to overcome linguistic barriers and create an environment that is more welcoming to people of all backgrounds. The purpose of this study is to shed light on the transformational potential of multilingualism in terms of promoting empathy, mutual respect, and intercultural discourse among peers. This will be accomplished through an analysis of the language practices of students.

A further objective of the research is to provide light on the complex relationship that exists between academic interactions and the languages spoken in the surrounding area within the context of the institution. By analysing the impact of local languages in formal classroom communication, teaching-learning processes, and student participation, the study attempts to illuminate how linguistic variety effects the academic experience of students at Santo Thomas Catholic University. Insights obtained from this investigation are positioned to inform strategies for promoting inclusivity and using linguistic variety as a catalyst for academic performance (Botes et al., 2020).

This study aims to establish a theoretical framework that elucidates the complex dynamics of cultural identity, multilingualism, and the impact of local languages in higher education environments. This will be accomplished by addressing the problem statements that have been defined. By presenting detailed insights on students' behaviours about local language usage, the research attempts to promote a deeper knowledge of the significance of linguistic variety in shaping social interactions and academic experiences at Santo Thomas Catholic University. Ultimately, it is via such scholarly initiatives that the university community may cultivate a more inclusive, culturally vibrant, and intellectually enriching environment for all its members (Kortmann, 2020).

In evaluating the impact of local languages on social interaction and communication between students, it is vital to explore the varied ways in which linguistic variety influences interpersonal relationships and community dynamics within the university setting. By researching patterns of language usage in many circumstances, ranging from informal talks to collaborative academic pursuits, this study intends to identify the significance of local languages as facilitators of connection, understanding, and solidarity among students (Lau, 2020).

Furthermore, the inquiry dives into how local languages act as vehicles for constructing bridges between persons from various cultural backgrounds. In a varied academic environment like Santo Thomas Catholic University, where students hail from a multiplicity of nationalities, regions, and linguistic traditions, local languages serve as conduits for building meaningful connections and fostering a feeling of unity despite difference. Through common linguistic practices, students overcome cultural boundaries,

create empathy, and forge relationships of camaraderie that transcend linguistic and cultural differences (Seneviratne, 2019).

Drawing upon theoretical frameworks that stress the symbiotic relationship between language, culture, and identity, this study strives to untangle the complicated interplay between local languages and social cohesion within the university community. By documenting students' lived experiences and perceptions surrounding the usage of local languages, the research intends to highlight the ways in which language functions as both a mirror of cultural identity and a catalyst for intercultural interchange and unity (Septiyana & Margiansyah, 2018).

Moreover, by setting the analysis within the broader context of higher education, the study attempts to offer insights that might improve educational methods, institutional regulations, and efforts aimed at fostering inclusivity and celebrating linguistic diversity. Through an interdisciplinary approach that draws from sociolinguistics, cultural studies, and education theory, the research endeavors to offer practical recommendations for harnessing the transformative potential of local languages in promoting social cohesion, academic engagement, and cross-cultural understanding within the university setting.

In conclusion, this study offers a significant initiative to enhance our awareness of the various processes surrounding the habitual use of local languages among students at Santo Thomas Catholic University. By shining light on the multiple functions that local languages play in defining cultural identity, promoting social interaction, and building bridges between individuals, the research contributes to continuing efforts to create a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally vibrant academic community. Through collaborative involvement, conversation, and advocacy, stakeholders may work together to harness the richness of language diversity as a cornerstone of campus life and learning at Santo Thomas Catholic University.

METHOD

This study will adopt a descriptive research methodology, utilizing a combination of data collection methods including questionnaires and interviews. Initially, a questionnaire will be constructed as the primary method to acquire quantitative data concerning the usage patterns of local languages among students at Santo Thomas Catholic University. The questionnaire will comprise structured inquiries addressing many dimensions of local language utilization, such as its frequency in daily interactions, involvement in academic pursuits, and impact on social dynamics. Rigorous testing will be undertaken to confirm the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, hence boosting the correctness of the acquired data (Kothari C.R, 2004; May et al., 2017).

Additionally, in-depth interviews will be done with a chosen sample of students to acquire a more qualitative grasp of the subject matter. These interviews will look into students' motivations for employing local languages, their influence on cultural identity, and their experiences within academic settings. Thematic analysis will be used to the qualitative data acquired, enabling the discovery of repeating themes, key insights, and a richer contextualization of local language usage.

