

“THE BILINGUALITY OF MIX-MARRIAGE CHILDREN IN THEIR SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION”

Komang Artisti Sekar Linuwih

Non-regular Program English Department
Faculty of Letters and Culture Udayana University

Abstract :

Penelitian ini berjudul “The Bilinguality Of Mix-Marriage Children In Their Second Language Acquisition”. Hal ini difokuskan pada strategi orang tua dari anak-anak pernikahan campuran dalam bagaimana mereka mentransmisi bahasa terutama bahasa kedua untuk anak-anak mereka, juga faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi keterkaitan dengan cara transmisi bahasa, dan untuk mengidentifikasi bahasa apa yang lebih sering digunakan anak-anak dalam pernikahan campuran.

Sebagian besar data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara langsung dengan anak – anak dari pernikahan campuran dan juga dari ibu mereka, saya memberi mereka beberapa kuesioner. Untuk melengkapi pengumpulan data, alat yang digunakan, adalah perekam suara, kamera, notebook, dan salah satu contoh buku yang digunakan oleh anak-anak pernikahan campuran dalam mempelajari bahasa mereka. Oleh karena itu, semua data yang dikumpulkan dianalisa dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif. Teori-teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah the parent’s strategies in transmitting language to the children based on Grosjean (1982), factors that are affecting parents in transmitting the language to the children, and types of parent’s strategies in raising bilingual children proposed by Suzanne Romaine (1995)

Kata Kunci : *Anak-anak, pernikahan campuran, strategi*

1. Background

Language is the most important component of culture because most cultures are being transmitted orally. It is impossible to understand the deep meaning of culture without knowing of its language well. Young children are inherently capable of learning the language as they are maturing. They come into the world as eager learning machines, and language acquisition is a major aspect of learning for children. How children learn the language is not entirely clear; however, it is believed that the children learn it by listening and trying so hard to communicate with adult speakers. Initially, it means that they imitate the phonemes, and later on as they are getting mature, they would eventually learn the grammar as well.

According to Webster dictionary (1961), “bilingual” is defined as ‘having or using two languages especially as spoken with the fluency characteristic of a native speaker; a person using two languages especially habitually and with control like that of a native speaker’ and

“bilingualism” as ‘the constant oral use of two languages’. Another definition about bilingual is that being a perfect bilingual is a person who possesses a minimal competence in only one of the four language skills, listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing, in a language other than his/her mother tongue. There are many languages being spoken around the world, which is estimated to be around 6,000 languages (Grimes, 1992), (www.cal.org).

The children who have bilingual family background tend to be bilingual children and they are capable of learning or adopting more than one languages; however, it depends on the ability of their parents in transmitting the language. The way the children would become bilingual depends on the factors as the parent’s respective native language, the community in where they live and the way where parents could maintain the language use, which they transmit to their children.

2. Problems

The research problem can be formulated as follows:

1. How is the application of Suzanne Romaine’s strategies in the James Alley’s family in terms of language transmission from parents to their children?
2. How is the children’s acquisition of second language comprehension?

3. Aims of the Study

The aims of this study are:

1. To find out how is the application to Romaine’s strategies in the Alley’s family in transmitting the language to their children for the second language and how intimate the language for the children
2. To find out how is the children acquire their second language

4. Method

A study would be better if it is done in steps. In this research the method covers the determination of the source of the data collection methods and technique attached to the data analysis. The primary data was taken from some observations, and the source data is from mix-marriage children. They are AgryaGunayadnya Alley and PrajnaGunahri Alley. They both are American-Indonesian siblings born from Indonesian mother and American Father that made them have double nationalities. To find out what is the dominant language from

the mix-marriage children when expressing their thought in their second language, also to know how far they could pronounce and interpret their second language. Therefore, some questionnaires which are made specially for the mix-marriage children and their parents given and then note taking was made, recording the data from tape recorder and video tape were very necessary in this research. Apart from recording the data, since the distance was far enough, therefore, communication through digital such as email, and face time or Skype were very important in order to support the data. Some library research also needed to support the data; therefore, in this study the idea from Suzanne Romaine is very much helpful.

