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Weighing on languages: Indonesian parents' attitudes on bilingualism

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the micro-level language policy where parents are the primary 'actors' to socialize language(s) to their children in the family circle. This small-scale study aims to find out 1) parent's language attitudes towards bilingualism; 2) how the attitudes contribute to the decision making on language policy in the family; 3) and what efforts or strategies for maintaining the heritage language (HL). Data were collected from questionnaires to 28 Indonesian parents (from diverse ethnic backgrounds). To gain deeper insights, interviews were also conducted to investigate individual perceptions, feelings, and experience over bilingualism. Based on the analysis, it is found that although most of the families are bilingual with 3-4 languages being spoken at home, there is a limited context where interaction is carried out in HLs. The majority of respondents reported that it is only used to close relatives. The maintenance of HL is symbolic rather than strategic; it is perceived as important because of the sense of family hood to the language. This is confirmed in the following finding that parents feel that national language is far more important (65%) than the heritage language (34.6%) which is slightly below parents' aspiration for the children to learn a foreign language (38.5%). Also, there is little evidence showing parents' explicit language policy which may be affected by familiarity and the status of the language, social institutions, community relations, and family structure.

Keywords: heritage language, family language policy, bilingualism

Introduction

Bilingualism has been a common phenomenon today. People around the world speak at least two languages, one spoken at home between family members while another used by individuals to connect themselves with a larger social and community network. Similarly, most Indonesians are bilingual by the fact that the majority of children are exposed to at least one or two local/native language(s) plus the mastery of *Bahasa Indonesia* that is

mandatory as the national language. Despite its high status as the nation's language, *Bahasa Indonesia* also serves as the *lingua franca* to bridge communication barriers between hundreds of ethnolinguistic groups that speak different languages in Indonesia. In the educational context, *Bahasa Indonesia* is the official medium of instruction (MOI) at all school levels across Indonesian provinces.

Those local/native languages spoken at home by the family members are generally defined as the heritage language (HL). Fishman (2001, in King and Enns-Kananen, 2013) explains that HL refers to "any language that has personal relevance" which might constitute *ancestral*, *indigenous*, and *immigrant* language. We can also call it the minority language in the context of the presence of other language(s) with higher status (i.e. the case of *diglossia*) or in the case of the immigrant context in which the domination of language of the host country is more apparent.

The superiority of Indonesian language has led to a critical question whether this nation's official language will be able to co-exist or otherwise dominate its use over the heritage language(s) spoken by most of the Indonesian bilingual families at home and the extended family context. The fear of national language domination over HL in Indonesia is not without reason. Lewis, Simmons, and Fenning (2016) report that despite the 'linguistic richness' with over 707 languages found in Indonesia, the estimated number of children having access to their minority language at school is less than 10%. The data presented by Kosonen (2005) also places Indonesia at the bottom rank with the populations that have low access to education in their first language.

Although the Indonesian constitution provides room for the minority language through school curriculum, less than 10% of children in Indonesia have experienced education in their HL as the medium of instruction or have this HL taught as the course/subject in local curriculum at their school (UNESCO, 2017). From the data presented, we could see the paradox of being a linguistically rich nation to the real status of HL in Indonesia's education. From such a perspective, we see the official language as the underlying factor that leads to a shift in linguistic practices. At school, children have little access to learn and practice their HL. To make matters worst, there is a tendency that more Indonesian parents decide to introduce and use *Bahasa Indonesia* to their children instead of familiarizing them with the HL. This small-scale study aims to find out 1) parent's language attitudes towards bilingualism; 2) how the attitudes contribute to the decision making on language policy in the family; 3) and parent's efforts or strategies for maintaining the heritage language (HL).

