

Bilingual Families Language Policy

Endang Larasati

English Applied Linguistics Study Program
Universitas Negeri Medan
North Sumatera, Indonesia
larashe@gmail.com

Sri Minda Murni

English Applied Linguistics Study Program
Universitas Negeri Medan
North Sumatera, Indonesia

Zainuddin

English Applied Linguistics Study Program
Universitas Negeri Medan
North Sumatera, Indonesia

Abstract— The objective of this study is to identify the way the bilingual families decide their own language policy through language ideology, language practice and language management. This research applied qualitative approach through observation, questionnaire and in depth interview. The data were collected from bilingual families that use minority (ethnic language) and dominant (national language). The research findings showed that bilingual families use language ideology, language practice and language management as the components of language policy. Nevertheless mostly parents considered language ideology and language practice. It is just that in practice, parents do not understand well what kind of strategy they should apply to their children. Thus, the language use chosen by parents to be used by family members goes without good planning. It means that language management were not applied by parents completely, it can be seen through language that their children use will be different with what the parents have expected.

Keywords— *Bilingual Family, Language Ideology, Language Management, and Language Practice.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In general language policy is always associated with the policy of the government against certain institutions such as what language is used in schools, in work places or in other formal places. Whereas the language policy itself can be applied in the family, which is how family members can set the choice of what language is used at home. Parents actually have a big role in overcoming the language shift, because the family is the first child's education or the basic environment of children to learn and communicate before they socialize in the community. nearly all studies on language policy, both theoretical and empirical, has examined language policy in institutional contexts, such as the state, the school, or the work place [1], but very little attention to the intimate context of the home.

[2] argued that family language policies are important as they shape children's developmental trajectories, connect in significant ways with children's formal school success, and collectively determine the maintenance and future status of minority languages. Parental involvement in language policy development can not only improve children's development but they will be more successful in the use of language both at home and in socializing at school or community. The language policy is needed because of the fact that there has been a shift in the mother tongue among the bilingual and multilingual communities in Langsa. The number of research related to language policy that happened like school, work place, and other public place, make the researcher think that in fact language policy is not always coming from government but also parent, as decision maker to choice what language should be used by family member at home.

The study of language policy includes analysis of language beliefs or ideologies (what people think about language); of language practices (what people do with language); and of efforts to modify or influence those practices through any kind of language intervention, planning, or management (what people try to do to language) [3]. The parent's ideology of language is a major factor in treating the language, whether the language is important in interacting or just a language that people like to speak as a speaker. There are some people who understand about it, but on the contrary many people also consider the language is a tool to communicate without knowing the values contained in the language.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Language Policy

A language policy is a part of ideas, laws, regulations, rules, procedures, and practices aimed to get the purpose of a policy [4]. At national level, many attempts are done by language policy makers. Language policy accommodates the

language needs of the nation from various communities and cultural background that exists, tests the resource that it has, investigates the function of language generally and particularly in the community life of a country, makes strategies that are needed in order to manage and develop language resources and connects all of these to be operated in some appropriate planning agencies [5].

According to the most recent conceptualization, language policy involves the intersection of multiple layers, such as language ideologies, management and practices [6]. The use of a certain language (or forms or varieties of languages) in a certain context can be regimented and controlled by language policies. To control the language means that the language can not utter freely without consider some rules that has been created. Rules that are discussed are about how the language controller considers what rules that will be used in the community. Thus, the controller will decide to choose some rules and apply it in speech community. But „correct language policy and planning must take into consideration the attitudes of the people whom a particular language is planned“ [7]. [8] has discussed in his book, some area where language policy is often discussed, they are:

1. Family Language Policy
2. Religious Language Policy
3. Language Policy in School
4. Workplace Language Policy
5. Legal and Health Language Policy
6. Military Language Policy

However the language policy that is discussed in here will be focused on family language policy and it is the part of micro level community. Language policy in this community will be different from what happened in the large community.

B. Language Ideology

Naturally, in examining the language policy of a family, the role of parents and their language ideology is emphasized as it is the parents who initially establish that language policy. Spolsky argued that “ideologies are ultimately expressions of moral judgment”. When it is held by particular group, it means that it has become a habituation and it is usually called as culture. Even it is held by particular person, it has become his/her beliefs based on some consideration that he/she will consider if it is bad or good based on his/her way of thinking.

