

## Language Ideologies: Family Language Policies on Bi/Multilingualism

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**Abstract:** English is the most useful language to be mastered in this century of globalization, but it has no particular official position in Indonesia. It was claimed as the first foreign language in Indonesia whose status as a multilingual country. In terms of being able to compete with others in this era, the citizen must have the ability to use English. As a result, the family has a substantial responsibility to educate their children bi-/multilingually, using two or more languages in interaction, especially using English. Parents do a role to undertake in constructing language policy in the family, what they wholeheartedly believe in languages (ideologies), how languages are exerted (practices), and what attempts have been made to retain languages (management). Focusing on this community, a conceptual framework for language ideologies held by bi/multilingual families is provided in this paper: cultural values, political values, social values, economical values, values of language acquisition, and parents' knowledge toward bi/multilingualism.

**Keywords:** *Bi-/multilingualism, family language policy, language ideologies*

**Abstrak:** Bahasa Inggris merupakan bahasa yang paling berguna untuk dikuasai di abad globalisasi ini, tetapi tidak memiliki posisi resmi tertentu di Indonesia. Bahasa Inggris diklaim sebagai bahasa asing pertama di Indonesia yang berstatus negara multibahasa. Agar mampu bersaing di era ini, warga negara harus memiliki kemampuan berbahasa Inggris. Oleh karena itu, keluarga memiliki tanggung jawab yang besar untuk mendidik anak-anak mereka menggunakan dua bahasa atau lebih dalam interaksi, khususnya menggunakan bahasa Inggris. Orang tua berperan dalam membangun kebijakan bahasa di keluarga, apa yang mereka yakini sepenuh hati terhadap bahasa (ideologi), bagaimana bahasa digunakan (praktik) dan upaya apa yang telah dilakukan untuk mempertahankan bahasa (manajemen). Berfokus pada komunitas ini, kerangka konseptual ideologi bahasa yang dipegang oleh keluarga dua atau multibahasa disajikan dalam tulisan ini: nilai budaya, nilai politik, nilai sosial, nilai ekonomi, nilai pemerolehan bahasa dan pengetahuan orang tua terhadap dua atau multibahasa.

**Kata-kata Kunci:** *Dua atau multibahasa, kebijakan bahasa keluarga, ideologi bahasa*

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It is not rare in contemporary society to be bi-/multilingual. Bi-/multilingualism occurs in almost every country in the world. Indonesia is one of the world's multilingual countries comprising 722 languages (Romaine, 2013). However, based on Statistik Kebahasaan 2019, accumulated language distribution by the provinces in Indonesia is 750 languages verified and up to date by sociolinguistics (Hadi, et al., 2019). As we look throughout the universe today, many people use English. Based on statistics, 1, 27 billion people speak it either natively or as a second language in 2019 (Duffin, 2020). It points out that, in addition to national and ethnic languages, the use of English is considered significant in this globalization era.

Meanwhile, Indonesia's language policy differs from many other nations; English has no special official status in Indonesia. The status of English in India, Malaysia, and the Philippines is as the second official language (Simpson, 2007), however, in Indonesia, it is only as a foreign language (Law No. 57, 1997/1998). Bahasa Indonesia is the only official language used for national unity (Law No.24, 2009). In short, the use of Bahasa is part of Indonesia's language policy.

In terms of being able to master more than one language, at least mastering English, the promotion of bi-/multilingualism in the family can be achieved by applying a certain language policy. Family Language Policy (FLP) is commonly characterized as how family members select which language to be used at home and is triggered and terminated by the family itself (Caldas, 2012; King, et al., 2008; Spolsky, 2004). According to Spolsky (2004), it involves three components, namely, language ideology/beliefs, language practice, and management. Among those components, the most significant is language ideology as it is the foundation to shape and apply other components of language policy, it consists of values and statuses of languages people hold (Spolsky, 2004). Regarding the family domain, it affects parent participation in home language practices and management.

According to some previous related studies concerned with family language ideologies from different contexts overseas such as immigrant, migrant, and transnational families, every family has a deep desire to raise their children bi-/multilingually. Cultural, social, economic, political values, values on language acquisition, parents' expectations, and parents' knowledge on bilingualism have a significant role in motivating their language

choices (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; Bell, 2013; Moin, et al., 2013; Gogonas & Kirsch, 2016; Soler & Zabrodska, 2017; Curdt-Christiansen & Wang, 2018; Goktologa & Yagmur, 2018; Wiltshire, 2018; Yazan & Ali, 2018).

