



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



The influence of mother language on children's oral language ability in efforts to improve children's reading and writing ability in Pematang Serai village, Langkat district

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Abstract

Low levels of education and interest in reading are suspected to be the cause of the decline in the character values of the millennial generation. The absence of PAUD schools is one of the obstacles for the children of Pematang Serai Village to get to know preschool education. Preschool education is a golden opportunity for children to recognize letters and numbers. Another problem that occurs in the village of Pematang Serai is a weak insight into tourism development: many people from the village of Pematang Serai do not understand the positive impact of tourism on economic, social, natural, and cultural conservation for the welfare of society. This is inseparable from the academic abilities of the people of Pematang Serai Village which are still minimal so this research is expected to have an impact on the people of Pematang Serai Village, especially children who will become the next generation of the nation. Based on the description and results of data analysis, it was found that language changes in the oral examination of bilingual children when interacting or attending lessons in class, namely the change in the use of standard non-standard varieties or vice versa. The change from standard variety to non-standard variety occurs when interactions occur between children or between children and teachers who share the same mother tongue.

Keywords: Literacy Skills; Mother Tongue; Spoken Language Skills; Indonesia

1. Introduction

Language is a capacity for humans to obtain and use communication well. Language can also let people know about their culture, nature, religion, and civilization. Communities can also use language that is related to their needs and by using language they participate in communication where they know the context of language use.

By speaking a person can interact with each other to form social relations in society, and they can also convey information to each other and gain a lot of knowledge about the world. Language is also a unique structure possessed by humans. Language is very closely related to thinking. Some even argue that the two cannot be separated. Language can also shape human thoughts, therefore language is very important in human life. Without language, humans cannot communicate perfectly and without communication, the world will be in chaos. Because of the importance of language for humans, language must be studied scientifically, so that it can be used as well as possible and utilized as much as possible.

Mastery of a language by a child begins with the acquisition of the first language which is often called the mother tongue (B1). Language acquisition is a very long process since the child does not know a language until he is fluent in the language. After the mother tongue is acquired, at a certain age another child or second language (B2) that he knows as a treasure trove of new knowledge. Zaenal and Amran (2018: 77) say the mother tongue is the first language that is

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mastered by humans since the beginning of their lives through interaction with fellow members of their language community, such as family and the community environment. This shows that the first language (B1) is an initial process that is obtained by children in recognizing sounds and symbols which is called language.

If in the initial process, it shows a good understanding and income from the family and the language environment it acquires, the process of acquiring the language will then get easier. These language stages have a major influence on the child's language acquisition process. Language acquisition is the process of understanding and producing (production) language in children through several stages ranging from groping to fluency in speaking.

Low levels of education and interest in reading are suspected to be the cause of the decline in the character values of the millennial generation. The absence of PAUD schools is one of the obstacles for the children of Pematang Serai Village to get to know preschool education. Preschool education is a golden opportunity for children to recognize letters and numbers.

Another problem that occurs in the village of Pematang Serai is a weak insight into tourism development: many people from the village of Pematang Serai do not understand the positive impact of tourism on economic, social, natural, and cultural conservation for the welfare of society. This is inseparable from the academic abilities of the people of Pematang Serai Village which are still minimal so this research is expected to have an impact on the people of Pematang Serai Village, especially children who will become the next generation of the nation.

2. Material and methods

2.1. Language Acquisition Theory

Language acquisition is a process used by children to adopt a series of increasingly complicated hypotheses, or theories that are still latent or hidden that might very well occur, with the utterances of their parents until he chooses, based on a measure or from language. (Indrawati and Santi: 2015). The explanation of language acquisition can be seen from daily observations of the development of a child (in this case a normal child) processing his language skills. Usually what these children do, among others, starts from hearing and observing the sounds of the language around them without being told or on purpose. Then over time, what he hears and what he observes develops continuously step by step according to the development of intellectual abilities and the socio-cultural background that shapes them. So it can be concluded that language acquisition is a process in which children learn and then acquire fluency in the language.

