

Language Use in English Learning Contexts: A Sociolinguistic Analysis from Papua

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Abstract: Language use refers to the language which someone uses to communicate with another. Then, the use of languages is directly related to the language choice a speaker makes depending on context and to whom he is talking to. The purpose of this study is to describe how is the use of the language in English Training classroom interaction between English Instructors and students of state Junior High School 2 Warsa, North Biak. Due to the purpose of the study, there is no research about the use of the language in English class at the State Junior High School Two Warsa, North Biak. Hence, this study aims to answer three research questions such as; (1) What is the domain of language use?; (2) What are the use of languages in English Training classroom Interaction?; (3) What are the reason of the use of student's and teachers' first language in language learning classroom?. Regarding methodology, this study used qualitative research which is given by Hill (2015, in Luardini, et, al 2021) to interpret the data collected in the field. Also, this study applied theories which are given by Luardini, et, al (2021) about the use of the language in English classroom Interaction between teacher and students, and Bouangeune (2009) about the use of students' first language as a tool in language learning classroom. The finding showed that the English instructors and students mostly used Standard Indonesian and Papuan Malay in English Training classroom interaction. Finally, the selected domain is education and the education domain indicated that both Papuan Malay and Standard Indonesian are dominantly used in English Training class room interaction.

Keywords: Language Use, English Learning Contexts, Sociolinguistic Analysis, Papua.

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a symbolic system that enables humans to communicate ideas, emotions, and experiences. According to Leoni et al. (1995, as cited in Rabiah, 2012, p. 2), language is a form rather than a substance, characterized by its arbitrary, productive, dynamic, diverse, and human nature. These characteristics distinguish language from other communication systems and demonstrate its vital role in facilitating social interaction and the exchange of meaning within human societies (Anggawirya et al., 2021; Anggriyani et al., 2026; Karubaba & Rahman, 2025; Adinda et al. 2025).

Also, Language plays a vital role in human life-individuals to express their thoughts and emotions, meet and communicate with everyone, and also establish and maintain social relationships between them (Charoline, 2020 in Luardini et.al 2021). According to them, these may occur in different spaces used by language. Thus, the use of language can be part of the ethnographic discourse of communication, to examine the relationship between language and society, and how multilingual speakers use language in their discourse community environment. Family environment, community environment, and school environments play a very important role in learning the human language Karubaba et al., 2024; Sukristiningsih et al., 2026; Andini et al., 2026; Paiting et al., 2025).

Besides, Agbalu, (2016, p. 6-7) said the use of languages is directly related to the language choice a speaker makes depending on context and to whom he is talking to. According to Fishman

(1965 in Agbalu, 2016, p. 6-7), language choice is when speakers choose what language to use in diverse social situations in bi or multilingual communities. Therefore, Agbalu (2016) stated that in an encounter, where at least one participant speaks more than one language, the first choice to make is: in which language is the interaction going to take place. According to Agbalu, it is often argued that a person tends to choose his mother tongue because it implies being in a powerful position, while the use of a second or foreign language entails the renounce of control. Agbalu (2016) said, nevertheless, there are other factors affecting language when dealing with choice of language, different situations can occur: language shift, which refers to when one language is replaced by another; code switching, which implies the use of two languages by the same speaker within the same speech act; style shifting, which means the alternation of styles according to setting, interlocutors, and topic; and finally, accommodation, which involves adjusting the communicational behaviour to others, that is changing the way of speaking depending on the person we are addressing to.

The purpose of this study is to describe how is the use of the language in English Training classroom interaction between the English Instructors, the students and the teachers in the State Junior High School Two in Warsa - Supiori, North Biak. Due to the purpose of the study, there is no research about the use of the language in English classroom at the State Junior High School Two Warsa-Supiori, North Biak. Hence, this study aims to answer three research questions such as; (1) What is the domain of language use?; (2) What are the use of languages in English Training classroom Interaction ?; (3) What are the reason of the use of student's and teachers' first language in language learning classroom ?