Literature Review

Family Language Policy: Parents as the socializing agent

In defining family language policy (FLP), I will borrow and adopt the definition given by Shohamy (2006) and Schiffman (1996) that it is a specific and manifested planning on the language used within the home setting to the children. Spolsky (2004) divides language policy at two levels: 1) “*micro-level* (families, schools, religious organizations, workplace, and local government); and 2) *macro-level* (supra-national groupings and polities)” (p.5). This study particularly focuses on the *micro-level* of language policy at home setting. Family language policy is not necessarily explicit, yet it is oftentimes implicitly stated, negotiated, and socially conditioned. Although FLP seems to be intentional, the practice of such planning is frequently implicit rather than explicit. There is no formal document or 'blueprints' that requires members of the family to speak language A, not B or C. For instance, in the context of bilingual families, this might refer parents' linguistic choices, use, and practice to their children. It may cover what language to use, in which context, and to whom. The practice of such language policy is often carried out through what Spolsky and Shohamy (2000) mention as 'habitual pattern' when choosing varieties that build linguistic repertoire, ideology, beliefs related to language and language use, and particular attempts that contribute to the construction of language policy.

In brief, FLP, in this study is defined as any attempt or effort that is carried out by parents to introduce, socialize, and practice the language to their children through habitual practices of language use. Such FLP is related to the language ideologies. Spolsky explains that it is parental conceptualizations of "values and statuses" associated with particular language(s) (as cited by Kheirkah, 2016). For instance, the Indonesian language receives higher status than other HL spoken as the language at home setting because it is the national language. Other language(s) such as Banjarese (the language in South Kalimantan) is more valued at the regional level in Central Kalimantan. Many people tend to use this language instead of their Dayak language and its varieties because Banjarese is considered to be more relevant to use. It is a language of trade, and it is spoken by the majority of migrants that dominate the region. Christiansen (2009) points out factors that may influence the decision on FLP, such as socio-political and economy (in Ekaterina, 2018). This is apparent that English and Mandarin are becoming more and more popular in Indonesia. There are many schools offering bilingual education with English and Mandarin as the language of instruction. This is because the two languages are dominant in

the world today. English is considered as the global language while Mandarin is learned due to China's current economic domination.

Responding to the critical condition of HL (competing to co-exist with other languages), parents are at the pivotal position to preserve it. From Spolsky's (2004) micro-level standpoint, it can be said that parents are the socializing agent of languages at home setting. Let us now assume that children within their initial stage of the critical period are raised at home with parents (or with other family members), then home setting where parents-children interaction takes place is the 'first school' that the children ever attend where they learn about languages, cultures, and other important values of life. This home setting is a perfect place to socialize and familiarize the HL to the children.

Language attitudes towards bilingualism

While the majority studies have given a lot of portions to study language attitudes in terms of positive-negative perspectives of particular language use, little has focused on the discussion of parental language attitudes towards bilingualism. Therefore, this research intends to find out the attitudes of parents towards the case of bilingualism. This discussion aims to see how these attitudes contribute to the efforts of maintaining the HL or how the valorization of a particular language might lead to leaving HL to die out in the family context.

Let us define language attitude as simply language users' behavior on linguistic choices, language use, and practices. Ladegaard (2000) (as cited by Wu, 2005) mentions three components of attitudes. These three components are knowledge, emotion, and behavior. Each of these 'items' is considered to pose unique features that represent language attitudes. In order to uncover this language attitude, one might consider conducting research through surveys, an in-depth interview, recording, or narrative method. Combining various techniques is highly encouraged in order to get deeper qualitative data in order to interpret the data with better understanding.

One of the examples is a study carried out by Dharmaputra (2019) on language attitudes of the Indonesian parents and their decision of language spoken at home setting. He argues that during the New Order era, Indonesian parents tend to present positive attitude towards the use of Indonesian language at home as they believe that their children will achieve better at school and secure a promising future. This was the successful ideology of the national language promoted by the government at the time. In addition to that, positive attitude of the language is triggered by "the strongest and most used language". This is in line with Wu's research (2005) that confirms current theoretical perspectives. Parents who hold stronger

views to preserve the HL will eventually influence children to maintain their HL proficiency.

Houwer (1999) suggests the importance of parental ideologies or attitudes towards maintaining the HL. At home setting, parents should decide which language to use and for what purposes to their children. Children who are exposed to the native majority will have less opportunity to practice their HL in environmental or social settings, and parent's valorization over the language of the host country will only worsen the condition. Home is the only place where HL can be preserved with parents being able to identify the purposes (and maybe the context to which that language is put into practice).

