

CHILDREN'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN AN INDONESIAN FAMILY: PERSPECTIVES FROM LANGUAGE POLICY

by

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Abstract:

The primary purpose of this research is to find out the English language acquisition of children in Indonesian families. More specifically, this research analyzes the role of parents in children's acquisition of foreign language skills. The object of this research was taken from one of the families in the city of Probolinggo. The method used is Narrative Inquiry. Information was received through participant statements and interviews. It was analyzed using an inductive evaluation technique, including studying the transcript several times and identifying texts associated with the study's targets and observations. The results of this study reveal 3 points, namely parents' experiences, challenges faced by parents, and language policies.

Keywords: *children's English language, English language acquisition, language policy*

Abstrak:

Tujuan utama dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui penguasaan bahasa Inggris anak dalam keluarga Indonesia. Lebih khusus lagi, penelitian ini menganalisis peran orang tua terhadap penguasaan bahasa asing kepada anak. Objek penelitian ini kami ambil di salah satu keluarga di kota probolinggo. Metode yang digunakan adalah Narrative Inquiry. Informasi telah diterima melalui pernyataan peserta dan wawancara berdasarkan. Dan dianalisis menggunakan teknik evaluasi induktif yang meliputi mempelajari transkrip beberapa kali, mengidentifikasi teks yang terkait dengan target dan pengamatan studi. Hasil penelitian ini mengungkapkan 3 poin, yaitu pengalaman orang tua; tantangan yang dihadapi oleh orang tua dan kebijakan bahasa.

Kata kunci: *bahasa Inggris anak-anak, akuisisi bahasa Inggris, kebijakan bahasa*

INTRODUCTION

English, the prevailing language of communication, holds immense importance as a language that must be learned, especially for individuals from non-English speaking nations. The

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Astutik and Suryanto (2024)

reason behind this urgency lies in the widespread recognition that English serves as a gateway to establish connections with a larger global audience (McKay, 2016).

This is a study of Indonesian parents who improve their kids in Indonesian and English, which are not their mother tongue. Those parents ship their kids to school in English at language colleges, and maximum code-switching occurs between Indonesian and English while speaking with your kids. This example is visible in massive towns in Indonesia regarding the supply of schools. When sending kids to schools where English is the primary language of education and Indonesian is the principal secondary language, children learn to talk, examine, and write fluently in English and typically have the simplest Indonesian language abilities. Parents choose because not many schools do not explore or apply English in school.

Moreover, according to parents, children who speak English from childhood can be said to be unique and rare. Hence, a limited number of individuals in Indonesia possess true fluency in the English language, as Kirkpatrick (2010) stated. The motive of this study is to recognize their mother and father's power to apply English at home even though English is a foreign language in Indonesia, not the country's mother tongue.

Family language policy (FLP). Are native Indonesians who live in the city of Probolinggo but use two languages in their family even though they have no previous background and how they practice it. The Family Language Policy (FLP) is a language study that initially aims to examine patterns of language use in the home and among family members. FLP research aims to provide an integrated view of how languages are implemented in families where languages are managed, learned, and negotiated (King, 2023). The family is the most critical area of language policy research because the family plays a decisive role in shaping the language environment of the child, so the family is the beginning of language policy (Schwartz & Verschik, 2013).

We investigated family language guidelines. We focus mainly on how mother and father perceive bilingualism and how the two languages, Indonesian and English, merge in each day's conversation. This look is essential because kids examine in colleges where English is used to talk, meaning that kids can improve their English further in their mother tongue. Concerning kids' language exercise, Houwer (2017) states that it is an ongoing issue that opportunities for youngsters to practice their language skills and know-how are advanced

Astutik and Suryanto (2024)

on the idea that children's exclusive talents and maturity bring about different things in order that "certain varieties of enter may additionally have one-of-a-kind influences on children in environments with one-of-a-kind tiers of maturity and education" (DE HOUWER, 2017). Similarly, De Houwer claims that a kid's language attitudes can affect their willingness and possibility to practice speaking according to language guidelines. Several researchers have studied the language in terms of attitudes and language policy. For non-native English speakers residing in their home countries, especially in cases where English is considered a foreign language, like in Indonesia, raising bilingual children fluent in English can present a unique challenge requiring a specialized language approach (Wattimena, 2016). Efendi (2020) examines parents' and language attitudes toward bilingualism, recognizes the contribution of these attitudes to language policy in families, and explores efforts to preserve their inherited language. Efendi concluded that the national language is much more important than the language inherited from the family. Effendi recognized that the status of language, social institutions, relationships in the community, and family structure influence this language policy.