Besides, he State Junior High School Two is one of the schools in Warsa - Supiori, North Biak, Biak Regency - Papua Province. The students and the teachers are from Biak, Serui, Kei, Ambon and Java. As a bilingual, the students, teachers and the English instructors face the choice of language to interact in the English Training classroom. Thus, according to our observations in the English Training Classroom, the English Instructors, students and teachers in Junior High School Two Warsa used two or more languages when communicated. Hence, Luardini, et.al (2021) stated that “this may be affected by social and contextual factors, that is social and contextual factors affect the appearance of language variation. Also, they said in some cases, the use of more than one language will cause the language environment of the speech partner to be very complicated. They must be able to speak the language to match with their speech partner. Therefore, language speakers can choose the language to determine which language will be used in the communication. Whether it is between teachers and teachers, between teachers and students, or between classmates”.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Luardini, et.al (2021) stated that “language can be studied by its use and functions. Language use is not only be apart by culture, age, social status, and gender but also depends on the situation around”. Also, Mu'in (2019, in Luardini, et al. (2021) presented “five strategies of communication in the norms of communication as follow; (1) strategy shows that “a speaker should know what he wants to say, and to whom he conducts a communication and interaction; (2) a language choice, “what language or varieties of language is (are) appropriate in the socio-cultural setting where the communication or interaction happens; (3) “when and how we use turns in speaking, interrupt when the other is speaking; (4) the time to keep silent, e.g., “when we should keep silent; (5) quality of voice and attitudes, e.g., “how well our voice is, and how good our attitudes are in the acts of speaking.” According to them, all the strategies are meant to produce utterances followed by respectful and polite attitudes. The utterances produced are expected to be culturally acceptable for the participants involved in interpersonal communication “.

Regarding language use by the English instructors, students and teachers in State Junior High School Two Warsa -Supiori, North Biak in their classroom interaction, and also based on their communication involvement, so Mu'in (2019, in Luardini et al, 2021) stated that “a language use is controlled by linguistic etiquette. This linguistic etiquette refers to the practice in any speech

community of organizing linguistic action so that it is seen as appropriate to the current communicative event". Hence, communicative event in this study designates the interaction between the English instructors, students and teachers in Junior high school two Warsa - Supiori, North Biak in English training. Also, Mu'in (2019 in Luardina, 2021) said language use is how the language is used in communication depends on the speech partner. Thus, the speech partner of language use in communication in English Training at the State Junior High Schools Two Warsa - Supiori, North Biak is the students, teachers and the English instructors. Then, he said people use only one language in communicating with others when they are in monolingual society. Meanwhile, people use two or more languages or codes in bilingual society. Indeed, in English training in Junior High Schools Two Warsa-Biak, there are three languages used in communication in classroom interaction such as Papuan Malay, Standard Indonesian and English. Although the students and teachers are from Biak, Serui, Kei, Ambon and Java, and speak Biak, Ambai, Kei, Malayu Ambong and Javanese languages, the language they choose to use depends on the context and situation."

Regarding teaching foreign language to the students of Junior High School Two Warsa-Biak, Sharaeai (2012) and Snorrad (2014 in Luardini, et.al 2021) have studied the use of language in teaching and learning foreign languages in the classroom. Their study showed that there are some reasons why students use first language in English classroom. It also helps teachers and students may be able to reduce them to improve the English language learning process. Teachers can also adjust their classroom management to reduce the amount and frequency for first language use. Furthermore, Suryatika (2020 in Luardina, 2021) summarized some studies carried out by Atkinson (1987), Schweers (1999), and Nation (2003), based on statement of Bouangeune (2009) in which "there are some reasons for Students' L1 use in EFL Classroom such as; (1) It is more natural to communicate in the first language of the students in the L2 class, especially for people with similar native languages; (2) Integrating the students' L1 into the L2 class is more effective and easier for students and teachers to communicate in the classroom; (3) The mother tongue of the students in the L2 classroom helps teachers manage tasks and help teachers transfer tasks including establishing a common understanding of the text; (4) The use of students' mother tongue (L1) will help teachers promote classroom activities, especially in delivering a complex task; (5) It can also help students focus on the vocabulary and grammar items of the target language; (6) Students' mother tongue lays the foundation for learners, especially the structure of the target language. Hence, Suryatika believed that using L1 in L2 classrooms provides a sense of security and verifies students' life experience, and allow them to express themselves".

A. Domains

Spolsky (1998, p. 34) stated that a useful way of classifying social situation is to analyze them into three defining characteristics: place, role-relationship and topic. Spolsky said "together, these make up a set of typical domains, and the common domain is home". Domains are named usually for a place or an activity in it. Home, then is the place. The role-relationship associated with home (the people likely to be involved to speech events) include family members (mother, father, son, daughter, grandmother, baby) and visitors. There are suitable set of topics depending on the cultural pattern) such as activities of the family members, the meal, the household. A particular variety of language is appropriate to the domain. In a multilingual community, different languages may well be considered appropriate for different domains. In multilingual family, different role-relationships might involve different language choice. For instance, husband and wife might use one language to each other. But father and children might use another.