However, the use and practice of HL within familial domain also depend on language preference at home. In most of the scholarly papers, language preference can only happen if the users have positive attitudes towards the language. If not, then there will be a language shift on the language practice and use as the result of negative language attitude. Yet, language attitude is more than just about positive or negative attitudes but it also involves a very complex domain that may affect the decision making whether to use or not use the language. Holmes (1992) introduces three levels of language attitudes; 1) attitudes towards particular social or ethnic group; 2) attitudes towards the language; and 3) attitudes towards the speakers of that language. Therefore, studying language attitudes will not be enough by just approaching the language, but it should also involve a particular social/ethnic group to which the language is used and the users of the language who use the language as a means of communication.

Bilingualism and bilingual conditions

According to Baker (2011), the context of bilingualism is divided into two. Such particular context of bilingualism is dependable on whether there is a speech community existing around us or not. The first context is called *endogenous*. This is the condition in which the speech communities exist, and more than one language is used by bilinguals and multilingual families almost every day. The second context of bilingualism is called *exogenous*. This is defined as a situation in which the L2 speech community does not exist. To illustrate, in Indonesia, most people speak at least two languages with Indonesian language becomes the lingua franca. It bridges the language that connects one speech community to the other. Local/heritage language is used when speaking to elders or close relatives. When people migrating to the capital city, Jakarta, some might encounter the exogenous context of bilingualism where no HL speakers exist. This exogenous condition has pushed the migrants to adjust to the situation by

gradually leaving their HL and adopt the new language of the host "country".

Studies have shown how migrants' children have shifted from their HL to adopt the language of the host country as a result of the assimilation process. Wu (2015) points out the loss and the shift of minority languages in the United States which is due to the process of acculturation and assimilation to English. Most of the immigrants who come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds do not use their HL when speaking to their children. Portes and Hao (as cited by Wu, 2015) metaphorically illustrate the US as the "cemetery" of the immigrants' mother tongues that do not survive to the third generation. Oller and Eilers (2002) present a strong tendency toward assimilation and language shift in the USA. They claim that "the culture of the United States has been notably effective in fostering assimilation to English as the primary and the only language of its inhabitants" (p. 44). They note that individuals from Spanish background as well as minority language speakers have scarcely used their language while communicating with their peers and unlikely to use that minority language at home. By this empirical evidence, it is predicted that by the near future, the number of people from minority languages who speak minority languages will dramatically decline. Thus, the big picture we are presented with is that the social context of the United States has made most of the immigrant families adapt to the language of the host country and slowly leave their HL which they might consider to have little benefit. This has made people 'socially-conditioned' to use and practice English whose context of use is far clearer than their HL.

Moving to a new settlement often poses challenges for children. Despite their immigrant status, those challenges are also associated with the cultures and languages unfamiliar to them. Children are faced with challenges linguistically, culturally, and socially. Linguistically, these children are encouraged to learn and adapt to a new language and all the linguistic properties of that language which is unfamiliar to them. However, sooner or later children will soon adapt to the challenges as they immerse in that culture. The adaptation is required in order to comply with the 'successful integration' to the host country (Haque, 2011).

Oftentimes, during the process of language immersion, bilingual children are puzzled with their identity. Prior to coming to a new settlement with the immigrant status, children have already acquired their non-native identity that is tied to their L1. However, there will be a condition in which children have little contact with the L1 speech community or worst the absence of speech community in the new settlement (Hamers & Blanc, 2004). This kind of situation normally opens the door for linguistic and cultural assimilation to the native language (or culture) of the host country

and hence leads to the construction of a new identity as children tend to favor the language of the host country instead of their HL. It also poses a challenge to parents who introduce the children with the HL. In many situations, the immigrant parents will valorize or place the language of the host country higher than their home language. As a consequence, this will lead to a shift in the L1 or HL. In order to avoid such things, happen, parents might designate their own language policy at home in order to maintain HL.