Spolsky’s theory on language policy, family language choices are influenced by ideas and beliefs about language - by the language ideology. In other words, the beliefs that the members of a speech community have generally about language and in particular about their own language are the basis on which language policy is grounded [9]. Language specific beliefs are the ideas on the value of the language and its status in the society as well as attitudes towards the culture it represents. These beliefs are considered important factors influencing the family language use: if parents value their own language, they are more likely to promote it for their children [10].

The beliefs about language in general, in relation to bilingual family language policy, include attitudes towards bilingualism and language mixing, as well as ideas on how languages are best acquired and on the role of parents in the acquisition, which are, according to De Houwer^[11], clearly linked to the language strategies that parents adopt with their

children. If, for example, parents believe language mixing to be improper language use or a sign of confusion in language acquisition, they are not likely to mix the languages themselves or to encourage their children to do so. However, the language ideology of parents has to have its basis on something; how are these beliefs then formed?

Some communities have many languages in their area and it is often called as varieties of language. So they need to choose language that will be used then, what do they do for choosing the language , the answer is based on their beliefs. “Standard languages and heritage language regularly explain decisions of parents as to what languages to speak and encourage in the home, just as they explain government decisions on national language policy” (Spolsky). So, the belief is formed from culture that has been provided in community.

C. Language Practice

Family language practice refers to patterns of language choice and preference within the family and in different contexts. What people do when they are talking, what language do they use and how do they use it. Spolsky defined language practice as „observable behaviors and choices – what people actually do.“ Parents often make the initial, more or less explicit and conscious decisions on the family language practices (based on their own language ideology) about the time the first child is born. But nothing is stable: the family lives on and situations change, there may be more children or a move to another country. The initial practices may need to be adapted to better suit the new conditions. „These changes in practices may then modify the ideology upon which the language policy is grounded“ (Spolsky), for example, a practice is over time found inefficient or inadequate, the idea behind that practice can be re-evaluated and a new practice applied. It seems that changes in practices and the role of children in shaping the FLP go hand in hand.

The process of language practice actually does not continually done by parents, sometimes they will forget to watch their children in practicing language at home. „ By language practice, the sum of the sound, word and grammatical choices that an individual speaker makes, sometimes consciously and sometimes less consciously, that makes up the conventional unmarked pattern of a variety of a language“ (Spolsky). This condition will make parents forget that they have decided language policy in their home. But from theoretical assumption, it follows that in many families a monolingual language policy (observable in language practice) will be the result of the members of the family having proficiency in one language alone“ (Spolsky). If the parents have decided to use certain language policy at home, the language result that they will get will be language practice that they have expected before through language policy it self.

Language practice that has been created by parents at home can not run as what they want, because the influences of outsider sometimes can give bad effect to language of children. For controlling the language it self, Spolsky has stated three language management strategy will be discussed after.

D. Language Management

Language management is viewed as redesign language practice. Family language management refers to “efforts to control the language of family members, especially children” [12]. It starts with the parents’ decision about the language choice to be used with the children. After practicing the language that has been chosen based on ideology (belief) than it will be evaluated. When some weakness has been got, so language policy will use its role in the language it self. Language management will use some efforts for fixing the weakness and make the language will better based on evaluation what should be changed and added. The language management will be applied maximally, if it is organized well. „It is organized management when the older persons consciously attempt to control the sociolinguistic environment by selecting a language to speak with each other or with the children, or give explicit instruction” (Spolsky).

Parents in family is the language controller for this language management, they also will have the task for controlling their children language. Spolsky stated that „the effort to control the language of other family members, especially children to avoid obscenity and profanity is common, with success varying according to the nature of family relationships.” In this case, parents should have strategy for controlling the language it self. Spolsky has stated three language management strategy, they are:

1. Control of the home language environment.
2. Bringing the speaker of the target language into household, such as the relative from the old country or a servant from the new.
3. Arranging for young children to play with other children selected for their language knowledge.

These three strategies can be used by parents for controlling the language of their children. As what Spolsky has stated that these strategies will be useful but the influence of outsider will also come and it will be better if parents can make their own strategy based on situation and context of the family it self.