Another common domain is work. The place might be a factory or an office a store. The role-relationship include boss, worker, colleague, customer, foreman, cliens, to mention just a few. The topic is worked related. Ayuningsih et.al, (2020) stated that Domain is a term created by Joshua Fishman. He defines domain as an abstract illustration of sociocultural from communication topics, relations between communicators, and where the communication takes place according to the social structure of the speakers. Also, Fisman (1972 in Ayuningsih et.al, 2020) revealed that certain social

factors, speakers, social context of the conversation, functions and topics of the conversation are important in the consideration of language choice in different kinds of speakers.

Hence, Ayuningsih et.al, (2020) said the birth of language choice and language attitude phenomenon is caused by the speaker having two languages to use alternately. The language phenomenon that possibly occurs as the result of language contact in sociolinguistics is called bilingualism (Chaer & Agustina, 2004 in Ayuningsih et.al, 2020). Bilingualism is the use of two languages alternately by a speaker in their contact with other people (Mackey, 1962 in Niza, et.al, 2020). Language choice as a social phenomenon is not only influenced by linguistic factors but also external factors. Language choice is closely related to the situation of the speaker's social community. The difference in age, and level of education can affect people's language choice.

Thus, the Language Choice of the English instructors communicate with the students because they are bilingual or multilingual. Also, the situation in which the conversation happens also affects how a language will be used. Language choice is a person in bilingual or multilingual community speaking two or more languages and has to choose which language to use (Fasold, 1984, in Niza et. Al, 2020).

Kasim (2023) stated that a multilingual community uses two or more languages according to the settings. Such use of language is known as the domain of language usage. Fishman (1972) introduced five domains of language usage; family, religion, education, friendship and occupation. Based on the domain introduced by Fishman (1972), Kasim stated that we could see and determine the language use among the multilingual community. Then, a domain determines the choice of language or code in the multilingual community. He gave the example such as, at home, a person may use the Malay language with his or her parents, but at work, the person may use his or her second language, English. If the person is a Muslim, he or she may also use the Arabic language during prayers.

III. METHODS

The purpose of this study is to describe how is the language use in English Training classroom interaction. According to Hill (2015, in Luardini, et., 2021) qualitative research aims to delve into the research environment in order to gain insight into the nature of things, why they are so, and how the participants in the context perceive them.

A. Data Collection

Data collection was only carried out in English training classes and consisted of elicitation, recording and observation because this study aimed to analyze how communication interactions between English instructors, students and teachers in the use of language in English training classes. Then, in this research, the subjects are the English Instructors, students of seven grade and the teachers in Junior High School Two Warsa - North Biak - Supiori - Biak Regency - Papua Province. The qualitative method is used to achieve the research goals in which sentences from English instructors, the students and teachers in English, Papuan Malay and Standard Indonesian were collected as a part of elicitation. Moreover, recording was done to describe how is the language use in English Training classroom interaction as a tool to obtain data. Then, when obtaining data, the observation was also used in this research to indicate how is the language use in English Training classroom interaction.

B. Data Analysis

The data of this research is analyzed qualitatively. The researchers collected data through teaching learning process in English Training classroom interaction. Elicitation about sentences from English instructors, the students and the teachers. Also, the researchers took the data from recording in teaching learning process in English Training classroom interaction. The data were transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted. Furthermore, data were also gathered through observations conducted

during the teaching and learning activities in the English training class.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

In this finding, the researchers applied Luardini, et, all's theory to analysis the use of the language in English Training Classroom Interaction between English Instructors, the students and the teachers of state Junior High School Two Warsa-North Biak-Supiori-Biak Regency-Papua Province. Then, there are 27 students from seven grade and 15 teachers participated in English Training in July 2025. The result from data collection about sentences from English, Papuan Malay and Standard Indonesian from English instructors, the students and the teachers. Recording and observation are presented in the following table below.

Table 1. The use of the language in English Training Classroom Interaction.

