

KONJO-BUGINESE LANGUAGE ACCOMMODATION WHEN INTERACTING WITH THE IMMIGRANTS IN WEST SINJAI

Hasminah Said, Tuti Bahfiarti, Muhammad Farid

Department of Communication Studies, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,
Universitas Hasanuddin, Indonesia
Jalan Perintis Kemerdekaan KM 10, Tamalanrea, Kota Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia
Corresponding Author: hasminahsaid93@gmail.com

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Abstract: This study aimed to identify the use of *Konjo-Buginese* language in West Sinjai, Sinjai Regency and the *Konjo-Buginese* language accommodation in interacting with the immigrants. This study employed the ethnography theory by Dell Hymes. The data were gathered using in-depth interview, observation, and documentation and analyzed using the communication accommodation theory by Howard Giles. The results showed that *Konjo-Buginese* language used in West Sinjai was adopted mostly from the *Konjo Mountains* language and the accommodation took the form of convergence. The divergent speech behavior was only performed by the elderly people and those who do not speak Indonesian.

Keywords: Accommodation, *Konjo-Buginese* language, interaction, immigrants

As social beings, humans consistently want to deal with other humans despite their differences in cultures and interests. Communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is a way for humans to relate to one another. Verbal communication is a mode of communication that is commonly used by humans on a daily basis. There are various languages spoken by people in Indonesia. These languages are used to characterize a certain community.

Indonesia is known as a country rich in culture and customs. Sinjai Regency in the South Sulawesi Province, for example, has 8 sub-districts

that speak in “*Sinjai Lo*”, part of Buginese language. Six of the sub-districts speak the common Buginese language while the other two sub-districts (West Sinjai and Central Sinjai) speak *Konjo-Buginese* language.

In 2018, West Sinjai has a population of around 24,311 people. People in this area speak *Konjo* language. Other regions, such as Central Sinjai has a population of 27,507 people, South Sinjai 36,918 people, Sinjai Borong 19,073 people, Sembilan Island 7,963 people, Bulupoddo 15,687 people, East Sinjai 30,421 people, Tellu Limpoe 31,112 people, and North Sinjai 43,505

people (West Sinjai Sub-district Government Office, 2019).

However, language differences are not an obstacle for Sinjai people to interact with each other. In fact, they have good adaptation skills despite language barriers. The Sinjai community is able to apply diverse ways to accommodate interactions. It cannot be denied that in interacting, the use of language largely determines the effectiveness of communication. This is why adjustments in communication are very necessary.

Richard West and Lynn H. Turner (2008: 222-225), in the Introduction to Communication Theory Analysis and Application define accommodation as a person's ability to adjust, modify, or regulate his speech behavior in response to another person's language. This accommodation theory was first coined by Howard Giles.

A preliminary study shows that the *Konjo-Buginese* language spoken in West Sinjai was different from the original Buginese language used in other Sub-districts within Sinjai Regency. This is influenced by the geographical location of West Sinjai which is a border area in Gowa Regency, where Makassarese language is used daily. Therefore, each individual or ethnic group in the area has different ways when interacting with immigrant communities.

In addition, Annisa Nurjannah through her research found that the Akit in Bengkalis applied three strategies to communicate with migrant Javanese. These strategies include (1) using Malay language or a language controlled by both tribes (verbal convergence) and using body movements to provide comfort (non-verbal convergence); (2) using the language of the interlocutor (verbal divergence), and promoting cultural rejection movements where there is no attempt to reduce the speed and tone of voice (non-verbal divergence); (3) overly accommodating. The Javanese make mistakes in adjusting the tone of speech, the Akit use the language of the interlocutors at the wrong time. Similarly in non-verbal communication, the Akit make excessive movements when communicating with the Javanese (Nurjannah, 2017).

The results of the preliminary research and Nurjannah's research indicate that people with different cultural backgrounds use different ways to adapt in communication. This naturally happens because each ethnic wants to maintain their

social identity and at the same time, create harmonious communication.