However, those studies did not reveal about family language policy in Indonesia contexts. Those researchers did not discuss invisible Family Language Policy (FLP) made by bi-/multilingual families in Indonesia, particularly language ideologies, involving the reasons why their children are raised bi-/multilingually, what beliefs they possess are, or what values they hold. It appears to be due in part to gain social prestige, provide an opportunity to get a better job and high salaries in the future, support children being successful in education, maintain heritage, regions, and global language. Therefore, in the remainder of this paper, discussions regarding parental ideologies in raising children with more than one language both within and outside Indonesian contexts are provided.

### **Bi-/Multilingualism and Language Policy**

The principle of bi-/multilingualism represents two or more languages of a person. The term bilingualism should not be seen as two monolinguals, where a person masters two languages equivalently (Baker, 1995; Baker, 2000; Bathia & Ritchie, 2013; Bassetti, 2013; Bialystok, 2013; Kroll & Dussias, 2013; Naomi & Susan, 2009). Most people are qualified in one language only because languages are used in a variety of ways. Multilingualism, however, is a group made up of those who have two or more languages with some degree of competence (Bhatia, 2013; Kaplan, 1997; Wei, 2013).

Being bi-/multilingual can benefit a great deal from a variety of areas. Many researchers argue that being bilingual or even multilingual enables them the opportunity not only to gain knowledge from other cultures, but also to engage more aggressively in these global initiatives, to foster self-esteem, to nurture creativity and educational success, and to create intergenerational relationships, and to urge individuals to interact with more people around the world. Likewise, employment opportunities are being provided; likely, employment will increasingly demand language skills in the twenty-first century (Baker, 1995; Baker, 2000; King & Mackey, 2007; Naomi & Susan, 2009).

In this regard, it is difficult to raise children

bi/multilingually safe from troubles. Before raising bi/multilingual children, Baker (2000), Susan and Naomi (2009) suggest that parents have to undertake a very well-considered action. Bi/multilingualism will indeed be useful for planning how, when, and where a child will have been revealed to languages to guarantee that they grow well.

Therefore, family, particularly parents, has such a fundamental role to play in making decisions of language policy for family members. Within a given context, parents should be engaged in their children's language development (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; King, et al., 2008; Spolsky, 2009, 2012). Therefore, it has been defined as "explicit and overt planning concerning language use within home among family members" (King, et al. 2008, p. 1). Thus, it has been seen as an interesting area as it lays the support for the development of children's languages.

By extending Spolsky's (2004) official version language policy model to the family domain, family language policy can be investigated through the association around the three key components put forward by Spolsky. These three components involve language ideologies (beliefs or values of language(s) that parents hold), language practices (the actual or observable language actions of family members at home), and language management (parents' attempts to alter existing language practices) (Spolsky, 2004). Thus, this dynamic is the answer to the core issue of why certain children are raised in bilingual/multilingual settings and why several children learn and use a second or third language rather than anything else.

Upon its basis of the bi-/multilingual and language policy concept mentioned above, it can be concluded that every person has the opportunity to be bi-/multilingual. They do not have to be perfect at all languages at the same level since each language is used in different situations for different functions. Being a bi-/multilingual person may also have some advantages in every area. It is also realized that family, particularly parents, have such a fundamental role to play in maintaining the language development of household members by considering three components of language policy, namely, language ideology; practice; and management.

### **Language Ideologies of Bi/multilingual Families**

Language ideology plays a critical role throughout the decision-making of language

policy. It is about what the person wants to assume about language (Spolsky, 2004). Moreover, it has a great value given to a national, regional, or heritage language (Spolsky, 2004, p. 4). Others also contend that it deals with fundamental factors in language control and usage (King, et al., 2008; Curdt-Christiansen, 2009). Thus, before using languages in the community, there is an act of thinking and believing in language.

Thus, language beliefs or ideologies are the core component of family language policy in the family setting since they guide language activities and maintenance services at home. Curdt-Christiansen (2009) points out those language ideologies are the primary motivation behind the development of FLP. It addresses the "values and status" that people in their communities give to different languages (Spolsky, 2004, p. 4). As a consequence, according to Shohamy, in terms of language protection, these views can be extended to minority and majority languages in the social context and sometimes contribute to the development of more than one ideology that simply goes hand in hand and interacts with each other (as cited in King et al . 2008). In other words, once the family establishes it, it becomes a habit called culture.