5. Analysis

5.1 Family Background

Luh Estiti Andarawati was born on May 1973 and she is a Balinese. When she was young she went to study abroad to the United States. She went to Mills College in the San Francisco Bay Area and graduated from it. Aside from being a college student, she also joined Sekar Jaya, which is a group that plays Balinese instruments as well as Balinese dances. During her stay in America, she met her future husband named James Richard Alley, a pure American people who was born in New York. He graduated from University of California Santa Cruz, USA. They decided to get married in Bali and had the traditional Balinese wedding ceremony in Klungkung, Bali in 2002. From their marriage, they have two beautiful children. The first child is a boy named Agrya, and the second child is a girl named Prajna. Now they are staying in Santa Cruz, since Andarawati's husband James now is currently working at Yahoo Company while she is a housewife as well as a part time teacher in teaching the Balinese Dance in Sekar Jaya.

Even though the children are mostly raised in America, Indonesian especially Balinese culture is very important for the family remembering that their mother is a Balinese and almost all her life has been dedicated to Balinese culture. Therefore, their mother wanted to raise the children to be proud of being Balinese-Indonesian-Americans. Since Balinese is an important cultural identity, her mother thinks that it is very important for one to understand their cultural heritage and to be proud of being part of traditions even when they are away from Bali. Since Bali is part of Indonesia and the parents do speak Indonesian, they think Indonesian is an important language; therefore, they strongly consider Indonesian the second

language for their children.

5.2 Parent's Strategies Using Type 1: One Person-One Language

When the children were still young such as two or three years old, they were starting to learn and adapting everything from their surroundings. They did not only increase their vocabulary, they also started to recognize the speech patterns they had heard since birth. At the age around two years old where Agrya and Prajna were already well aware and familiar with English and they started to recognize the speech patterns in English that was the time where their mother decided to teach them their second language, which is Bahasa Indonesia. The community where they mostly stay is America using English where it is the dominant language of the community. In order for them to be able understand and interpret English, their father, which is pure American, was always using English to communicate and teaching things with the children. While their mother using Indonesian to communicate with the children and trying to teach them their second language. Their mother is fully aware that since the children's first language is English and mostly understand everything in English; when their mother were trying to teach something new word in Indonesian. First of all their mother had to say that word in English and then followed by Indonesian. She wanted the children to understand and could comprehend the meaning by their own way without getting confused by their first language. Andarawati knew well that her children would adapt the second language where they would mostly use in their daily life. Especially during their time staying in Bali. In order for the children to be able to learn Indonesian, she would teach the children in dining area, playtime area, and daily life area.

5.3 Type 2: Non-Dominant Home Language/One Language-One Environment

Andarawati and James both have different cultures and native languages. As for Agrya and Prajna they were born from parents with different native languages. Indeed their first language is English and their second language is Indonesian. Since they were all staying in America where the dominant language is English. Therefore, the advantage for Agrya and Prajna to learn Indonesian is quiet minimum due to little access to contact with other Indonesian since there were not many Indonesians living in Santa Cruise. Therefore, Agrya and Prajna were only able to learn Indonesian at home with their mother. Every summer

vacation, Agrya and Prajna with their mother would come to Bali and spend their vacation in their grandparents' house about two or three months in Bali. Their father would stay in America to take care of the house, pet, also he has to work the company where the vacation was a bit hard to get.

During their summer vacation in Bali, Agrya and Prajna would practice their second language, which is Indonesian with the people in their environment where they stay. Since most people in the village and in their grandparents' house do not know English, they have no choice except talking with them in Indonesian. During this time, their mother wanted Agrya and Prajna to practice their Indonesian without her help. She believes practice makes perfect, therefore, she told her children even though they make mistake in Indonesian it is completely fine. That way they could learn from their mistake and improve their Indonesian better. Mostly they would try to communicate with their grandparents' employees using easy Indonesian sentences, whether they were asking for help or anything to them. Sometimes during their stay in Bali, children from the village would come to visit and played with Agrya and Prajna. The village children knew that Agrya and Prajna could only communicate with simple Indonesian since they have not mastered it well enough since they are also still young. Therefore, the children would also use simple words for Agrya and Prajna to communicate.