Ulpa studied communication accommodations in intercultural interactions among learners in Patani student association in Indonesia. Ulpa found that in communicating with each other, the students showed natural behavior without any modification. In terms of language, no setting of communication was found in the conversation. However, identity disclosure was found in the way they dressed. No barriers to communication adjustment were found in the intercultural interaction experienced by Patani students because their language and belief system shared many similarities (Ulpa, 2014).

Speech style or language that is inherent in a person is not easily changed. Even if a migrant is able to speak Indonesian to adapt to a new life, for example, dialects from his native area will still be obvious. Bahfiarti has proven that Buginese who have long tried to adapt to the Sundanese culture still use thick Buginese dialects in verbal communication. The nonverbal language displayed by the Buginese is rather loud intonation and voice accompanied by a friendly smile, which also manifest Buginese polite manners in general (Bahfiarti, 2013)

The previous studies above illustrate that communication and adaptation are inseparable. Differences in character, understanding and attitude in each individual produce different acceptance when interacting with new people. Therefore each individual has a different way of adapting in verbal and nonverbal communication.

The main aim of this study was to identify the use of the use of Konjo-Buginese language in West Sinjai, Sinjai Regency and the Konjo-Buginese language accommodation in interacting with the immigrants.

METHOD

This study was conducted in West Sinjai, Sinjai Regency. It employed a qualitative method to data analysis and data collection. The field-based data were collected through interview and the text-based data were gathered from books, theses, journal articles, and the internet.

In-depth interviews were conducted to the informants by visiting their houses. The interview guidelines contained questions that were used to explore information on the informants' complete

biodata, length of stay in West Sinjai, ways of adapting to the local people, intentions to study, the amount of time spent to learn the language. Other questions that created a harmonious interaction between the informants and researchers were also asked.

The interview guidelines used for the local government were slightly modified, where the local government representative was also interviewed about the history of Konjo-Buginese language in West Sinjai. The rest remained the same.

The informants were selected using the purposive sampling method. The total number of the informants was 22 people consisting of 7 local government representatives (the Sub-District Chief, the Sub-District Staff, three village heads, two *Kelurahan* heads), one customary head, one cultural practitioner, and 12 immigrants who met certain criteria (they were not Konjo natives and they had lived in West Sinjai for at least 2 years). The migrants informants come from Java ethnic, Toraja ethnic, Buton ethnic, Buginese ethnic, and Makassar ethnic.

An ethnographic approach was employed in this study. Immigrants who come from different cultural backgrounds were studied. Their behavior patterns, habits, language, and ways of life and interacting were revealed through longitudinal observation. The researchers were involved through hands-on experience with the informants' life and in-depth interview.

The findings of this study were described based on the results of interviews with the informants related to Konjo-Buginese language accommodation in West Sinjai. To draw conclusions, the data were analyzed using a qualitative method through an ethnographic approach.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The results of the in-depth interviews and observations showed that the *Konjo-Buginese* language used by migrants in West Sinjai has different pronunciation, dialect, and intonation from *Konjo-Buginese* language use spoken in other regions. This language is known as Dentong or Bentong language that is commonly spoken by the people from mountains. The Konjo language spoken in West Sinjai is influenced by Makassarese language and Buginese language.

Besides the informants and the local government representatives, the cultural practitioner also agreed that each village in West Sinjai has a different dialect. Konjo language was identified as part of Makassarese language. Makassarese language consists of several dialects including the Maleung dialect, the Turatea dialect, the Tupakbiring dialect, the Bantaeng dialect, the Selayar dialect and the Konjo dialect. Konjo itself is divided into two dialects, namely Konjo Coastal dialect and Konjo Mountain's dialect or more popularly known as Bentong or Dentong. The Konjo Coastal dialect is spoken in the East Coastal Bulukumba and South Sinjai Coastal whereas the Konjo Mountains dialects including Bentong and Dentong are used in the Barru Mountains, Pangkep Maros, Bulukumba, Sinjai and Bone.

