

FAMILY VALUES IN THE MAINTENANCE OF LOCAL/HOME LANGUAGE

Layli Hamida

English Department, Airlangga University

E-mail: laylihamida@yahoo.com

Abstract

Family is part of a social and cultural group. It is from the family a new member of a society has learned his/her first word. Family's decision to choose local or national language at home to be socialized to the children is one significant contribution for the maintenance of local or national language. Once a family shifts its perspective or values on the choice, there will be further consequence for local or national language preservation. Therefore, this paper is aimed at exploring family language policy to get the idea of how this small group of a society can contribute to positive or negative effect for local and national language maintenance. Several interviews and observation were conducted to investigate the language policy applied in family language practices and interactions in urban city of Surabaya. The result of the investigation shows how changes in government policy, parents' social, cultural, as well as professional and linguistic background and the global world have influenced family's, in particularly parents, values in the use of local or national language for socialization.

Key words: family values, language policy, language maintenance and shift.

1. Introduction

Urban society in Surabaya is a multilingual society in which the 'high variety' language, Indonesian, and the minority or local languages, such as Javanese and Madurese, as well as foreign language such as English are spoken by its citizen. This phenomenon is actually not surprising since the linguistic history of Indonesia has indicated that 'some degree of multilingualism has long been the norm in the region' (Musgrave, 2011). The concern is then focused on the problem that in such a multilingual society shift in values in the languages has occurred and the maintenance of local language as part of the component of local wisdom is at stake.

Since the implementation of Indonesian or Bahasa Indonesia as the national language after the Indonesian independence in 1945 and the Second Indonesian Youth Conference of 1928 for the sake of the need of interethnic communication and the unity of the nation, there is an increase in the number of Indonesian speakers. Musgrave (2011) stated that Indonesian censuses conducted in 1971, 1980, and 1990 shows an increase in the number of people who speak Indonesian as their first language, especially among the young generation, and a decline in the number of people who speak local languages, including Javanese, as their first language.

In the context of Surabaya, the writer herself has witnessed that Indonesian has recently been used extensively in schools, at home, during plays, or even in chat. Most young mothers are also observed to have been socializing Indonesian to their 1-5 year old children. In addition, there is a growing number of parents who are eager to socialize foreign language, in this case English, to their children. This trend has formerly occurred among the Chinese ethnic in Surabaya, but then it also extends to the Javanese family in accordance with the government policy to endorse the acquisition of English as foreign language at schools. This fact has added a hindrance to the preservation of the high value of local language, such as Javanese. Javanese is also perceived to be used in some parents' interaction with their children. Nevertheless, the language is never heard spoken solely as it is but in the context of code switch with Indonesian.

Which language is socialized to children is in fact part of family's policy. It is the parent who actually has the authority and independency whether to use certain language for practical reason or to maintain the local language which has been the means of communication from generation to the next. Fishman (in Reyhner, 1994) suggested that 'efforts to save languages must ultimately deal with the intergenerational transmission of mother-tongues and this is, to a large extent, a family and community issue'. For political reason, government of Indonesia has set up Indonesian as the 'higher variety' of language which is used in formal settings, such as in schools and other formal institutions. This course of action has forced local languages to stand away as minority languages. In this case, 'the role of the home and family is commonly acknowledged as being central to the 'transmission' of minority languages' (Jones & Morris, 2005).

This paper is aimed at describing family values in the maintenance of local language and how the value held by the families affect family language policy and practices. The families are captured in the context of urban society in Surabaya and the local language is Javanese.

2. Family Background

Eight families were selected to participate in this study. All are families consisted of young parents; a mother, a father and one to three children aged 1- 7 years old. Some of the families are of Surabaya origin and the others are coming from other parts of East and Central Java but have been living in Surabaya more than ten years. The data for this paper was taken by observing parents interaction with their children and by interviewing the mother or father of each family. Table 1 shows the summary profile of each family.