No.	Questions	Engsih	Standar Indonesian	Papuan Malay	Biak, Ambai, Javanese, Kei, Malayu Ambong
1.	What language do the English instructors use for opening the lesson?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
2.	What language do the English instructors use for explaining material ?	No	Yes	Yes	No
3.	What language do the English instructors use for giving exercise ?	No	Yes	Yes	No
4.	What language do the English instructors use for discussing the material?	No	Yes	Yes	No
5.	What language do the English instructors use for communicating with the students and the teachers in English Training classroom	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
6.	What language do the English instructors use for closing the lesson	No	Yes	Yes	No
7.	What language do the English instructors use to students and teachers if the instructors have questions ?	No	Yes	Yes	No
8.	What language do the Students and the teachers use to answer the questions if the English instructors ask the students and the teachers ?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the English instructor, the students and the teachers mostly used Standard Indonesian and Papuan Malay in English Training classroom

interaction. It is shown by students' and teachers' answer to the instructors used English, Standard Indonesian and Papuan Malay. The instructors mostly used English, Standard Indonesian and Papuan Malay when opening the lesson. For explaining the material, the instructors mostly used Standard Indonesian, and Papuan Malay. In discussing material, the instructors mostly used Standard Indonesian and Papuan Malay. The instructors mostly asked questions used Standard Indonesian and Papuan Malay. For communicating with the students and the teachers in English Training classroom interaction, some students and teachers used English, and other used Standard Indonesian or using Papuan Malay. Finally, for closing the lesson, the instructors mostly used Standard Indonesian and Papuan Malay. Whereas, local languages or mother tongue such as; Biak, Ambai, Kei, Malayu Ambong, Javanese are not used in English Training classroom interaction.

B. Discussion

1. Domain

In the domain of education, a few factors were addressed from table 1. Some of the factors include the use of language during the opening class with the English instructors, during the discussion, and answer the questions. The English language (English) is used in these factors. Whereas, the factors such as; explain material, giving exercise, discussing material, closing the lesson, asking questions are not employed; rather, Standard Indonesian and Papuan Malay are predominantly used. The Biak, Ambai, Kei, Malayu Ambong and Javanese languages are not used because language choice is determined by domain and situational context.”

The reasons why Papuan Malay and Standard Indonesian tend to be used can be analyzed based on Bouangeune (2009) and Luardini et al. (2021), who identified seven reasons for the use of students' first language as a tool in the language learning classroom.

The table below presents only two of seven reasons of the use of students' first language as a tool in language learning classroom, adopted from Bouangeune (2009) and Luardini et al. (2021), which are relevant to the use of English in English training class.

Tabel 2. Two reasons of the use of students' and teachers' first language as a tool in language learning classroom.

No	Reasons of the use of students' and teachers' first language as a tool in language learning classroom	Papuan Malay	Standard Indonesia	English	Biak, Ambai, Javanese, Kei, Malayu Ambong
1.	It is more natural to communicate in the first language of the students and teachers in the L2 class, especially for people with similar native languages.	Yes	Yes	-	-
2.	Integrating the students' and teachers' L1 into the L2 class is more effective and easier for students and teachers to communicate in the classroom.	Yes	Yes	-	-

Table 2 shows that the use of language in English training at state Junior High School Two Warsa-North Biak-Supiori-Biak Regency-Papua Province indicates that Papuan Malay and Standard Indonesian are used more naturally, effectively, and easily in classroom interactions. For example, factors such as explaining material and conducting discussions are more natural, effective, and easier in communication between the English instructors, the students and teachers. Furthermore, in terms of function, Papuan Malay serves as the first language for the instructors, the students and the teachers.

Meanwhile, Standard Indonesian serves as the official medium of instruction in educational institutions. Therefore, domains such as education involves a role-relationship between teachers and students in using Standard Indonesian as the official language of instruction. As a result, the use of standard Indonesian in English language training classes between English instructors, the students and the teachers become more natural, effective, and easier for communication. English is not very effective for communication because it is only used in the form of code-switching and code-mixing.

Furthermore, Papuan Malay and Standard Indonesian were predominantly used in the English training class by the English instructors, the students and the teachers." Thus, Sulistiyo et al., (2017 in Luardini et al, 2021) revealed that for students, the use of L1 gives them an advantage in comprehending the materials, adding their vocabulary and giving them opportunities to master their L2 by using their L1. When they can understand the materials given, it will be easier for them to get the objectives of their learning in the classroom; they can learn fast and well. In conclusion, Little wood and Yu as cited in Mohebbi & Alavi (2014 in Luardini et al 2021) point out teachers use L1 to establish social relationships in the classroom, emphasizing the main points of the course, ensuring that students understand the courses being taught, and saving time.