It is indeed important to explain that Konjo can be identified as part of Makassarese language. As an enlightenment, Makassarese language consists of several dialects including the Maleung dialect, the Turatea dialect, the Tupakbiring dialect, the Bantaeng dialect, the Selayar dialect and the Konjo dialect. Konjo itself is divided into two dialects, namely Konjo Coastal dialect and Konjo Mountain's dialect or more popularly known as Bentong or Dentong. The Konjo Coastal dialect is spoken in the East Coastal Bulukumba and South Sinjai Coastal whereas the Konjo Mountains dialects including Bentong and Dentong are used in the Barru Mountains, Pangkep Maros, Bulukumba, Sinjai and Bone. Thus it is unreasonable that Manipis people including all people who speak Konjo, Dentong or Bentong are ashamed to use Konjo language everywhere. There is no super or shabby language. It all depends on the needs of the speakers and those who can develop and kill a language at the same time are the native speakers themselves. If the Manipis want to save their Konjo language, that language should be used as the language of instruction in schools or meetings. The Konjo language should be used as local content at schools or meetings, where the law allows it. This depends on the policy makers, if they still want to maintain the Konjo language. Facts show that many

young people from Manipi or other places who speak Konjo, if they move to the city and get along with others, cover up their accent and language style when interacting with others even when interacting with fellow Konjo speakers. Makassarese language is incomplete without Konjo. Therefore, believe that and don't feel ashamed of using the language that is your identity. You don't ask to be born in Konjo-speaking areas anyway, but it's already a gift and a destiny to be proud of (Muhannis, 2017:5-6).

One of the local government representatives, the Tassililu village chief, said that the language spoken in West Sinjai is a separate language that is influenced by two languages namely Makassarese language and Buginese language. Even though Konjo language used in West Sinjai is categorized as the Konjo Mountains, the language contains several different words that are not found in other regions. West Sinjai people interact with positions as speech communities where they use and interpret language broadly. For example, migrants use the Konjo-Buginese language with different pronunciations when interacting with local communities. In language theory this is known as speech act theory.

“The Konjo language spoken in West Sinjai is indeed different from the Konjo language used in other districts, such as the language spoken in central Sinjai. West Sinjai is a border area of Gowa Regency which has a different dialect. The dialect is mainly influenced by Konjo and Buginese languages. Tassililu Village especially has a distinctive dialect, so I heard from parents' stories. I think that's the reason why Konjo language is still maintained until today. Konjo language is broad. Konjo people, especially the Manipis, can speak Buginese even though they have never learned it. The Manudukoi people and the Bikeru people do not speak Konjo. That is our strength as Konjo people. We can speak in both Makassarese and Buginese. The Konjo language spoken in West Sinjai is indeed different. I call it a separate language because it is also different from Konjo in Bulukumba. The point is our language is a combined language. Buginese people cannot speak Konjo, but Konjo people can speak Bugi-

nese despite a slight difference in the pronunciation. (Excerpts of interview with The Tassililu Village Chief, December 2019)”

The table below contains *Konjo-Buginese* language accommodation in West Sinjai by the local people. It describes the difference in the way the local people adapt with the immigrants in terms of communication and interaction.

Table 1. Konjo-Buginese language accommodation in West Sinjai by the Local People

Local People		The Immigrants			
Name	Ethnic	C	D	C	D
A.Paris	Konjo	v	-	-	v
Harun	Makassarese	v	v	v	v
Lukman	Konjo	v	-	-	-
Yunus	Konjo	v	-	v	-
Mansur	Konjo	-	-	v	-
A.Nasrun	Konjo	v	-	v	-
Ruslan	Buginese	v	-	v	-

Notes:
C= Convergence
D= Divergence

The Konjo-Buginese community in West Sinjai carries out a process of convergence language accommodation towards migrants. This is because the people in West Sinjai are more proficient in Indonesian, Makassarese and Buginese languages so that it is easier for them to form a certain attitude towards communication.

One of the examples is that Konjo-Buginese community still speaks in a thick dialect when interacting with the Javanese ethnic communities. In similar fashion, all informants stated that they, as migrants, had to learn Konjo-Buginese language to blend in with the local community.

“Regarding the adaptation issues when interacting, I think all immigrants do the same thing. Especially if we have a little education, I think we can invite quiet people to interact. Besides working, I also farm here. I had to learn Konjo-Buginese because my parents-in-law could not speak Indonesian. I use the language even though my native language dialect is still obvious. I also can understand the words of local people. I can't understand about 80% of the old

Konjo-Buginese language. Only my immediate family wants to learn Buton language because they are curious about how I communicate. When my family from Buton came here, they sometimes asked about the language used by the local community. (Excerpts of interview with La Hamuri, December 2019)."

