

Table Of Contents

Error parsing applicant's data submitted by filling the form!	1
Proposal	2

Indonesian Diglossia

During the past 50 years or more Indonesian has been moving in the direction of the diglossia first described by Ferguson¹ for Arabic, Greek and other languages. In the Indonesian case, the “high” language is the called “*bahasa Indonesia yang baik dan benar*” or “*bahasa baku yang ditulis*” and other terms, the subject of many books, articles and teaching materials, which Indonesians are encouraged to use, and the “low” language, variously called “*bahasa gaul*” and by other names, the Indonesian used in every-day situations, particularly by young people. This latter language has been described most fully by Sneddon² and in articles, dissertations and popular books as well as in countless postings on the Internet. Although there are regional variants of this language, much of it comes out of Jakarta and has been spreading throughout the Archipelago.

In this talk I will start with some personal anecdotes about my own experiences with this diglossia and then give some examples of the “low” language that I have seen recently.

The rest of the talk will briefly describe some of the main features of the “low” language. These fall into three categories: verbs, lexicon and syntax.

The data come from the thousands of pages of Indonesian material that I have translated as a professional translator over the past 40 years and from the lists of words sent to me regularly by an Australian friend who lived in Jakarta, went to classes at Universitas Indonesia and mingled with young Indonesians there.

The areas to be discussed are:

Morphology: the various forms of the prefix *meng-*; the suffix *-in*; the prefix *-ke* (instead of *-ter*).

Lexicon: words directly borrowed from Javanese, Sundanese, Jakarta dialect; disguised language such as *prokem*; other distorted words; use of English words; particles such as *kan*, *sih*, *dong*, *kek*, *ding*, *lho*.

Syntax: use of the passive; use of a topic phrase; and others.

I will present a chart of the non-standard verb forms taken from my dictionary³ along with a brief discussion of the suffix *-in* and their combinations. Another morphological feature of the “low” language is the infix *-uw-* to form adjectives meaning “very, extremely” such as *buwanyak* from *banyak*.

I will then discuss *prokem* and present the phonological rule for forming *prokem* words such as *bokap* from *bapak* and *prokem* words taken from English such as *bokep* from *blue film* in addition to other distorted borrowings from English such as *oretz* from *all ritght*; and other distortions such as *gengges* from *ganggu*; reversals such as *yalsi* from *sial*. This will be followed by examples of the language used in emails, text messages and other social media. Other lexical phenomena such as as the use of the Chinese-derived pronouns *gua* and *lu* will also be presented.

Finally I will give some examples of “low” language syntax.

¹ C. A. Ferguson, *Diglossia*, *Word*, vol. 15, 1959, pp. 325-40

² Sneddon, James Neil, *Colloquial Jakartan Indonesian*, Pacific Linguistics, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University, 2006.

³ Stevens, A.M. and A. Ed. Schmidgall-Tellings, *A Comprehensive Indonesian-English Dictionary*, Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio, 2nd Edition 2010.