5.4 Domain Area Where the Second Language Use

During their time staying in Bali, most of the vocabulary they acquired were vocabulary which it belonged to daily food or around kitchen. Because they had to communicate using Indonesian with the maids every time requested something. Agrya and Prajna understood well Indonesian vocabulary and enjoyed practicing it while in dining area. They knew well enough terms for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Apart from knowing the terms for dining, Agrya and Prajna also knew how to request politely using Indonesian for food or snacks, they also knew most of the utensils in Indonesian. Since they did not cook, they had not learned most of cooking tools in Indonesian. Since Agrya and Prajna had been traveling a lot, they eventually learn the vocabulary in transportation terms. Both of them knew well about directions and vehicles in Indonesian. They could pronounce the vehicles yet they could not give directions fully in Indonesian, and sometimes English as their first language would interfere and they eventually used Indonesian as well as English if they faced some

difficulties.

5.5 The Children's Acquisition of Second Language Comprehension

Children needed to be surrounded by spoken language, which was understandable or comprehensible in order to develop their language especially when they were learning their second language. As the children became aware with their second language, they would eventually develop their listening comprehension. If the children were able to comprehend the language, it means they were able to communicate well with their second language. Sometimes children could only slightly comprehend their second language because they were trying to understand every word and interpret it with their first language, and then as learning the word children tended to be confused with the words they had learned and how to use them. In this case, Agrya and Prajna as they were learning Indonesian as their second language, they could comprehend them well yet their speaking ability in Indonesian was about 20%. But that did not mean they were not able to communicate with Indonesian. They did understand when people around them talked and tried to communicate with them in simple Indonesian. But when it came to reply back in Indonesian, they seemed to be stuck in vocabulary and eventually would use some words from their first language. By learning second language or multiple languages, children would become exposed to other cultures as the language and culture are connected. Therefore, children would become more open minded with the cultures and other possibilities. Children who grow up learning two languages are better at multi-tasking. Children who are raised to be bilingual can easily learn two similar sounds of words. Also bilingual children could build new relationships because they have the capability they can talk to people. In this case, Agrya and Prajna could communicate with two communities where they live in America and Bali. They are also open-minded children and appreciate both America and Indonesian cultures. Even though the children were raised to be bilingual and better at multi-tasking. The bilingual children slowly acquired the vocabulary than monolingual children. Because the bilingual children must divide their time between the two languages while the monolingual children only focus on one language. It depends on where the children grow up; the children would feel confused about their cultural identity. The school which the children attended only used one language. Agrya and Prajna were going to school in America where their first language is the dominant.

Therefore, for them to become fully fluent in reading and writing in their second language, there would be additional work for them to learn the second language. Unfortunately, they were already busy enough with their school, which would make them hard to have an extra time to learn the second language.

6. Conclusion

The conclusion based on the analysis from the previous chapter is that James Alley family using 3 types of strategies based on Romaine's idea in how to raise the children to become the bilingual. The first type was one person-one language as the strategy to transmit the language for their children where as they would transmit the first language for the children to acquire at the age of two years their parents would introduce them with Indonesian as their second language. Since Agrya and Prajna were passive with their first language and because the family is currently living in America where the community does not support their second language. Therefore, the strategy of non-dominant home language and the strategy of mixed language was also used. Noni would taught Agrya and Prajna learning Indonesian as the second language at home and would provide the children with the some facilities where they could use it to learn Indonesian. As their father who could also speak Indonesian, he would help the children to learn Indonesian by switching the language he used to communicate with Noni as well as the children.

Personal factors are also important factors that affect the children' ability in both languages. Agrya and Prajna were able to speak and understand their first language, while they could only speak simple Indonesian yet they were able to comprehend well the Indonesian. As they are staying in America where English as their first language is the dominant language, it made them hard to practice the Indonesian when they spent their time at school or with the community. The only time when they could learn their second was when they were at home. Sometimes they would become frustrated and loose their patient in learning Indonesian and in the end they would eventually use English to communicate. Therefore the only full time for learning Indonesian was during they stay in Bali for summer vacation. During their stay in Bali, Agrya and Prajna could comprehend Indonesian quiet well. Their listening ability in Indonesian was about 70% yet their speaking ability was only 20%, due to the interpretation of their first language. One of the advantages for Agrya and

Prajna to be bilingual children was that they would become more open minded, associated, and appreciated cultures. While the disadvantage for being bilingual is that both the children sometimes confused with the language and always frustrated every time they learned Indonesian.

English is the dominant language used by Agrya and Prajna for most of their life, while Indonesian would be the dominant language once they stay in Indonesia. They both would use either English or Indonesian to communicate with the people depending on the person's language.

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