Table 2. Konjo-Buginese language accommodation in West Sinjai by the Immigrants

Immigrants		Local People			
Name	Ethnic	C	D	C	D
Bambang	Javanese	v	v	v	-
Nunu	Javanese	v	v	v	-
Ati	Javanese	v	v	v	-
Kasiati	Javanese	v	v	v	-
Sutini	Javanese	v	v	v	-
Lahamuri	Butonese	v	v	v	-
Suharti	Butonese	v	-	v	-
Diana	Torajan	v	-	v	-
Citra	Makassarese	v	v	v	-
Indah	Makassarese	v	v	v	-
Kurnia	Mandar	v	v	v	-
Resi	Mandar	v	v	v	-

Note:

C = Convergence

D = Divergence

The majority of informants acknowledged the ability of West Sinjai people to “read” the situation. They understand one's position as an immigrant. Therefore, they will speak Indonesian in their interactions with the immigrant. However, when the migrant community comes from Buginese or Makassarese ethnic, the local people will directly use Buginese or Makassarese language in communication. The local government representatives who also lived in West Sinjai stated that West Sinjai people were more adaptable when interacting with migrant communities.

Migrant communities have thick local accents. Therefore, when speaking Indonesian, these accents are obvious. An immigrant from Java admitted that Javanese people should be able to maintain their accent even though they move to a new area.

I did not study the Konjo language intentionally. It just happened. Every time someone uses Konjo language, I will confirm the meaning. Yes, it is possible. I hear it every day. However, I still need to maintain my Javanese dialect as a Javanese (Excerpts of interview with Nunu Dian Hirmawati, December 2019).

The following table contains how the immigrants accommodated interactions in the Konjo-Buginese language in West Sinjai. It describes the immigrants' perception on the local people's attitude to their face-to-face interactions.

Discussion

The use of Konjo-Buginese Language by the Locals when Interacting with the Immigrants

The Konjo-Buginese language used by the locals when interacting with the immigrants in West Sinjai is the Konjo Mountains language or the Konjo-language commonly known as Dentong or Bentong language that has a different pronunciation, dialect, and intonation from the Konjo language used in other areas, such as the one used in Bulukumpa. West Sinjai is located between two areas that speak different languages, namely Buginese language and Makassarese language. Buginese language is a native language spoken by the people in Sinjai regency while Makassarese language is the mother tongue of Gowa people.

Migrant communities in West Sinjai adjust their Konjo-Buginese dialect to the dialect of each village where they live. Each village in West Sinjai has a different dialect that is categorized into Konjo's sub-communities. Bonto Salama, Turungan Baji and Terasa are villages that use the fast Konjo-Buginese language. Gunung Perak is one of the villages that uses the slow Konjo-Buginese language. Arabica, Barania, Tassililu and Balakia are the areas where the moderate Konjo-Buginese language is spoken, while Botol-empangan is a village that communicates with the rough Konjo-Buginese language.

One of the theories of language that was coined by Whorf namely the Principle of Linguistic Relativity states that language makes us see social reality in a certain way (Rachmat, 2001: 275). This theory is the theory that supports the findings of this study. Similar to what argued by Whorf, the migrant communities in this study came from different backgrounds. They constantly made an effort to maintain their native dialect despite communicating in Konjo-Buginese language. They also communicated in ways that were influenced by their educational and professional backgrounds. The difference in the immigrants'

speech is seen in the pronunciation of the sentence that should be placed at the beginning, but pronounced at the end. However, since the local community had understood this speech act, it was then easy for them to follow the conversation flow.