Furthermore, (Wijaya et al., n.d.) also said that preserving the heritage language is more symbolic than strategic and tied to emotions of kinship. The family also has a language policy at the heart of Sahriandi's research. In their research, Sahri et al. (2019) found that bilingual families in Langsa District, Aceh, set language politics in their family and identified the factors influencing the chosen language policy.

Sahri stated that the Putong Birem Group did not implement policies for their preservation, use the local language within the family, or communicate in their environment. Two factors influence language practice: ideology and mother tongue, while the other is children and language. This research examines language policy from the perspective of Indonesian parents in parenting so that children can easily accept foreign language learning. This is based on field notes and interviews with people related to the experience.

We argue that these findings show that parents influence children's acceptance of foreign languages with different parenting styles. We also show children's stages before becoming fluent in a foreign language. In light of the above literature, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What parenting style do they use?

Astutik and Suryanto (2024)

2. How do they deal with the challenges of teaching a foreign language to their children?
3. What do parents do in their children's language policy?

METHOD

Design

This research uses qualitative methods with a narrative inquiry design. Narrative inquiry research is research about a person's personal life; usually, researchers take data from the object's experience, which is then narrated (Schreiber & Asner-Self, 2011). Researchers choose to use narrative inquiry because the narrative structure is very relevant and can focus on describing the object's point of view. The researcher wants to obtain quantity, where the researcher wants to dig for more profound information about the object.

Participant

The participants in this study were parents, specifically mothers and fathers, who were the primary focus of the investigation. The researchers explored the family language guidelines and delved into mothers' and fathers' perceptions and attitudes toward bilingualism. The main emphasis was on understanding how the two languages, Indonesian and English, intersect and coexist in the context of everyday conversations within the family. The significance of this study lies in the fact that children attend schools where English is the primary medium of instruction. This situation allows children to enhance their proficiency in English while maintaining their proficiency in their native language.

Instrument

The research instruments employed in this study included field notes, interviews, and observations to gather comprehensive data on the subject. The field notes were generated by systematically observing children interacting with parents or individuals in their immediate environment. These notes aimed to capture essential details about the children's behavior, experiences, and any noteworthy points that could later be explored during the interview.

The interviews with resource persons lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and consisted of seven carefully crafted questions. Researchers intentionally conducted the interviews in Indonesian, a deliberate choice to facilitate data reception. This decision was made to minimize misunderstandings and to enhance overall understanding between the researchers

Astutik and Suryanto (2024)

and the resource persons. The questions covered various aspects of the introduction of children to foreign languages, including the timing of the introduction, the methods or media used for this introduction, the age at which children typically begin to speak, and an exploration of potential negative impacts associated with the methods employed.

These instruments collectively allowed the researchers to gather rich and detailed insights into the dynamics of children's language acquisition, the methods employed in their language exposure, and the potential consequences associated with these methods. Combining field notes, interviews, and observations provided a holistic understanding of the researched phenomena.

Data collecting technique

This study collected data through field notes, interviews, and observations. We made field notes to observe children when interacting with parents or people around them so that we could get essential details about children to get points or experiences we could ask when conducting interviews. Then, after we found some points from the results of the field notes, the researcher interviewed the resource person for about seven questions for 60–90 minutes. To interview resource persons, researchers deliberately used Indonesian to make it easier to receive data, minimize misunderstandings, and broaden understanding. The research questions include: When do children start to be introduced to foreign languages? What methods or media are used to introduce children to foreign languages? At what age can children speak? Furthermore, what is the negative impact of the methods used?