Besides, there are some linguistic and non-linguistic triggers of language ideologies in the family. Spolsky (2009) suggests that they are divided into socio-political, socio-economic, socio-cultural, and sociolinguistic contexts. However, Curdt-Christiansen (2009) points out that language ideologies are shaped by micro-and macro-factors. Macro factors involve the political, socio-cultural, economic, and sociolinguistic environment. Meanwhile, micro factors include home literacy environment, parents' expectations, parents' education, and language experience, and parental knowledge of bilingualism. These conditions are known to be a trigger for shaping the family language policy (FLP). Language ideologies are therefore regarded in this analysis as the primary styles of ethical judgment.

Concerning the underlying forces of FLP of different groups such as from immigrant, migrant and transnational families, both micro and macro factors led those families in shaping their family language policy (FLP). Comparing some studies coming from various researchers of language policy, especially in the family context, I identified some different significant values held by bi/multilingual families regarding

the parents' language ideologies: cultural, social, economic, political capitals, values on language acquisition and parents' knowledge on bi-/multilingualism have a significant role in motivating language choices of immigrant families (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; Bell, 2013; Moin, et al., 2013; Curdt-Christiansen & Wang, 2018; Goktolga & Yagmur, 2018; Yazan & Ali, 2018), migrant families (Gogonas & Kirsch, 2016; Wiltshire, 2018), and transnational multilingual families (Soler & Zabrodska, 2017). Thus, discussions about values or beliefs that parents hold are discussed in the following section.

### *Cultural Values*

Cultural values contribute to parents significantly in choosing languages used in the family; it refers to the symbolic values of certain languages. Languages are seen from this perspective as a representation of culture as language and culture are inseparable. As tools of culture, languages recognize identity, religions, and origins.

The parents of immigrant families respected their heritage languages so much. They seemed to feel that they are important assets to be conserved, enhanced, and passed on to the next age (Bell, 2013; Moin, et al., 2013; Goktolga, 2018; Yazan & Ali, 2018) and migrant families (Gogonas & Kirsch, 2016; Wiltshire, 2018). In all the data, the most predominant reason for children to learn heritage language is rooted in an understanding of it as a key element of their culture, religion, identity, and as a report on the acquisition of an acceptable outlook for a particular culture.

Living in a country whose language is distinct from their heritage language, it is recognized that certain immigrant and migrant families deserve the right to demonstrate their identity. It was seen from most of the Turkish families in the Netherlands, Libyan families in the US, Russian in Israel and Spanish in New Zealand, Greek families in Luxembourg, even though they live in another country, their identity must be maintained (Gogonas & Kirsch, 2016; Goktolga & Yagmur, 2018; Wiltshire, 2018; Yazan & Ali, 2018). Although English, Dutch or Russian are used by its community, they use their heritage language as their first language at home to communicate with family members, such as parents and children or children and their siblings. Their heritage language will be lost if they do not use it. Most of them assume that if their heritage language is destroyed, they

will also destroy their identity. Thus, keeping the heritage language at home reveals who they are in the environment where they live. In other words, identity is portrayed in a language.

Besides, heritage language is not only used to display their identity, but also as a means to preserve their own culture. Most immigrant or migrant families who raise their children bi / multilingually in monolingual countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, or New Zealand (Bell, 2013; Goktolga & Yagmur, 2018; Wiltshire, 2018; Yazan & Ali, 2018) still believe that the best first language at home for their children is their language. They do not want their children to be infected by their society, such as Western culture (Goktolga & Yagmur, 2018; Yazan & Ali, 2018). Home culture keeps on the strength, it must be protected with extra work as they feel that their own culture must be predominant in their lives. The essence of the language they carry is therefore vital for the survival of their own culture.

Furthermore, heritage language is also necessary for participating in religious activities and for establishing a relationship with the family as well as their community members. Arab families in the US and the Netherlands, for example, raise their children at home with Arabic as they think that it encourages their children to learn the Qur'an, Sunnah, and other sources of Islamic principles (Yazan & Ali, 2018). Additionally, it also tightens the relationship with other HL-speakers, both within and beyond family members (Bell, 2013; Goktolga, 2018; Wiltshire, 2018; Yazan & Ali, 2018). Those who are using their heritage language at home are hoped by their parents to be closer to their extended families and to be part of the community with the same culture both overseas and in their home country in case they move back there again. It is emphasized that children's failure to speak the heritage language causes a rift in family relationships (Bell, 2013; Moin, 2013). In all the proofs, it can be concluded that language is seen through this context as portrayals of identity, culture, religion, and origin. By using heritage language, they have framed who they are.