The role of language management has beneficial for language policy in evaluating the weakness and modify it for making it more effective. Spolsky stated that „the language practices provide the models of language that helps explain language learning and so establish the necessary conditions for language choice, language behavior is determined by proficiency, the belief explain the values that help account for individual choice, and the management may influence speakers to modify their practice or belief”. For illustrating the benefit of language management, it can be explained starts from language beliefs, in this case family will be the example. As the first act, family exactly a couple will decide the language that they will use in their family based on language belief that they have had. They will consider many things for deciding it their ideology and combine or choose one of them which will use then in their family and it will become language policy in their family. When they are sure that the language that they have chosen are the good language, then they will apply it through practicing it in their family and like what has explained in background of this study, that the point that the family which is done here is to make the language use by their descendant later on. The language will be practiced in

the family, and after few years the family will see some weakness of language policies that they have made. Thus, for fixing it language management will be used to redesign the rules of language and add some beneficial rule for making the language will run well and decrease the weakness of the language that has been practiced in family. „Language management efforts may go beyond or contradict the set of beliefs and values that underline a community’s use of language and the actual practice of language use. To describe language management, one may use taxonomy derived from the question posed by Cooper^[13] when he set out to investigate language change: “*who plans what for whom and how.*” Considering these questions will provide us with a fuller notion of the nature of language management and how it should be differentiated from the general language practices and beliefs it is usually intended to modify.” (Spolsky). After done the language management, then the language will be practiced then.

E. Bilingual Family

Relating to the concept of language policy, „a family is defined as a unit of society: a speech community that has, like all speech communities, its own language policy or policies” (Spolsky). *Bilingual* is a concept that requires a definition, and of which there are at least as many understandings as of the concept of family. In everyday language, a bilingual individual is often described simply as „speaking two languages”. However, this definition leaves unclear quite many variables, such as the speaker’s fluency in each language, the possible dominance of either language, and the frequency and the domains of use in each language. Similarly, a bilingual family can be described simply as a family „in which two languages are spoken”. Barron-Hauwaert^[14] elaborates on this a little by saying that in a bilingual family at least two different languages (or dialects) are spoken, and it may have elements from at least two cultures.

Scotton^[15] defines bilingualism as „a person speaking at least two languages that acquires by bilingual person can be acquired when they are child and adult. There is no specific age when people are called bilingual, it means there is no age limitation for people for becoming bilingual. „There are two kinds of bilingualism; they are native bilingual and second language acquisition” (Gleason and Ratner)^[16]. Gleason and Ratner stated that „if two languages are learnt simultaneously from birth we will call that native bilingualism rather than second language acquisition”. In second language acquisition , „it has optimal age for learning: they see the process as gradual and incremental at all ages” (Gleason and Ratner). So, there has been clear different between native bilingualism and bilingualism through second language acquisition.

„The concept of a bilingual family indicates that at least one family member actively uses (speaks) another language than some other member in the family and at least one other member uses other languages at least passively (understand it) so that the language can be an is used regularly in communication between family members” (Viljamaa)^[17]. It means it is not really important for all members have fluency in the two languages; it has enough if the speaker is fluent in one language and can comprehend another language although they do not master both language well.

Bilingual does not mean that the speaker has to master or fluent in both languages but the most important is the speaker understand the two languages and one of them should be communicated fluently. In case, where the members of bilingual family do not master the both languages, to use Code – Swithes is the best way for solving it. „Code switches is fairly common in families where two languages are spoken, as speaker select words from either language that best express the intent“ (Gleason and Ratner). It will help the family members for getting their ability in understanding each other without worrying that there are members of family that do not understand what they are discussing. Code – Switches is the normal way for communicating each other, and it will be bilingual people in communication by mixing the language.

F. Family Language Policy

The field of study family language policy is relatively new and focuses on the guidelines or „rules“ that families put into place in regards to language use within the home or family setting. Family language policies are part of larger speech community practices that includes language ideology, practice, and management [18]. When language development is looked at from the family level, research includes the role of the family in minority language maintenance, family language ideology, practice and management, as well as the challenges associated with these policies.

Family language policy is a policy that is used by a family for choosing language that will be used by them. It is almost same with other communities but it is the smallest community and it means it can be analyzed deeper than others. Many families have made their own language policy conscious or unconscious, they have choosen the standard language that they will use in their family and the basic purpose of them is their descendant.

Beside a family is focused on this discussion, it also focuses on how they will focus on their language in their family. „When two people establish a regular relationship, one of the features governing their normal practices is the choice of language variety“ (Spolsky). Before a couple becomes a family, they should choose language that they will use from many varieties of language and will be implemented in their family later on. The first thing that they need to do is to decide their belief about the standard language that will be used by them, and after they have been a family they applied it in their family. The role of language management will be used then, „in the normal state of affairs, then they are likely to speak to each other using much the same language and dialect, modifying their speech according to the stylistic situation and the presence or absence of other people (Spolsky). The evaluation that the family has made in their language will become preparation for their good language later on for their children.