The language fluency in question is his mother tongue or the first language he hears. The term acquisition is used for the equivalent of the English term acquisition, namely the process of mastering a language that is carried out by a child naturally when he learns his mother tongue. The process of children getting to know and communicate with their environment verbally is called the child's language acquisition. Acquisition of the first language occurs when a child who was original without language has now acquired one language. During the acquisition of children's language, children are more directed at the function of communication than the form of their language. The acquisition of children's language can be said to have the characteristics of continuity, having a continuum, which moves from simple one-word utterances to more complex word combinations.

Acquisition of the first language is very closely related to the development of cognitive development, namely first, if the child can produce utterances that are basic to neat grammar, it does not automatically imply that the child has mastered the language in question properly. Second, speakers must obtain cognitive categories that underlie various expressive meanings of natural languages, such as words, spaces, modalities, qualities, and so on. Cognitive requirements for language acquisition are more demanded in second language acquisition than in first language acquisition.

2.2. Stages of Language Acquisition

The development of language acquisition is divided into three periods, namely: (a) the diary period; (b) the large sample period; (c) the longitudinal review period. In this method, parents keep a diary whose contents record the child's language development, which is often called a "baby biography". The same opinion was previously expressed that the development of language acquisition will always go through stages, as well as sound acquisition. In the process of acquiring sounds, the child's ability to move from making sounds to making sense. The period of making a distinction between two sounds can be recognized during the first year, namely

- The vocalization and pre-feeling period and
- The groping period.

Mustakim (2020: 244) states that babbling occurs at the age of 8 to 10 months. Differences of opinion like this are possible. What needs to be remembered is that a child's ability to chatter depends on a child's neurological development.

2.3. Phonological Acquisition Stage

The acquisition of phonology or language sounds begins with the acquisition of basic sounds. According to Jakobson (in Putrayasa and Ida, 2017:445) the basic sounds in human speech are /p/, /a/, /i/, /u/, /t/, /c/, /m/, and so on. Then at the age of 1 year, the child begins to fill these sounds with other sounds. For example /p/ combined with /a/ becomes /pa/ and /m/ combined with /a/ becomes /ma/. After the child can produce sound, over time, the child will be more proficient in producing sound. This is influenced by the environment, cognition, and also the means of speech.

Physiologically, newborn children have very striking differences in language organs compared to adults. The brain weighs only 30% of the size of an adult. The still narrow mouth cavity was almost filled by the tongue. Increasing age will widen the oral cavity. This growth provides greater space for children to produce language sounds. To further clarify the stages of acquiring the first language, the stages of acquiring a child's language are described below. According to Hamalik (2018: 153) the language acquisition stage is divided into four stages, namely pre-arrival, groping, one-word stage, and word-combination stage.

2.4. Method

The research was carried out in several stages, namely the preliminary stage, data analysis, data interpretation, and concluding, with the following stages: The preliminary stage was carried out by making initial observations, finding problem phenomena and identifying initial problems in research, and making research proposals. The second stage is the stage of collecting data by interviewing. The third stage is the data analysis stage analyzing through a descriptive quantitative approach.

This descriptive research follows the steps of Miles and Huberman (Hikmat, 2021: 24-27), namely: Data collection, namely collecting data in the form of words using interviews, observations, document digests, recording, and recording. Data reduction, namely summarizing, choosing the main things, focusing on the important things, looking for themes and patterns, and "setting aside" what is not necessary. Data display (presentation of data), namely showing data, classifying data, and presenting it in the form of text that is narrative or chart. Conclusion drawing/verification, namely drawing conclusions and verification so that researchers can formulate findings.

The fourth stage is data interpretation by interpreting the results of the predicted values of each variable and comparing them with the results of previous studies. The conclusion-drawing stage is summarizing the results achieved and recommending them to related parties.

3. Results

In general, we know that people from various regions have their regional languages, but if the use of this regional language is used to interact with others, it will certainly be difficult for them to understand each other's languages, because that is the use of Indonesian which has a function as a unifying tool. However, the use of Indonesian is used by the village community or village people. The use of Indonesian in the village is used only as needed unlike in urban areas which tend to be used more often. The language of the village community is generally the regional language, namely the language they have known since they were born, this regional language is also referred to as the mother tongue.