Below is the use of language by the instructors in delivering the material, as well as the language used by the students and teachers to answer the instructor's questions.

Table 3. The language use by English instructors

No.	The Students	Papuan Malay and English	Standard Indonesia and English
1.	The language that the English instructors use to ask the questions	The teacher: What kinds of food do you eat this morning? Ana-ana makan apa tadi pagi ? The students and the teachers: rice, pisang, keladi, fish.	The teacher: How are you? Apa kabar? The students and the teachers: baik The teacher : How are you today? Apa kabar hari ini? The students and the teachers: baik-baik

The language used by English instructors when asking questions during classroom interactions. The data indicate that the instructors frequently employed a combination of English and local languages, particularly Papuan Malay and Standard Indonesian, to facilitate students' comprehension of the lesson. For example, when asking about students' breakfast, the instructor first used English ("What kinds of food do you eat this morning?") and then translated the question into Papuan Malay ("Ana-ana makan apa tadi pagi?"). Similarly, greetings such as "How are you?" and "How are you today?" were accompanied by Indonesian translations. This practice reflects a translanguaging strategy in which instructors draw upon multiple linguistic resources to bridge the gap between English and students' familiar languages. Such an approach helps students understand the meaning of the questions, encourages participation, and reduces communication barriers in the English learning process.

Table 4. The language use by the students and the teachers

No.	The English instructors	Papuan Malay and English	Standard Indonesian and English
1.	The language that the students and the teachers use to answer the questions	The teacher: Susu tu milk, water tu air, cheese tu keju The teacher: apa itu flour ? Kalau mama mo bikin pisang goreng, mama taro yang puti-puti tu	The teacher: Do you have breakfast this morning? The students: Sudah

namanya flour:	Disini ada eggs,
The students and the teachers: tepung	Kenapa telur menggunakan _s
	The students: karena tiga telur
	The teacher: three eggs

Table 4 presents the language used by students and teachers in responding to questions and explaining learning materials. The findings reveal that both teachers and students frequently alternated between English and Indonesian or Papuan Malay during classroom interactions. The teacher often introduced English vocabulary items, such as milk, water, cheese, and flour, and then provided explanations in Indonesian or Papuan Malay to ensure understanding. Students typically responded in Indonesian, as shown in the answer "Sudah" to the question "Do you have breakfast this morning?" Furthermore, the teacher used a bilingual explanation to clarify grammatical concepts, such as the plural marker -s in "three eggs." These examples suggest that code-switching and translanguaging served as important pedagogical tools that supported vocabulary acquisition, grammatical understanding, and effective communication between teachers and students in the multilingual classroom context.

2. Two Instructors or two Teachers, One Classroom

The English language training class conducted at state Junior High School Two Warsa-North Biak-Supiori-Biak Regency-Papua Province focuses on only one class and is taught by two instructors who use more than two languages. This study focuses on the language use of the instructors, the students and teachers in their interactions during the English language training class.

Therefore, it pertains to the use of language within a single classroom by two instructors, so according to Eng 512: Bilingualism that another arrangement is to have two teachers within one classroom who speak only one language to the students but are able to facilitate their learning in the other language because they themselves are bilingual.

In conclusion, it can be said that the English instructors is bilingual, and as the languages used in the English training class are English, Papuan Malay, and Standard Indonesian."

V. CONCLUSION

Apart from Bahasa Indonesia, there are also local languages spoken by people in Indonesia. The students and the teachers at the state Junior High School Two Warsa-North Biak-Supiori-Biak Regency-Papua Province speak Biak, Ambai, Javanese, Key and Ambones languages as their mother tongue. However, they also speak Bahasa Indonesia and Papuan Malay, and they are also proficient in English. In the English language training class, both Papuan Malay and Standard Indonesian are predominantly used by the English instructors to open the class, discuss materials, work on exercises, and close the class. To respond to the teacher's questions, the students and the teachers use three languages: Papuan Malay, Standard Indonesian, and English. Although Biak, Ambai, Key, Javanese and Ambonese are their mother tongue, the choice of language used depends on the context and situation, with the three mentioned languages being preferred.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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