Other research also finds that consistency in parents' language policy is significant in the maintenance of HL. Pan (1995) who studies Chinese families living in the USA found that the inconsistency of the parents that frequently switch the language into English while speaking to their children has consequently led to the language shift from Chinese to English. Having a lack of consistency of HL practices at home might allow the language of the host country to take over the place of HL thus dominate the HL identity on their children.

The process of the immersion to a new culture in migrant or transnational contexts then raises complex topics to be discussed: 1) parents' language attitudes towards bilingualism; 2) how these attitudes contribute to the decision making on what language to use in the family setting; and 3) efforts or strategies for maintaining HL in the family. This paper aims to address the first topic by exploring language use, choice, practice, and aspirations in bilingual families. The second topic deals with the parents' perceptions over the use and practice of the languages in the family and how these perceptions might constitute the decision making of language policy (if any). In addition to those two topics, the paper also attempts to discover what strategies or efforts that parents do to preserve or maintain the heritage language in the family.

Research Methodology

The following research is based on a small-scale study of 28 Indonesian parents' language attitudes towards the case of bilingualism. It also attempts to find out whether those attitudes contribute to the decision making on the family language policy. Equally important, any strategies associated with the maintenance of the heritage language within Indonesian bilingual families are also explored. It is a part of current objectives to see if there is any effort to maintain the heritage language in the family. Other unique findings such as identity formation, the case of Indonesian diaspora, language shift, and other topics are treated as supplementary discussions on this paper.

In order to do that, research questions are designed as the 'guiding direction' of this paper. These research questions are adopted from Grosjean (as cited in Wei, 2000) that suggests 6 questions to be addressed when

studying bilingual speakers; 1) language history and language relationship; 2) language stability; 3) function of languages; 4) language proficiency; 5) language modes; and 6) biographical data (p. 444). Those 6 suggested questions are then formulated into two critical questions stated as follows:

- 1) What are parents' language attitudes toward bilingualism?
- 2) How do those attitudes help parents make decisions about what language(s) to use in certain contexts (for example 'family domain')? And what are their efforts in maintaining each language?

This research is descriptive in nature. It employs a mixed inquiry model for data collection by using survey instrument (questionnaires) to arrive at the quantitative measures for parents' language attitudes and how these attitudes contribute towards the decision making on language policy. While the survey alone is not enough to get the holistic picture of the topic, particularly on parents' perspectives and beliefs, then semi-structured interviews are employed as another data collection instrument. This in-depth interview was conducted with 5 respondents who volunteered to participate.

As mentioned earlier, this research paper owns two objectives: 1) it aims to find out the attitudes of the Indonesian parents towards the case of bilingualism; and 2) how those attitudes contribute to the decision making of language policy. Additionally, this paper also discusses the efforts (if any) of that parents do to maintain the HL in the family through the language policy.

There are 28 Indonesian parents who participate in an online survey. The gender distribution for the respondent is balanced. There are 14 males (father) and 14 females (mother). The ethnic and linguistic backgrounds of the respondents are native Javanese speakers, Malay Bangka, Dayaknese, Banjarese Malay, Chinese dialects (Hokkien, Tio Ciu), Padang, Sundanese, West Nusatenggara (Lombok).

As for research instruments, this research employs at least two research instruments that are constructed based on the exploration of the issues on bilingualism, the guiding questions models by Grosjean (as cited by Wei, 2000). The first research instrument is the questionnaires that cover 25 specific questions regarding demographic information of the respondents, family structure, linguistic profiles of the family, context of the language use, language-related future aspirations, personal experience in the case of bilingualism, and the perceptions on language and identity. The second instrument is a set of interview questions that follow-up the survey to gain in-depth information from the selected respondents. It is more concerned with the perceptual answers, feelings, and experiences on bilingualism.

When identifying communicative events/issues, the researcher focuses on parental language attitudes towards bilingualism and how these attitudes contribute to the decision making on the language policy. Although

the focus has been specific to two core research questions, there are other issues that are observed to be interesting findings to be presented in this research such as identity formation, family structures on bilingualism, and heritage language maintenance.