The use of the Indonesian language in the village can be observed when the village has a visitor to the village who comes either for vacation or for other purposes. In the interaction between visitors and the village community, there will be interaction using the Indonesian language, especially if the visitor does not master the language of the village he is visiting. Interaction using the Indonesian language can run optimally or vice versa, because of the possibility of using two languages in one communication between visitors and the village community. a little, because the village community will use Indonesian and regional languages to interact together, and as a result, communication will not be optimal.

The ability to speak Indonesian is one of the requirements that must be fulfilled by Indonesian people, including elementary school students. In the field of education and teaching in elementary schools, Indonesian is the main subject. Indonesian language lessons are taught to students based on the applicable curriculum, which (the basic education curriculum) contains several learning objectives. One of the main goals is that students are able and skilled in speaking Indonesian properly and correctly after experiencing the teaching and learning process at school. Language skills do

not only cover one aspect, but include the ability to read, write, listen (listen), and speak. In the process of acquisition and use, these language skills are interrelated.

Several things need to be stated, especially the various issues that will be discussed in this chapter. The things in question are the parts related to the various problems that occur in this study, especially the students' ability to speak (oral language). The parts that will be discussed are (1) the structure of the variety of spoken language (phonology, morphology, lexical, syntax); (2) the variety of spoken language; (3) language function; (4) the relationship between the use of variety and language functions; (5) content of communication messages; and (6) the teacher's understanding of the contents/messages conveyed by bilingual elementary school children. These parts formally occur in the context of classroom communication through the teaching and learning process.

3.1. Language Structure Oral Variety of Bilingual Children in Pematang Serai Village

In its form, the language we use consists of sound elements, morphological forms, syntax, and semantics. The elements of language are no longer seen as separate things. In spoken language, these elements are strung together in the form of interrelated sentences. The first sentence is used as a reference for the appearance of the second sentence, the second sentence can bring up the third sentence, and so on. Therefore, understanding someone's spoken language can be done, among others, by analyzing the elements of language and the rules that apply in that language. The description above illustrates that the language structure of children's spoken variety can also be analyzed through the elements of the language they use. In addition, the rules that apply can also be used as a standard benchmark for whether or not the use of language as a whole.

From the description and results of data analysis, the structure of the spoken language of bilingual children is still influenced by their mother tongue and spoken language. This is caused by the environment in which language events occur, such as the frequency of use of the dominant mother tongue. Children tend to use their mother tongue more often than Indonesian when they are at home. This incident occurred because environmental factors (family and community) dominated the use of the local language. The effect of this incident was that the use of Indonesian in class was colored by regional languages. In this case, several things can be stated regarding the incident.

- The effort made by the teacher during the learning process is that the teacher uses good Indonesian when teaching in class. During the learning process, various expressions of thoughts and feelings occur through spoken language. In that event also occurred the use of spoken language structures in children. Because in general, the students are bilingual, in this event, the variety of spoken language (standard and non-standard) cannot be avoided. Nonetheless, in general, children have been able to use a set of linguistic markers needed in the spoken language so that they can express thoughts and feelings with others. The entire language system includes the fields of phonology, morphology, lexical, semantics, and syntax.
- In principle, the use of standard and non-standard varieties in communication events does not interfere with the teaching and learning process in the classroom. This is caused by the use of standard variance which is used more often than a non-standard variance. Non-standard variety is used by children based on situational and social considerations. The situation or context of events that occurred did expect the use of non-standard varieties by children. For example, when borrowing books, ordering, asking, and getting angry with friends who share the same language (mother tongue).

Elementary school-age children have mastered the structure of language perfectly. At this age children besides having mature speech organs, are also able to respond to other people's speech. The maturity of children can be manifested verbally, such as through the use of morphological forms in complex sentences. The data obtained in this study also shows that the use of morphological forms in bilingual children's sentences is structurally sound. This can be seen in the ability to use affixation, compounding, and repetition. There are only a few errors in the use of affixes due to the influence of local language or everyday conversational language.