The speech act theory is associated with Ludwig Wittgenstein and John Searle. This speech act theory explains how messages express the users' intentions. In communication, this theory is applied in the study or analysis of conversations. Furthermore, Littlejohn states that this theory aims to explain how conversation partners cooperate to form coherent patterns that can create or shape meaning (Littlejohn, 2009),

Communication is not troubled by any communication pattern and/or event because the most important thing is that the message conveyed can form a meaning that can be understood both by the communicators and communicants. Likewise, regarding the Konjo-Buginese language used in interacting with migrant communities in West Sinjai, the people involved in communication already understand and are familiar with the dialect, speed, and intonation spoken in each village. Thus, despite the differences, harmonious communication can still be created. Language that lives in communication will not have meaning if it is not communicated (Kuswarano, 2008:11).

Konjo-Buginese Language Accommodation by the Locals when Interacting with the Immigrants

Buginese-Konjo language accommodation varies by each individual. Accommodation refers to the ability to adjust, modify or regulate one's behavior in response to others. The local and migrant communities in West Sinjai have demonstrated the ability to adjust, modify, and regulate behavior in different ways. The response to each person is also different.

In communication science, communication accommodation is a theory that focuses on a person's behavior in choosing to regulate or modify the way he communicates to the response obtained when communicating. In this theory, there are some basic assumptions keeping in mind that accommodation is influenced by a number of personal, situational and cultural conditions.

The first assumption is the similarities and differences in speech style and behavior found in all conversations (West & Turner, 2008: 219). Diverse experiences and backgrounds will determine the extent to which people will accommodate others. The more similar our attitudes and beliefs to other people, the more we are attracted to accommodate these people (West & Turner, 2008: 220). This assumption was found in this study. The local people and migrant communities in West Sinjai both tried to accommodate their face-to-face interactions.

Conversation topics that are favoured by a communicator will melt the atmosphere during the communication process, making it easier for one or even both parties to adjust to each other. One example is when we tried to adjust to follow the conversation topic when interacting with the Javanese informants. This was also stated by all informants that they had to blend in with the surrounding community by learning Konjo-Buginese language, considering their position as migrant communities.

How to perceive speech and behavior of others will determine how we evaluate a conversation (West & Turner, 2008: 219). This assumption lies in both perception and evaluation. Perception is the process of paying attention to and interpreting messages, while evaluation is the process of assessing conversation (West & Turner, 2008: 220). In a conversation between the Konjo-Buginese community and the newcomer community, the newcomer community tended to be more careful in interacting and issuing verbatim. They paid more attention to the questions raised by the communicator and carefully responded to them, especially if the local people invited to the conversation used the Konjo-Buginese language. Then, after the communication process took place and after some similarities were found in interpreting the message, the communicant became more open in terms of delivering information.

The third assumption is that language and behavior provide information about social status and group membership (West & Turner, 2008: 219). Specifically, language has the ability to communicate status and membership among communicators in a conversation. The language used in conversation will tend to reflect individuals with higher social status (West & Turner, 2008: 221). Similarly, migrants have their own

characteristics to indicate their educational background, for example in terms of the words or language used. Even though the immigrants in West Konjo used Indonesian or Konjo-Buginese language in communication, their dialect still reflected the characteristics of their native language.

In addition, accommodation varies in terms of the level of suitability, and norms directing the accommodation process (West & Turner, 2008: 219). This fourth assumption correctly describes what often happens in the communication process. Someone will be more relaxed communicating with people his age, but more careful in adjusting when interacting with older people. Likewise in this study, when one of the informants met with a new person, he would tend to do an imaging of himself. However, after they were able to understand each other, they became more open than before. So, it cannot be denied and it must be recognized that in a communication process, the two parties may equally adjust to each other, accentuate each other, or only one of them tries harder to adapt.

In communication accommodation theory, there are several ways to adapt, namely convergence, divergence and excessive accommodation. This study only focused on convergence and divergence. Convergence refers to a strategy in which individuals adapt to each other's communicative behavior. People will adapt to the speed of speech, pauses, smiles, eye contact and behaviors of others. In a conversation, the communicator does not directly use convergence strategy because this strategy arises when one communicator has an interest in the other person. In this study, all informants adapted by convergence after having to explain the objectives and topics to be discussed in the conversation.