Findings and discussions

Parents' language attitudes towards bilingualism

As earlier mentioned, most Indonesians are exposed to at least two languages. One language is considered as the heritage or minority ethnic language used at home setting, to other relatives, spouses, and familial domains while another is *Bahasa Indonesia* which is mandatory to be acquired as the national language. In this section, we will see the linguistic profiles of 28 parents on the language(s) that they speak.

If we see table 1 on the linguistic profiles of bilingual families, we could derive several points. First, each of the respondents knows between 3-4 languages; one perceived as the local language, second is the Indonesian language, whereas the third is other foreign or local languages that the respondents get from their experiences. Second, seven (7) people claim that Indonesian language as their first language whereas the majority (21) people claim that the local languages are perceived as their first language (L1).

Although most of the respondents (24 out of 28) know and speak 3-4 languages, HL seems to be used only when speaking to the other family members or relatives and it is sometimes combined with *Bahasa Indonesia*. Likewise, parents also use *Bahasa Indonesia* combined with the local languages when speaking to spouse. In contrast, 23 respondents answer that they use *Bahasa Indonesia* when speaking to children, some combine it with English and local/heritage languages.

Language use and functions

The languages are used specifically in different contexts. As explained previously, the local (or heritage) languages are mostly used when interacting with the other family members such as grandparents, relatives, cousins, who are not in the main (nuclear) family structure. While communicating with children, the majority of the respondents (24 out of 28) decide to use Indonesian or English instead of the local languages. However, several respondents use local languages to their children mixed with *Bahasa Indonesia*.

Table 2 shows that the national language received the highest percentage as the children's first language (61.5%) compared to just 23.1% of heritage language and 23.1% foreign language. This may indicate the

parents' language practice at home in which parents prefer to use *Bahasa Indonesia* while speaking to their children.

Table 1
Linguistic profiles of bilingual families

Name	Language Use in Familial Domains						Ethnic/Language Background
	1 st or native language	2 nd language	3 rd or 4 th language(s)	To spouse	To children	To other family members	
Respondent 1	Tio Ciu	Indonesian	English	Indonesian English	Indonesian & English	Indonesian, English, Tio Chiu	Native of Tio Ciu (Dialect of Hokien)
Respondent 2	Indonesian,	Javanese	Sundanese	Indonesian	Indonesian	Javanese & Sundanese	Native of Javanese & Sundanese
Respondent 3	Indonesian	English	Arabic	Indonesian	Indonesian & English	Indonesian	Native of Sasaknese
Respondent 4	Dayaknese	Banjarese	Indonesian	Banjarese	Banjarese	Dayaknese	Native of Dayak Katingan
Respondent 5	Javanese	Indonesian	English	Indonesian	English-Indonesian	Javanese	Native of Javanese (Yogyakarta)
Respondent 6	Indonesian	Mandarin, Hokien, Tio Ciu	English	Indonesia	Hokien, Indonesia	Hokien	Native of Hokien & Tio Ciu
Respondent 7	Indonesia	Unknown	Unknown	(divorced)	Indonesia	Local language (not mentioned)	-
Respondent 8	Javanese	Indonesian	English	Javanese	English, Indonesian	Javanese	Native of Javanese (Yogyakarta)
Respondent 9	Dayak (not mentioned)	Indonesian	English	Indonesian	Indonesian, English	Indonesian	Native of Dayaknese
Respondent 10	Javanese	Indonesian	Javanese, Madurese, Melayu	Indonesian	Indonesian (the child is under 5 months old)	Indonesian	Native of Javanese (eastern dialect)
Respondent 11	Javanese	Indonesian	English	Javanese, Indonesian	Javanese, Indonesian, and English (a little bit)	Javanese (non-standard and <i>Krama</i> , speech level, polite version)	Native of Javanese (Yogyakarta)
Respondent 12	Banjarese	Indonesian	--	Banjarese	Banjarese	Banjarese	Native of Dayaknese
Respondent 13	Bangka Malay	Indonesian	Indonesia	Indonesia	Indonesia	Bangka Malay	Native of Bangka Malay

Table 2
Children's first language, parents' perspectives

Languages	Percentage
Heritage/local languages	23.1%
National language (Indonesian)	61.5%
Foreign language (i.e. English/mandarin).	23.1%