Data Analysis Technique

Researchers analyzed the statistics using an inductive analysis method, which covered analyzing the transcripts several times and figuring out texts related to the research goals and observations. Reading articles citing important arguments is an important step that supports the analysis process (Turmudi, 2020). The outcomes of interviews performed by researchers had been transcribed, after which they collected qualitative information. This method is vital for the family's language policy, following Schwartz and Moin's (2012) display that the linguistic socialization of youngsters may improve the accuracy of information received from parents. Then, after everything was complete and accurate, the researchers began to

Astutik and Suryanto (2024)

synchronize the findings and discussions. The citation arrangement uses an offline automatic reference manager called "Mendeley Desktop" (Turmudi, 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Finding

Parenting Style

Parenting has a practical and sizable impact on children's character development. One of the things we will do to expand children's potential to interact with others is parenting. Regarding the significant impact on our family language coverage, the information suggests that dad and mom's enjoyment of parenting is an influencing factor. In the following section, we present how the mother and father perceive their stories: children are fluent in English after they have input the toddler's duration.

"My husband and I are very busy working, but I don't want our child to lose a parent figure, so every time we work, we always bring our child. We communicate with people using Indonesian, and even the language we use in our family is Indonesian, so the first time I introduced English to my child was when he was two years old. At that time, we gave him a video to watch on the YouTube application in English, and it turned out that our child was excited and liked it."(P-1)

Some parents think the pros and cons of giving YouTube videos to children are that, besides making children addicted, they will also tantrum more often.

"Although there are many pros and cons to the provision of videos on the YouTube application, we make rules for our children, such as limiting videos that can be watched, supervising when he is watching, and before I allow watching the video, I first watch whether the video is safe and does not contain elements of violence, and more."(P-1)

Challenges faced by parents

At 4, his parents started giving him books and reading stories. Knauer et al. (2020) show that mothers and fathers who inform their kids about storybooks have an impact on growing their vocabulary. Songs and singing with kids are also stimulus activities that dad and mom can do, but the toddler seems to dislike them and now does not pay attention.

"When he was four years old, I started to buy him fairy tale books and read them before bedtime, but our son did not really like it. Then we tried to understand and found that our son did not dislike listening to stories, but he preferred to find out the story himself through the YouTube application because our son still could not write, so he used voice to search." (P-1)

Astutik and Suryanto (2024)

The statement above states that parents can face this challenge by giving their children another option: watching YouTube. Another challenge that parents face is when their children start to use a foreign language in all their activities, and parents realize that they do not have a good background or foreign language skills, and the solution they take is to learn and practice the foreign language in their family environment.

Family language policy

This study found things that should be a reference for parents, especially in children's language policies. However, in this case, parents give their children the opportunity to choose the language they will use to communicate, but parents do not consider other things, such as the language used to communicate, which in their environment uses Indonesian.

"Our child became an inverted child because he could not get along with other friends because of the language that was not understood, so our child only communicated with us. Even when entering school, it only lasted a few days, and after that, our child did not want to go to school anymore because he considered everyone boring." (P-1)

Parents then process the above statement by looking at language policies to combine the mother tongue and second language in daily implementation. Parents decide to give their children homeschooling and facilitate the children adequately.

Discussion

The study reveals that parental involvement significantly influences children's language development, particularly in acquiring English. Jeong et al. (2021) support this finding, emphasizing the impactful role of parenting on character development. Estlein (2021) also underscores the crucial influence of parenting on expanding children's potential for interaction. Dewi (2021) and Papadopoulos (2020) stated that children's language development is influenced by innate talent, the environment, or other factors that support it, namely physical and intellectual development.

The parent's approach, as illustrated by one participant, involves introducing English to their child at the age of 2 through videos on YouTube. The child's enthusiasm for English content suggests the importance of early exposure and positive experiences. Parents are the central and closest figure in a child's life—an ecological theory proposed by Bronfenbrenner (Bornstein et al., 2012). Regarding parenting style, the parents adopt various strategies, such

Astutik and Suryanto (2024)

as using YouTube videos for language exposure, setting rules, and considering the potential pros and cons. This case is consistent with previous research by Solfema (2013), which shows that parenting style has a significant correlation with the development of children. The role of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in morphology, vocabulary, and narrative development (Sorenson Duncan & Paradis, 2020) aligns with considering the advantages and disadvantages of YouTube videos. The study reflects parents' awareness of potential issues and their implementation of rules. The participant's statement indicates a balanced approach, acknowledging the concerns related to video content but mitigating them through careful monitoring and rule-setting.