The study population will cover active students across several academic disciplines at Santo Thomas Catholic University. Sampling will be done by stratified random sampling, considering characteristics such as academic affiliation and semester level to provide a representative sample. Subsequently, data produced from both the questionnaires and interviews will undergo analysis, with descriptive statistics utilized for quantitative data and thematic analysis implemented for qualitative data.

During the analysis phase, findings from both data collection methods will be merged to offer a holistic knowledge of students' linguistic patterns inside the academic context. This study methodology is predicted to give profound insights and complex perspectives on the multilingual dynamics prevalent at Santo Thomas Catholic University.

This comprehensive research technique is meant to provide a holistic picture of the intricate dynamics surrounding the use of local languages among students at Santo Thomas Catholic University. By combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection devices, this study intends to capture the intricacies of language usage patterns and their underlying motivations, thereby delivering significant insights into the multilingual phenomenon within the campus community.

Through the administration of standardised questionnaires, the project will systematically gather quantitative data on several features of local language usage, ranging from its prevalence in daily communication to its impact on academic engagement and social interaction. The meticulous design and validation of the questionnaire assure the dependability and correctness of the quantitative data, allowing for robust statistical analysis to find relevant patterns and trends.

In parallel, in-depth interviews will provide a qualitative lens through which to study the subjective experiences, perspectives, and reasons underpinning students' language choices. By engaging directly with participants and obtaining their narratives, the qualitative component of the study intends to unearth unique insights into the cultural, social, and personal relevance of local language use within the university context.

The merging of quantitative and qualitative data analysis tools will offer a sophisticated understanding of the complex dynamics at play, giving light on both the macro-level trends and the micro-level experiences impacting students' language habits. Through thematic analysis, the qualitative data will be distilled into core themes and narratives, enriching our understanding of the intricate interplay between language, culture, and identity.

Furthermore, the thorough selection technique ensures the representation of varied perspectives and experiences among the student population, boosting the generalizability and validity of the study findings. By adopting a rigorous and systematic approach to data collection and analysis, this research methodology is poised to yield deep insights into the role of local languages in shaping social interactions, fostering cultural identity, and enriching the academic experience at Santo Thomas Catholic University.

Ultimately, this study strives to contribute to the scholarly discourse on linguistic variety and multiculturalism in higher education, presenting practical implications for encouraging inclusivity, intercultural understanding, and academic performance within varied university environments. By highlighting the varied features of local language use, the research attempts to provide educators, administrators, and policymakers with the

knowledge and insights needed to establish more inclusive and culturally sensitive learning environments.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data presented provides varied views on the use of local languages among students in the campus environment. Most students, such as Giovani Br Lubis (Semester V) and Gracella (Semester 1), reported that they rarely or never use local languages in formal communication contexts such as presentations or discussions in class. However, there were also some students, such as Futri Sidabutar (Semester 1) who reported that they often used local languages when seeking academic information or presenting assignments. Significant differences are also seen in the level of participation in extracurricular activities or study groups that use local languages, as expressed by students such as Dionisius Buaton (Semester V) who actively participates.

In addition, responses regarding how often local languages influence social interactions show a variety of opinions. Some felt that the use of local languages was not very influential, as expressed by Rialince Gultom (Semester 1) who called it rare. However, Eska Sihotang (Semester V) stated that she never felt affected in her social interactions by the use of regional languages. Furthermore, in terms of communicating with lecturers or administrative staff, Asta Piani Br Sembiring (Semester 1) never uses local language, while Dionisius Buaton (Semester V) reports occasional use.

The results of this analysis illustrate the diversity in the use and perception of local languages among university students, which may reflect the influence of context, semester level, and individual preferences. This provides valuable insights for research into the dynamics of local languages in academic contexts on campus.

Based on the analysis of the data provided, it appears that the use of local languages in the campus environment varies among the respondent students. Most students reported that they rarely or never use local languages in formal communication contexts, such as presentations or discussions in class. However, there was a distinct trend in the use of local languages in extracurricular activities or study groups, where some students reported more active participation.

It is important to note that the frequency level of local language use also appears to be influenced by semester level. Early semester students tend to report higher use of local languages in some contexts, such as seeking academic information or participating in extracurricular activities, compared to higher semester students.

In addition, most respondents stated that the use of local languages did not really affect their social interactions on campus. However, there were variations in opinion, and some felt that local languages could support the understanding of lecture or presentation material. The results of this analysis provide a complex picture of the role of local languages among university students, highlighting differences in usage and perception depending on context and semester level.