The convergence process carried out by the local people in West Sinjai to accommodate interactions with the immigrants was influenced by language acquisition and approach. For instance, immigrants from Bugis and Makassar would use Buginese or Makassarese language to interact with the local people because both of them speak the same language. On the other hand, migrant communities who could not understand Buginese or Makassarese language, would accommodate interactions using the Indonesian language. In relation to approach, the immigrants who had been settling for a long time in West Sinjai would feel

more comfortable interacting with the locals even though they were unable to use Konjo-Buginese language fluently. This is not a big problem because both the locals and the immigrants already understood each other's message.

Divergence refers to a strategy used to highlight verbal and non verbal differences among communicators. The exemplary issue underlined in this study is the strong dialect highlighted by the Javanese, Buton, Makassar and Mandar informants. This happened not because of arrogance but because of a commitment to maintain identity, cultural pride and uniqueness. There were many local people in West Sinjai who did divergence adaptation. These groups consisted of elderly people and people who cannot speak Indonesian. This condition encouraged the immigrants to learn Konjo-Buginese language to avoid communication failure.

When we look at different ethnic groups, both the local people and immigrants in West Sinjai adapted to divergence. However, some are very transparent and some are almost invisible. For example, Javanese informants who possessed a very strong Javanese dialect acknowledged that the dialect must be maintained. On the other hand, it is difficult for local communities to break the habit of adding the suffix "do" in their speeches.

Overall, the local communities in West Sinjai predominantly use convergence strategies in language accommodation. This is indicated by the fact that migrant communities are indeed required to know Konjo-Buginese language for the sake of creating harmonious interactions with the locals. However, when migrants enter the West Sinjai area, they cannot immediately understand, let alone know the language. It takes a long time to speak Konjo. Therefore, adjustments are mostly made by the local community, for example by using Indonesian, Makassarese and Buginese languages in communication. Local people will respond in the same language if they understand the language spoken by the immigrant community. Only a small portion of the local community, those who do not speak Indonesia, will communicate using the local language in the region.

In this study, the immigrants acknowledged that local communities played more roles in language accommodation. We also feel this as a native community in West Sinjai. We cannot deny that we will spontaneously use Indonesian when meeting new people from outside our area.

However, if the newcomers speak in Konjo language, we will immediately respond in the same language. So, in this study, convergence strategy was mostly done by the Konjo-Buginese community (except for the elderly) and divergence strategy was mostly performed by the immigrants due to their commitment to maintain self-identity.

CONCLUSION

The analysis results showed that the Konjo-Buginese language used in West Sinjai was adopted mostly from the Konjo Mountains language, commonly known as Dentong or Bentong language which has a distinctive dialect. However, the local communities and migrant communities had no difficulty in interacting with each other because both parties were able to interpret each others' message.

The Konjo-Buginese language accommodation by the local community took the form of convergence. The immigrants were demanded to learn the language for the sake of creating harmonious interactions with the locals. However, because it took quite long to acquire Konjo language, the local community was willing to play more roles in accommodating the interactions, such as by using Indonesian, Makassarese, or Buginese language in communicating with the newcomers. Except for the people who cannot speak Indonesian, the majority of the local community in West Konjo will respond to the immigrants with the same language they both understand. Only a small group of elderly people or of

those who cannot speak Indonesian apply divergence strategy.

The findings of this study indicate that the Konjo-Buginese language needs to be explored and recorded so that future generations better understand and know their origins. It is also important to incorporate this language into teaching materials in formal schools because the regional language in West Sinjai is not the same as the original Buginese language spoken by the Sinjai community in general.

The Konjo-Buginese language is quite difficult to learn. The informants who are also immigrants admitted that it took a long time for them to master this language. The local people, on the other hand, can be categorized as fast learners who can quickly adapt to newcomers, especially in mastering languages other than Konjo.

The informants' adaptive skills in this study were influenced by many factors. One of them is the rural community life that is different from urban life. People in the village know each other better because the family system adopted in the village is much stronger than that in the city. They really appreciate people who come to their territory without exception. Therefore, it is not surprising that convergence strategy is more dominant than divergence strategy.

In addition, this study also creates an appreciation of ethnic identity. The presence of the migrant communities in West Konjo illustrates that wherever they settle, their native characteristics are not easily removed because these characteristics are inherent and have become the habit of each individual.

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