Then, in terms of challenges in teaching foreign languages, the parents face challenges such as children preferring self-directed learning through YouTube, a potential language preference shift, and reluctance to read traditional storybooks. (Knauer et al., 2020) Work on the impact of informing children about storybooks on vocabulary growth aligns with the attempted use of fairy tale books. The study suggests that children's language preferences may evolve with exposure. The most critical factors in the family (parental attitude toward language) determine the children's success and the language's victory (Istighfaroh et al., 2023). As described by the participant, understanding and adapting to children's preferences highlights the dynamic nature of language acquisition and the need for flexible approaches.

Regarding the family language policy, the parents grant children autonomy in choosing their language but face challenges, such as becoming introverted due to language barriers in a multilingual environment. The assertion that parental attitudes toward language significantly impact children's language success (Istighfaroh et al., 2023) resonates with the challenges faced. The study emphasizes the importance of considering the broader language environment. The participant's experience underscores the complexity of language policies at the family level, emphasizing the need to balance autonomy and consider the broader linguistic context.

So, based on the discussion above, it can be said that the unit variable underscores the pivotal role of parental attitudes toward language in determining the success of children's language development. The findings illuminate the multifaceted nature of parenting in shaping language acquisition, emphasizing the importance of early exposure, adaptive strategies, and a nuanced understanding of children's evolving preferences. The unit variable,

Astutik and Suryanto (2024)

encompassing parental attitudes, is a critical determinant in navigating the challenges and facilitating children's success in acquiring and using languages.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Conclusion

The study highlights the pivotal role of parental involvement in influencing children's language development, specifically in acquiring English. Empirical evidence supports the significance of parenting in character development and expanding children's potential for interaction. Early exposure to English, exemplified by one participant introducing the language through YouTube at 2, underscores the importance of positive experiences in language acquisition.

Then, regarding parenting style, the parents employ diverse strategies, including using YouTube videos, setting rules, and considering the pros and cons of their parenting styles for language exposure. The findings add that Second Language Acquisition (SLA) aligns with the study, indicating parents' awareness of potential impacts and their proactive implementation of rules. As indicated by a participant, the balanced approach demonstrates the consideration of concerns related to video content, emphasizing careful monitoring and rule-setting.

Furthermore, the parents encounter challenges such as children preferring self-directed learning through YouTube, potential language preference shifts, and reluctance to read traditional storybooks. The previous findings on the impact of informing children about storybooks align with the study, suggesting that children's language preferences may evolve with exposure. As described by a participant, adapting to children's preferences highlights the dynamic nature of language acquisition and underscores the need for flexible approaches.

Then, related to the Family Language Policy, Parents give children autonomy in choosing their language but face challenges, such as becoming introverted due to language barriers in a multilingual environment. The assertion is that parental attitudes toward language significantly impact children's language success. This resonates with the challenges faced, emphasizing the importance of considering the broader language environment. The participant's experience underscores the complexity of language policies at the family level, emphasizing the need to balance autonomy and consider the broader linguistic context.

Astutik and Suryanto (2024)

So, it can be concluded that this research highlights the multifaceted nature of parental parenting in shaping children's language acquisition. These findings underscore the importance of early exposure, adaptive strategies, and a differentiated understanding of children's evolving preferences. The unit variable of parental attitudes towards language emerges as an important determining factor in facing challenges and facilitating children's success in acquiring and using language. Understanding and implementing effective parenting styles and language policies is essential to creating an environment conducive to a child's language development.

Limitation

The study primarily presents the positive aspects of parental approaches without delving deeply into potential counterarguments or contrasting perspectives. A more comprehensive exploration of challenges, failures, or alternative viewpoints could provide a more nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in parenting and language policies.

Furthermore, the study lacks a longitudinal perspective, potentially overlooking the evolving nature of parenting styles and language policies. A longitudinal study could capture changes and adaptations in parenting practices and language policies, providing a more dynamic picture of the subject matter.

In addition, the study heavily relies on self-reported data from parents, introducing the possibility of social desirability bias or inaccuracies in recalling past events. Future research could incorporate diverse data sources, such as direct observations or child assessments, to validate and supplement the self-reported information.

Implication

Parents play a crucial role in fostering a conducive environment for children to acquire English, emphasizing the need for early and positive exposure. Parental awareness and thoughtful strategies contribute to shaping effective parenting styles that facilitate language development in children. Recognizing and adapting to evolving challenges is crucial for parents to navigate and support their children's changing language preferences. Family language policies should balance autonomy and awareness of broader linguistic contexts to foster effective language development in children.

Astutik and Suryanto (2024)

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