Although, choosing the language that will be used in the first step that language users need to do, but there is other thing that should be considered by family. It is a bad language. Many families view that a bad language is not allowed to be used in their communication because it will give bad effect to their children. „The effort to control the language of other family members, especially children and to avoid obscenity and profanity is common, with success varying according to the nature of family relationship“ (Spolsky). The families will

try to make their own rule about it, although it can not guarantee that it will be success then, because children will be also influenced by people around them such as friend and peers. The way of adult for teaching children in using good language is different.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study is conducted in descriptive qualitative research design with case study in order to describe the ways of bilingual families decide their own language policy to their children [19] stated that case study research design is an intensive analysis of an individual unit (e.g. a person, group, event) stressing developmental factors in relation to context. The case study is common in social sciences and life sciences. Case study research design looks intensely at an individual or small participant, drawing conclusions only about that participants or group and only in that specific context.

The data of this study consist of two types. The first is the data to observe the components of language policy that are used by parents in their family. This data will be derived with the questionnaires. The administration of the instrument is intended to observe the components of language policy, namely: (1) language ideology, (2) language practice and (3) language management. The second type of the data is the transcriptions of interview about how the families are used their language at home. This data will be collected by applying in-depth interview and the interview recorded with audio recorder. The instruments used are: in-dept interview and questionnaires of language policy.

And the survey type that is used in this study is cross-sectional survey in which researcher examines the subject of the study at one time or a period of time [20]. This design is chosen because of the subject of the study are some families that have applied their language policy. The subject of this study is bilingual families that use minority (ethnic language) and dominant (national language).

TABLE 1. Participants

Parents in Family	Father	Mother
Family 1	MA	AR
Family 2	PT	ZA
Family 3	KH	ER
Family 4	SB	EV
Family 5	IJ	SA
Family 6	SS	KM

TABLE 2. Ethnic Background of Parents

Ethnic Background	Father	Mother
Family 1	Acehnese	Acehnese
Family 2	Acehnese	Acehnese
Family 3	Javanese	Acehnese
Family 4	Gayonese	Acehnese
Family 5	Javanese	Javanese
Family 6	Acehnese	Javanese

TABLE 3. Language Used in Family

Language Use	Father	Mother
Family 1 Bahasa Indonesia	√	
Aceh Language		
Bahasa Indonesia and Aceh Language		√
Bahasa Indonesia and Java Language		
Bahasa Indonesia and Gayo Language		
Family 2 Bahasa Indonesia	√	
Aceh Language		
Bahasa Indonesia and Aceh Language		√
Bahasa Indonesia and Java Language		
Bahasa Indonesia and Gayo Language		
Family 3 Bahasa Indonesia		
Aceh Language		
Bahasa Indonesia and Aceh Language	√	√
Bahasa Indonesia and Java Language		
Bahasa Indonesia and Gayo Language		
Family 4 Bahasa Indonesia	√	
Aceh Language		
Bahasa Indonesia and Aceh Language		
Bahasa Indonesia and Java Language		√
Bahasa Indonesia and Gayo Language		
Family 5 Bahasa Indonesia		
Aceh Language		
Bahasa Indonesia and Aceh Language		
Bahasa Indonesia and Java Language		
Bahasa Indonesia and Gayo Language	√	√
Family 6 Bahasa Indonesia	√	√
Aceh Language		
Bahasa Indonesia and Aceh Language		
Bahasa Indonesia and Java Language		
Bahasa Indonesia and Gayo Language		

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

The main factors of creating language policy are varying in every family. The three factors that is argued by Spolsky did not used by every family. Because of the condition where bahasa Indonesia is used as national language and it is used widely in formal area such as school, the parent will try to teach their children bahasa Indonesia firstly and for ethnic language, it is used by parents for maintaining the language and dominantly for making the children easier communicates in their environment. The condition where a child who has born in a family will has heritage language.