Based on the results of data analysis, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents in this study revealed a tendency to rarely or even never use local languages in various contexts in the campus environment. It was found that most students only

occasionally use local languages in daily conversations, and most of them rarely use local languages in formal communications such as presentations or discussions in class. Local languages are also not significantly used in finding or presenting academic information, such as finding references or writing assignments.

In addition, participation in extracurricular activities or study groups that use local languages is also low, with most respondents rarely or never participating. Nonetheless, there was variation in perceptions regarding the effect of local language use on social interactions on campus, with most respondents stating that this sometimes affected their social interactions.

Overall, respondents tended to rarely use local languages in academic and social contexts on campus. In addition, most of them did not feel that the use of local languages significantly supported the understanding of lecture materials or presentations delivered by lecturers. This data provides a general picture of the low prevalence of local language use on campus, but further interpretation may be needed to understand the context and implications of these findings in more depth.

In a more in-depth analysis of the data, some interesting patterns and findings can be noted. First, the majority of students tend to rarely use local languages in academic contexts. This includes using local languages in formal communication such as classroom presentations, seeking or presenting academic information, and participating in extracurricular activities involving local languages (Muklis, 2011). This finding suggests that the local language does not have a significant role in these aspects.

Second, there is a gap between the frequency of local language use in daily conversations and formal classroom interactions. Although most students admit to occasionally using local languages in daily conversation, they rarely or never apply local languages in formal contexts such as classroom presentations. This may reflect the existence of certain norms or expectations in the academic environment that limit the use of local languages.

Third, perceptions regarding the influence of local languages on social interactions show variation. Some respondents revealed that the use of local languages sometimes affected their social interactions, while others did not feel a significant influence. This could be related to the cultural diversity of the campus environment and individual differences in perceptions of the importance of local languages in social interactions.

Fourth, most respondents did not feel that the use of local languages supported their understanding of lecture material or lecturer presentations. This may indicate that in an academic context, students prefer or rely on the use of official or more common educational languages.

This analysis provides a more in-depth picture of the patterns of regional language use among university students, and highlights certain aspects that can be the focus of further research. By understanding these dynamics, research can be more focused on exploring the factors that influence language preference in the campus environment and its implications for communication and social interaction.

In looking at the relationship between variables in this study, there are several aspects that can be considered. First of all, the frequency of using local languages in daily

conversation does not necessarily reflect the level of participation in extracurricular activities or study groups involving local languages. Some students who rarely use local languages in daily conversation are sometimes active in these activities, while there are also those who never participate.

Secondly, the relationship between the use of local languages in formal classroom communication and seeking or presenting academic information in local languages appears to be weak. Students who never use local languages in classroom presentations do not necessarily have a tendency not to seek or present academic information in local languages. This may suggest that while students may be reluctant to use local languages in formal contexts, they can still feel comfortable using local languages for certain academic activities.

Third, there is a gap between the use of local language in social interactions and its influence on understanding lecture or presentation material. Some students who feel the influence of local language in social interactions do not always see that the use of local language supports the understanding of lecture material. This may reflect the different functions of local languages in social and academic contexts.

It is important to note that these relationships between variables are descriptive and do not necessarily imply causality. For a more in-depth understanding, further statistical analysis can be conducted. In addition, the interpretation of this relationship can also be enriched by involving qualitative approaches, such as interviews or group discussions, to get a more contextualized perspective from students related to the use of local languages in various contexts in the campus environment.

CONCLUSION

In drawing conclusions from this study, it can be concluded that the use of local languages in the campus environment tends to be low among students. Although most respondents admitted to sometimes using local languages in daily conversation, the frequency of using local languages in academic contexts, especially in class presentations, extracurricular activities, and academic information searches, is low.

The gap between the use of local language in social interactions and its impact on understanding lecture material reflects the complexity of the dynamics of local language use in the campus environment. Some students feel the influence of local languages in social interactions, but this is not always associated with understanding lecture material.

Factors that may influence the low use of local languages include norms and expectations in academic settings, preference for official language use, as well as the presence of cultural diversity among students. However, it should be noted that these findings are descriptive in nature and do not include more in-depth statistical analysis.

This study provides a foundation for further understanding of the dynamics of regional language use among university students, and encourages further research to explore the factors that influence language preference and its implications for communication and social interaction on campus. The implications of these findings can serve as a foundation for policy development or initiatives at the university level to better understand and support students' language needs.

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