### *Social Values*

Also, language policy is often shaped by the social values that parents hold, and there are some views of certain language that parents have in their social capitals. It concerns accessibility to the social opportunity

offered by a specific language and is closely linked to economic values (Spolsky, 2004; Curdt-Christiansen, 2009). To shape family language policy, some immigrant, migrant or transnational families believe that their bi-/multilingual children will gain social benefits such as to be able to compete with citizens in the global market, encourage self-esteem and survive in society (Bell, 2013; Moin, et al, 2013; Gogonas & Kirsch, 2016; Yazan & Ali, 2018). In other words, language provides benefits for social reasons.

Parents claim that the role of English is directly linked to society and the global industry. It is important to master English in this globalization era since it is known as an international language. Thus, those who are not master English will be left behind. Some bi-/multilingual families think that if their children are not able to use English, they will not be able to compete with society (Bell, 2013; Moin, et al, 2013; Gogonas & Kirsch, 2016; Yazan & Ali, 2018). As a consequence, a better future life cannot be reached (Curdt-Christiansen & Wang, 2018; Gogonas & Kirsh, 2016; Wiltshire, 2018; Yazan & Ali, 2018). It is proved by Bell (2013), In Scotland; some multilingual Chinese family points out that English and Mandarin are significant assets for them to reach a better future career. Therefore, in this social context, English is an important language to be introduced to children as it is the global language.

Considering a higher future career, they also believe that English will enhance their social status. Some families from many developing countries point out that being able to communicate more than one language; especially in English will influence the encouragement of their self-esteem (Bell, 2013; Moin, et. al. 2013). They recognize that their bi-multilingual children will be more valued in society.

Besides, the upbringing of bi-/multilingual children is related to survival. For those who move from one region to another or from one country of birth to another for some reason both permanently or temporarily, mastering its language is a must for them. For immigrants and migrants in the US, UK, and New Zealand, English is necessary to assist them to survive in the community (Bell, 2013; Goktolga & Yagmur, 2018; Yazan & Ali, 2018). Furthermore, they also consider that wherever they live, their children must be able to know its language at a high level to connect with people in its society and

education (Moin, et al., 2013). As a result, English is not only important in the country where they live but also internationally. From the language ideologies of parents, it is seen that English provides an opportunity for humans to encourage social advancement.

#### *Economic Values*

Seeing from some family language policy of bi/multilingual families, they espouse economic development. Economic values belong to the economic pressures evoked by a specific language or conversely. In other words, language and economy have interactions. These principles are about the degree to which language characteristics influence salaries and incomes. Many parents of Spanish-English speaking children in New Zealand, multilingual children in China, and some multilingual Chinese families in Scotland believe that bi/multilingualism gives economical profits which can help children obtain a high-paid job or good career in the future (Bell, 2013; Curdt-Christiansen & Wang, 2018; Wiltshire, 2016). Furthermore, Gogonas & Kirsch (2016) report some parents of multilingual children in French, German, and English construct language ideologies with beliefs that their children will compete easily in new globalized, transnational and post-industrial. Thus, it can be concluded that parental language policy on bi-multilingualism has a role in empowering the finances of family members as it provides a chance for their children to gain better career and economic benefits.

#### *Political Values*

Political factors play a significant role in shaping family language policy; it is related to multilingual, immigrant, and migrant families' experiences. Political values include the rights and access of persons to education, civic activities, and government decisions (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009), such as language policy and language choice as a right (Moin, et al., 2013; Gogonas & Kirsch, 2016; Curdt-Christiansen & Wang, 2018). As a matter of facts, one of the factors that influence family language policy of multilingual families in China, with Fangyan, Putonghua, and English, is expressed in the new belief that the rise of English changes their cultural values toward Fangyan since Putonghua and English are in the current educational system and it provides a chance to study abroad (Curdt-Christiansen & Wang, 2018). In other

words, their belief toward their language use has been changed because of political reasons as English is the language used in education and it allows their children to study overseas. Besides, reflecting from migrant Greek families' experiences in Luxembourg and Turkish families living in the Netherlands, their language ideologies are also shaped to participate in an educational system (Gogonas & Kirsch, 2016). Besides, Russian immigrant parents in Israel argue that wherever they live their children must be able to know its language at a high level to communicate with people in education (Moin, et al., 2013). Therefore, certain language gains high value to be used as it includes a political reason for bi/multilingual families, especially to join education.