Table 3
Participants' language use

Languages	The percentage of language use			
	Almost never	Rarely	Sometimes	Everyday
Heritage language	23.1%	19.2%	19.2	28.4%
Indonesian language	0%	3.8%	7.7%	88.5%

Table 3 shows that there is a huge gap in the linguistic choices that parents prefer to use when communicating with the children. The superiority of *Bahasa Indonesia* makes it score 88.5% compared to just 28.4% on heritage language use. However, this is not the case of the language valorization. Instead, parents feel more comfortable using Indonesian language to their children and consider the importance of *Bahasa Indonesia* as the national language to communicate with others that come from different cultural backgrounds. Those who decide to use local language claim that it is critical to preserve the cultural identity and think that the Indonesian language could be learned at school in a more formal setting.

Parents' related feeling and belonging to particular language(s)

There seems to be a paradox of parents' language attitudes towards bilingualism on their children. Table 4 shows that *Bahasa Indonesia* is still the dominant language use when communicating with their children (62%). In contrast, the local language gains only 34.6% which is lesser than parents' interests to introduce the foreign language 38.5%. Most of the respondents want their children to be able to speak the local language to preserve their native culture. However, language practice at home is not carried out in that local language. It is preserved in a more symbolic way, i.e. it is treated as merely an emblem of one's heritage cultural identity, rather than the linguistic medium of one's cultural identity.

Table 4
the most important language my child needs to learn

Heritage language	34.6%
National (Indonesian) language	65.4%
Foreign language	38.5%

Only a small number of respondents (34.6 %) introduced children with the HL as their L1 by using it at home. These parents also consider

exposing children to the ‘big family’ as a good opportunity to make the children familiar with the HL since it is used extensively when interacting with other family members; grandparents, cousins, uncles, and etc.

Language domination and valorization

We have so far seen that the percentage of *Bahasa Indonesia* among the bilingual family from parents to children is more dominant than the heritage language. However, this does not seem to be the case of valorization of *Bahasa Indonesia*. There are several reasons to explain and that we will see personal answers from the respondents. The following is an excerpt from R12 who is a native Dayaknese but speak Banjarese and Indonesian to his children. When asked why he used Indonesian and Banjarese instead of Dayaknese, this is how he responded:

I think this is all because of the environment I've been living in. When I was a child, there was no friend to speak in local (Dayaknese language). So, it feels weird to speak that language to my children. I normally use Banjarese and Indonesian to my children instead of Dayaknese. Both are more useful to master because the majority of people in Sampit speak Banjarese and my children also need to learn Indonesian to communicate with other people.

From the above excerpt, we can see that there is no case of valuing either Banjarese or Indonesian over Dayaknese language. The speaker does not have an opportunity to practice the language when he was a child and feels more comfortable to speak the majority language. According to Bakers (2011), in this particular condition, the speaker tends to use Banjarese or Indonesian due to the exogenous condition in which there is scarcely speech community to talk to in the Dayaknese language.

In addition to the exogenous condition, the diglossia situation in the area where the HL is used also affects FLP. This condition tends to influence respondents' decision to use *Bahasa Indonesia* instead of the heritage language when communicating with their children. R26, who is a native of Sundanese and Javanese, explains her decision not to use Javanese with her children as follows:

I don't really do it intentionally. But if you ask me to give you the answer, then I will tell you that I feel worried that he [her son] will speak non-standard Javanese to the elders. I'm afraid if he does, then he will be considered to be an impolite kid. I myself don't really understand that speech levels.

R26 concerns of using Javanese language with her children is related to the three speech levels of Javanese to express various degree of politeness and its intricate etiquette of use (Poedjosoedarmo, 1968). Javanese language has three speech levels: *Ngoko* (non-polite and informal), *Madyo* (semi polite and semi-formal), and *Kromo* (polite and formal). The complex system of these levels is not easy to acquire. Each level is used in a particular speech communicative event and is appropriated with whom the speaker is addressing. Misused variety may jeopardize speakers' communication goals as well as their positive face. R26 little knowledge of *Kromo* speech level unable her to use and teach this High variety to her son. She is also reluctant to use the *Ngoko* and *Madyo* varieties with her son to avoid him from adopting her acquired varieties (without the awareness of appropriating the speech level) to be used with elder Javanese speakers. *Bahasa Indonesia*, in this case, is considered as a more neutral language to be used with the elders in order to avoid being misunderstood as an impolite speaker.