Language policy in family relates to language practice as the components of language policy. Based on data that have been got, many families who decide language choice in their family does not has the same result in their language practice. Some families who decide Bahasa Indonesia as their language choice result their children use code-switching of both language (national and ethnic language) and Aceh language

only. Mostly families who have decided Bahasa Indonesia and Aceh language as their language choice will result code-switching children and children who just use Bahasa Indonesia only. Language management strategies that have been stated by Spolsky do not completely by the families. From the three strategies, the 6 families just consider controlling home language environment and only 3 families consider the effort for bringing the speaker of the target language into the household as their strategy in doing language management at home. Whereas arranging for young children to play with other children knowledge do not do by the parents for managing their children language.

V. DISCUSSIONS

Language policy of bilingual family will be different from language policy in monolingual family. In bilingual family, the family will try to avoid some problems of language such as code-switching, shifting language and others. [21] stated that „For parents, mixing is still an indicator of the lack of differentiating the two languages, and is not considered as an ability to use the two languages“. Language policy which is used in family relate with the parents language ideology. The ideology that is discussed here is based on belief that can be done and belief concern the nature of what should be controlled (Spolsky).

Language practice which is based on language ideology can not be done as what the language controller except. Although language ideology has been decided through language choice, the condition when language practice of children will be different with language practice will happen in family. One of strategy to manage language which is stated by Spolsky do not done in the family. There is no family who arrange for young children to play with other children knowledge for managing their children language. The fact through the observation that has been done the families focus on home language environment and 3 families consider the effort for bringing the speaker of the target language into the household as their strategy in doing language management at home.

VI. CONCLUSION

Bilingual families have decided their own language policy through the components of language policy. Mostly parents considered language ideology and language practice. Otherwise, language management were not applied by them completely, it can be seen through language that their children use will be different with what the parents have expected. Language policy is applied in the families by practicing the language directly. There some influences that make the parents practice the language directly, namely influences of outside home and there is no balance guidance of practicing language to children between mother and father in family.

References

- [1] Ricento, Thomas. (2006). *An Introduction to Language Policy*. Australia: Blackwell Publishing.

- [2] King, K. A. & Logan-Terry, A. (2008). Additive bilingualism through family language policy: Ideologies, strategies and interactional outcomes.
- [3] Spolsky, B. (2004) *Language Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [4] Kaplan, R. B. and Baldauf, R. B., Jr. (2003) *Language and Language-in-Education Planning in the Pacific Basin*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- [5] Corson, D. (1990). Language Policy Across the Curriculum. *Multilingual Matters*.
- [6] Shohamy, E. (2006) Language policy: Hidden agendas and new approaches. London: Routledge.
- [7] Mukhuba, Thisaphungo Theophilus. (2003). Bilingualism, Language Attitudes, Language Policy and Language Planning: A Sociolinguistic Perspective. *Journal of Linguistics* 3(2), 268-278.
- [8] Spolsky, B. (2009). *Language Management*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- [9] Schiffman, H. F. (1996). *Linguistic culture and language policy*. London/New York: Routledge.
- [10] Harding, E. & Riley, P. (1986). *The bilingual family: A handbook for parents*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [11] De Houwer, Annick. (1999). *The acquisition of two languages: a case study*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- [12] Spolsky B. (2007). *Family language management: Some preliminaries*. In A. Stavans & I. Kupferberg (eds.), *Studies in language and language education: Essays in honor of Elite Olshtain*, 429–449. Jerusalem: The Magnes press, Hebrew University.
- [13] Cooper, Ralph L. (1989). *Language planning and social change*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- [14] Barron-Hauwaert, S. (2004). Language Strategies for Bilingual Families: The one-parent-one- language approach (No. 7). *Multilingual Matters*.
- [15] Scotton, M. (2006). *An introduction to bilingualism*. Australia: Blackwell Publishing
- [16] Gleason & Ratner. (1998). *Psycholinguistics*. United States: Harcourt Brace College Publisher.
- [17] Viljamaa, Sanna-Kaisa. (2012). *Constructing Family Language Policy: A Case-Study Bilingual Family Language Policy*. Thesis of Bachelor Degree. Finland: University of Jyväskylä Department of Language English.
- [18] Schwartz, M., & Moin, V. (2012). Parents' assessments of their preschool children's bilingual development in the context of family language policy. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 33(1), 35-55.
- [19] Yin, Robert K. (1984). *Case study research: design and methods*. California: Sage Publishing, Inc.
- [20] Creswell, John W. (2008). *The Mixed Methods Reader*. California: Sage Publishing, Inc.
- [21] Cantone, Katja F. (2007). *Studies in Theoretical Psycholinguistics. Code-Switching in Bilingual Children*. Netherlands: Springer.