#### *Values of Language Acquisition and Parents' Knowledge toward Bi/multilingualism*

Values of language acquisition and parents' knowledge toward bi/multilingualism also affect parental language ideologies in successful family language policy (FLP). Most parents argue that raising bi-/multilingual children in a multilingual context is better than monolingualism, learning languages at an early age is easier for children and a good language environment will support rapid language acquisition (Moin, et al., 2013; Soler and Zabrodska, 2017; Wiltshire, 2018). Spanish-speaking migrants in New Zealand and Russian immigrant parents in Israel believe that learning languages for youths is more feasible than adults. Also, they agree that mastering Spanish as well as English provides more benefits over monolingualism (Moin, et al., 2013; Wiltshire, 2018). They argue that family, especially, parents play a vital role in providing a language environment at home to support bi/multilingual children.

Regarding the importance of family on the bi-multilingualism process, good parenting is really necessary. Based on interview data Soler and Zabrodska (2017) studied on language practices of three Spanish-Estonian families in Colombia, he found that both parents use English to communicate among them and they applied OPOL strategy to be used with their children. Connected with the concept of good parenting, they believe that they are the greatest example for their kids in their native tongue. Thus, it can be concluded that to gain a successful family language policy, knowledge of language acquisition

and bi/multilingualism must be involved.

#### **Indonesian Parents' Language Ideologies on bi/multilingualism**

Regarding the language ideologies of some families in Indonesia, data have shown that many Indonesian parents believe that raising bi-/multilingual children would bring educational, social, economic benefits to their children, protect their national and cultural identity and maintain positive attitudes towards languages (Bonafix & Manara, 2018; Sa'diyah & Setiawan, 2019; Efendi, 2020). How bi-multilingual families in Indonesia think about languages is highlighted in the following subsections regarding the factors mentioned above.

#### *English is a guiding force for the academic process*

Viewing language ideologies from Indonesian families bringing up children with more than one language, particularly using English is recognized as a vehicle for school. Considering the presence of English as the language of globalization, some schools in Indonesia and overseas use it. Therefore, Indonesian parents living in Indonesian or other countries are influenced by taking their children to this type of education (Efendi, 2020; Bonafix & Maxmara, 2018). As a consequence, they do not care about their national and heritage language to be well-mastered regarding English is needed for their children's academic process.

#### *Bi/multilingualism contributes to the betterment of the social and economic status*

As mentioned earlier, family language policy is shaped by social as well as economic values held by parents. It is clearly understood that FLP on the bi/multilingualism of Indonesian families is also affected by social and economic aspects (Bonafix & Maxmara, 2018; Efendi, 2020). Some Indonesian parents compel their children to master English as they assume that it has been provided high social and economic benefits for their family (Bonafix & Maxmara, 2018). However, another experience from Indonesian families in Australia believes that English is a must for their children to be able to interact with society (Efendi, 2020). To sum up, bi/multilingualism influences their social and economic life.

*Reasons for maintaining national and cultural identity*

Regarding the study on Indonesia bi/multilingual families, national and cultural identity is considered to be preserved. Parents think that their bi-/multilingual children will not be left behind as they are worth participating in international, national, and regional events (Bonafix & Maxmara, 2018; Efendi, 2020). Therefore, bi/multilingualism does not only show national identity in the world, but it also preserves their native culture as well as maintains relationships among families.

*Positive Attitude towards Languages*

A transnational family that consists of an Indonesian father and Scot mother possesses positive attitudes toward bi/multilingualism. It is supported in a study conducted by Sa'diyah and Setiawan (2019); this transnational family raises multilingual children using Indonesian, English, and Javanese. They trust that all languages in the world are great and interesting to be learned by their children. Therefore, they are not afraid of their children influenced by other languages.

**CONCLUSION**

As a highly various concept of family language policy (FLP) on bi/multilingualism studies, language ideologies are significantly shaped by the values or beliefs held by bi-multilingual families such as English as a vehicle to reach successful academic both in the country or abroad, path to get a social prestige as well as a better future life, national and heritage language used as an effort to maintain the relationship with family and society and it is possible including the role of parents in language acquisition. This paper is an effort to present such an approach by critically synthesizing the pertinent theoretical and empirical research in FLP and bi/multilingualism. Thus, it has an impact on stakeholders and user communities. It promotes the growth of a new FLP research sub-area. It also contributes to the context of early bi / multilingual acquisition. Government, headmasters, and teachers, also make contributions to language instruction decisions and provide substantial support for family language policy.

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