Different from R26, R22 is confident with her use of Javanese. She perceives their local language positively that they teach and demand their children to use Javanese at home and Indonesian at school among friends. This is because mother and father are both coming from the same cultural background, native Javanese (Yogyakarta) and live in a dominantly Javanese language use community.

Yes, my husband and I have agreed to introduce Javanese language to our children. Indonesian language could be learned at school, while English it could be later studied in an English course. We are living in Javanese speech communities where most of the people speak Javanese. It sounds funny if my son communicates to these people in Bahasa Indonesia or English.

To R22, Javanese is the immediate language use of the community she lives in and it is treated as a default language. Their decision to use Javanese at home came quite naturally since both she and her husband are both coming from the same linguistic and cultural backgrounds. *Bahasa Indonesia* is also acquired quite easily since it is used as the language of instruction in her children's schools.

On the survey, there are two Indonesian respondents who currently live and bring their children along with them overseas. I take (R8) one of this Indonesian diaspora to gain unique information about how she perceives her son bilingualism. Both she and her husband are the native Javanese speakers and speak Javanese to each other and other family members. However, the two children are apparently using and speaking English as their first language while Indonesian is learned at the Australian school.

I speak Javanese to my husband and my big family (father and other relatives). I use English because this is the only language my children understand. And I also combine it with Bahasa Indonesia so that my children know where they come from. English is used in many contexts here in Australia at school, campus, neighborhood, between friends. ...I want them to speak English as their native language, [I use] Indonesian [to my children] because we are Indonesian, and [I use] Javanese because the ethnic root is Javanese.

R8 claims that English is the only language their children understand and use as their L1. Both R8 and her husband are using Javanese to talk to each other whereas Indonesian and English are used when talking to the children as the means of daily communication. R8 decision to let her children acquire English as their L1 at home is driven from the necessity to function in their immediate communication (social and educational) settings. R8 feels the urgency to acquire English for her children's social and educational needs. English is used by the children at school, between friends, watching movies, and youtube. R8 uses Indonesian to her children at home and at any Indonesian event in order to socialize *Bahasa Indonesia* as the national language. R8's decision echoes Haque's (2011) description of the challenges that children of migrants family when entering a new host country. They have to face unfamiliar linguistic, cultural, and social challenges and learned to cope with them immediately. Most of the time, this coping system required them to comply with the host country's linguistic, cultural, and social conventions.

Conclusion

This paper has presented how *Bahasa Indonesia* is still the dominant language preferred by respondents of this survey. This decision is affected by its status as the national language, a lingua franca to be used for a wider audience across the nation. HL is mostly used when speaking to other family members or relatives. Although most respondents state that it is important to preserve HL, respondents were clueless about how to execute it. HL seems to be treated as merely an emblem of one's heritage cultural identity, rather than the linguistic medium of one's cultural identity.

Other factors affecting respondents' FLP are related to the bilingualism conditions of their current living area. The absence of HL speech community and the complexity of the HL linguistic and sociolinguistic system are considered to be big challenges for migrant families to teach their children the HL. The urgent needs of acquiring the

host community/country's linguistic conventions are of essential for their children to enter and participate in this speech community. Weighing on their intentions to maintain HL and the immediate needs of acquiring the dominant language, most parents chose to make a pragmatic decision that felt more practical and realistic for their current living situation.

However, since the scope of this study is very small, it does not intend to generalize its findings to represent Indonesian parents. Further study can help to bring clarity on the tendency of Indonesian parents' FLP on a larger scale. It will also be benefitting to study mobile parents' FLP (those who move to other parts in the country) and their reasons behind their decision to find out the various challenges and strategies in preserving HL.

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