Table 1 Summary of Family Profile		
<p>Family 1 Mother: Indonesian & Javanese speaking, part time teacher. Father: Indonesian & Javanese speaking, marketing officer. Other caregivers: Indonesian & Javanese speaking Children: two; 6 & 2 years old Language of parents with each other: Indonesian and Javanese Language of parents with children: Indonesian Language of siblings: Indonesian Language of other caregivers with children: Indonesian Transmission of Javanese in the family: Possible Use of foreign language to children: intensive</p>	<p>Family 2 Mother: Indonesian & Javanese speaking, administrator. Father: Indonesian & Javanese speaking, Junior attorney. Other caregivers: Indonesian & Javanese speaking Children: one; 2 years old Language of parents with each other: Indonesian and Javanese Language of parents with children: Indonesian & Javanese Language of other caregivers with children: Indonesian & Javanese Transmission of Javanese in the family: Likely Use of foreign language to children: expected</p>	<p>Family 3 Mother: Indonesian & Javanese speaking, full-time mother. Father: Indonesian & Javanese speaking, private company staff. Other caregivers: Indonesian & Javanese speaking. Children: three; 7, 4, and 2 years old Language of parents with each other: Indonesian & Javanese. Language of parents with children: Indonesian. Language of other caregivers with children: Indonesian & a little Javanese Language of siblings: Indonesian Language of friends at home: Javanese Transmission of Javanese in the family: Unlikely. Use of foreign language at home: expected</p>
<p>Family 4 Mother: Indonesian & Javanese speaking, home industry practitioner. Father: Indonesian & Javanese speaking, private company staff. Other caregivers: Javanese speaking. Children: two; 4 and 3 years old Language of parents with each other: Javanese. Language of parents with children: Indonesian & Javanese. Language of siblings: Indonesian Language of other caregiver with children: Javanese Transmission of Javanese in the family: Likely. Use of foreign language at home: expected</p>	<p>Family 5 Mother: Indonesian & Javanese speaking, part-time kindergarten teacher. Father: Indonesian & Javanese speaking, lecturer. Children: three; 7, 4, & 2 years old Language of parents with each other: Javanese Language of parents with children: Indonesian Language of siblings: Indonesian Transmission of Javanese in the family: Unlikely Use of foreign language at home: expected</p>	<p>Family 6 Mother: Indonesian & Javanese speaking, full-time mother. Father: Indonesian & Javanese speaking, private company staff. Other caregivers: Indonesian & Javanese speaking Children: one; 6 years old Language of parents with each other: Indonesian and Javanese Language of parents with children: Indonesian & Javanese Language of other caregivers with children: Indonesian & Javanese Transmission of Javanese in the family: Likely Use of foreign language at home: expected</p>

<p>Family 7 Mother: Indonesian & Javanese speaking, lecturer. Father: Indonesian, Javanese, & Japanese speaking, lecturer. Children: two; 6 & 1 years old Language of parents with each other: Indonesian and Javanese Language of parents with children: Indonesian Language of siblings: Indonesian Language of other caregivers with children: Indonesian Transmission of Javanese in the family: Likely Use of foreign language at home: sometimes</p>	<p>Family 8 Mother: Indonesian & Javanese speaking, full-time mother. Father: Indonesian & Javanese speaking, company staff. Other caregivers: Javanese speaking Children: two; 6 & 3 years old Language of parents with each other: Indonesian & Javanese Language of parents with children: Indonesian Language of siblings: Indonesian & Javanese Language of other caregivers with children: Javanese Transmission of Javanese in the family: Likely Use of foreign language at home: expected</p>
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3. Family Values, Language Policy and the Maintenance of Javanese

Ochs & Schieffelin (1986) stated that the conception of language socialization involves two major areas that incorporate socialization through the use of language and socialization to use language. There are many factors affecting the process of socialization including values held by a community. Researches in this field, which were formerly carried out in small scale society, are now directed at a more 'particular language socialization processes that happen within sociolinguistically and culturally heterogenous setting characterized by bilingualism and multilingualism, code-switching, language shift, syncretism, and other phenomena associated with contact between two or more languages and cultures' (Garrett & Baquedano-Lopez, 2002). The heterogeneity of such context, then, influences the complexity of language socialization process.

This study is conducted in an urban setting of Surabaya in which indigenous Javanese people are situated within a heterogeneous metropolitan community. Beside the original people, citizens of Surabaya come from many different surrounding areas as well as many other islands in Indonesia. There are the Javanese, the Chinese, the Madurese, The Sumatranese, and others. In this case, one language that can become a means of interethnic communication is highly needed. In addition, the global networking which is spreading in a lot of big cities including Surabaya has obliged the people to also master foreign languages. Therefore, the Javanese in Surabaya are faced with bilingual and even multilingual settings. They have to choose and aware of different situations that require different language use. Furthermore, they have to transmit and socialize this choice and awareness to the next generation.