This can be seen, among other things, in the omission of the prefixes in the words *manat*, *metal*, *shoot*, and *mobile* (non-standard), which should have been *climbing*, *picking*, *shooting*, and *buying* (standard). Errors also occur in the words *taking* and *waiting* (not standard), should have *taken* and *waited*. In addition, there were also some errors in the use of repeated words. What is meant is the *stars* and *swirls* (not standard), should be the *stars* and *swirls*. One of the most perfect things is the use of compounding. That is, no errors were found in the use of compound words in the spoken language of bilingual children.

The choice of words, vocabulary, or terms, and their use in speech greatly affect the content of the conversation. The right choice of words or terms and the use of standard words in the context of speech will reflect language skills. That

is, the meaning or content of the speech will be represented clearly based on the accuracy of its use. In this case, the choice of words or terms used by bilingual children in general can be said to be good (standard) when measured by the context of the conversation. Various choices and use of words are directly related to the topic of conversation, directed, contextual, and situational.

There are only a few choices of words that deviate due to the influence of the mother tongue and everyday social language. The choice and use of regional words are used by bilingual children because of the difficulty in finding equivalents. This is found in regional words (Javanese), such as panga, nyucuk, and bandil (Indonesian = tree branch, pecking food through a bird's beak, and throwing stones with a slingshot). In addition, there are several choices and uses of words that are caused by social language. These words include just, no, and durian (not standard), it should be just, only, no, and durian (standard).

4. Discussion

The various descriptions above are basically due to several factors. The most dominant factor is because in general Indonesian society, including elementary school children, is classified as a bilingual society. As a bilingual society, of course, they can use more than one language. This situation will certainly affect their use of Indonesian in everyday communication, both at the formal and non-formal levels.

The bilingualism of a person in society can be seen in the ability to use two or more languages. Before a person masters two or more languages, the first thing that influences the basis of a person's language is generally the mother tongue. Mother tongue, which is the first language is usually obtained in the family or community environment. The tendency to use the mother tongue or first language is highly dependent on the dominant language used in society. Especially in rural areas, usually, the dominant language is the regional mother tongue. In the next period, according to their age, a person will learn a second language. For children, this will be experienced when children start going to school. From the passage of time and school age, second languages will be obtained and mastered, so that they can master more than one language.

Most of the community, including elementary school children, mostly speak the regional mother tongue. Even though children have entered school, because most people use local languages, it is the use of regional languages that tends to be dominant in communicating. This is proven because local languages are used more often when compared to other languages, for example Indonesian. Thus, we are not surprised if the local language or conversational language will affect the use of Indonesian speakers.

Thus the effort that can be made in improving children's literacy skills in the village is the Storytelling Learning Method (storytelling). A language is a tool for communicating to convey feelings or ideas that you want to express. This language ability is very important for children because this language is used to communicate with children in the environment and with other people. the telling story method helps children to improve their language by the way the child conveys what he wants to say. For this reason, it is very necessary to have a method that needs to be done by parents in developing the abilities of their children. One method that is considered appropriate for developing children's language skills is the storytelling method.

5. Conclusion

Based on the description and results of data analysis, it was found that language changes in the oral examination of bilingual children when interacting or participating in class lessons, namely the change in the use of standard non-standard varieties or vice versa. The change from standard variety to non-standard variety occurs when interactions occur between children or between children and teachers who share the same mother tongue. The other factors that cause language switching (code) are caused by the difficulty in finding equivalent words and the situational factors that surround them. These situational factors occur in bilingual children, especially when the teaching and learning process takes place, while they experience various obstacles.

Efforts that can be made to improve children's literacy skills in the village are the Storytelling Learning Method. A language is a tool for communicating to convey feelings or ideas that you want to express. This language ability is very important for children because this language is used to communicate with children in the environment and with other people. the telling story method helps children to improve their language by the way the child conveys what he wants to say. For this reason, it is very necessary to have a method that needs to be done by parents in developing the abilities

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Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this document.

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