Spolsky (2005) said that language policy is about choice. He added that the choice may be is of specific sound, or expression, or of a specific variety of language and may be made by individual, or a socially defined group of individuals, or a body o with authority over a defined group of individuals. However, Spolsky also suggested that language practices, beliefs, and management are not necessarily congruent. Each may reveal a different language policy. It means that what people choose to speak, what they think they should speak and what they think other people should choose to speak may consistently differ.

Summary of family profile in Table1 shows that all families in this study, in particular the parents, value bilingualism and multilingualism. They are all speakers of both Indonesian and Javanese and they use both languages for daily purposes. Some of them use both Indonesian and Javanese in interaction with their spouses, and others choose Javanese to be used in that context. They continue using Javanese because they are competent Javanese speaker and because they had been socialized to use that language and to become a competent member of society through the use of that language by their parents. They are also open to the use of other foreign language for communication purposes. Nevertheless, when it comes to the decision of the language to be socialized to their children, they have different policy regarding which language they value highly.

All families socialize their children with Indonesian. In all cases, parents use Indonesian in interaction with children regardless of the formality of the situations. They choose to use Indonesian because they believe Indonesian is a national language that represents national identity. The use of Indonesian, the parents said; symbolize their pride as part of a nation. Specifically, all parents suggested that socializing Indonesian to their children is intended to prepare the children to become a competent member of society, particularly when the children enter schools. It is because Indonesian is used as a medium of learning in all schools and all books and stories are written in Indonesian. They are afraid if they socialize their children with Javanese solely, the children will experience difficulties to understand lessons and communicate with their parents and teachers. Besides, in the context of Surabaya they said that it is more beneficial for the children to get familiar with Indonesian since they will meet with a lot of people from different background and ethnic and only Indonesian is suitable for that situation.

Some parents code switch and mix Indonesian with Javanese. Some of them admitted that they do it in purpose as to maintain the use of Javanese in their family and to transmit the language to their children. The other some said that they switch or mix Indonesian with Javanese spontaneously since they are used to the language. Other parents stated that they consistently use Indonesian in interaction with their children. They choose that practice because the same thing also happened to them when they were children. That is, the grandparents also consistently speak with Indonesian even though they live in Java and they are Javanese. However, the children of those parents are still in contact with Javanese in interaction with other caregivers or friends.

All parents except parents in family 3 and 5 consider it is important to maintain Javanese language. Using Javanese for them is part of the maintenance of cultural identity. Therefore, the use of the language should be transmitted to the next generation. Those parents affirm that neglecting the transmission of Javanese to children is an action of pulling them off their cultural root as Javanese so that they will make sure that their children understand Javanese and are able to speak Javanese. However, some of the parents in this group are actually stand in a paradoxical state. They assert that their children should understand Javanese, but they admitted that they consistently use Indonesian in all contexts at home. They said that they can make the children understand Javanese by sending them to play at their relatives' residence in the villages of East Java. They want to maintain Javanese, but they thought that Indonesian is more importantly socialize to children in any context because it is the national language and they feel at ease to speak Indonesian with their children.

Family 3 and 5, particularly assume that the maintenance of Javanese is not such an important matter. They only know Javanese *ngoko* and they think using Indonesian for their children is better than putting their children in impolite state. The mother of family 3 especially stated that she used to meet people from different ethnics during college that caused her use Indonesian all the time. Thus, she thinks that Indonesian is more important to be acquired by her children. Except that Javanese becomes international language, then she will push herself to socialize Javanese to her children. The mother in family 5 claimed that if parents are supposed to socialize children with Javanese, it is supposed to be the Javanese *krama*, not the *ngoko* one. Since she does not have the ability to speak *krama*, she thinks that there is no use of teaching children Javanese. Besides, as a teacher, she has had some experiences witnessing children who get used to speak Javanese at home getting trouble with the lesson at school and it determined her family policy to socialize children only with Indonesian.

4. Conclusion

Despite the fact that two of the families in this study appear to have little and almost no concern with the maintenance of Javanese language, all the parents feel it is important to socialize children with Javanese since early age. The policy of their practices are endorsed by the value they hold as considering Javanese language as part of Javanese culture. It means that maintaining Javanese is an action of preserving their cultural identity and therefore Javanese should be transmitted from generation to generation. Values held by parents are determined by many factors including linguistic and professional experiences. Parents' attitude toward the preservation of local language must be supported by government policy as it is from the parents and family children learn their first words.

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