

THE USE OF MOTHER TONGUE FOR EDUCATION FIELD IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETY, BALI-INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to find out the role of mother tongue language as the instruction in multilingual society and the importance of mother tongue language as the instruction in multilingual society, such as Bali. The data was collected through library research to find out the role of mother tongue in multilingual society and conducting interview in rural area and urban area to find out how importance of mother if it is used as the instruction in the classroom. The result showed that there are 5 role of mother tongue in multilingual society and there is a contrast opinion of the importance of mother tongue as the instruction in rural and urban area.

Key words: Mother Tongue Language, Multilingual Education, Multilingual Society

I. INTRODUCTION

Many countries have bilingual or multilingual societies, and more than 20 states have more than one national language. However, the majority of countries are monolingual nation states, meaning that they have established one language to be used for government and legal purposes (Pauw, 2009). Indonesia itself is reported as having 742 languages spoken within its borders, making it the 26th most linguistically diverse nation in the world. The choice of Bahasa Indonesia as the national language was first proposed at the Second Indonesian Youth Conference in 1928 and Bahasa Indonesia was officially recognized as the national language in 1945 Constitution (ACDP Indonesia, 2014). While, Indonesian is taught in all schools and English is part of the standard curriculum, the use of mother tongue languages such as Javanese, Balinese and Sundanese and over 700 other minority languages varies from region to region. Since independence, Indonesian has increasingly been spoken as a second language by most of the population and more recently increasingly as a first language as well, coexisting alongside other native languages in the archipelago. In this situation, students mother tongue is going to disappear slowly and makes the mother tongue can't be implemented well in the teaching process (Cohn & Ravindranath, 2014).

Having access to learning in more than one language also allows individuals to use different languages for different functions. For example, literacy in national and/or international languages often opens doors to the world of work and facilitates

mutual intelligibility between the local context and the “outside world” politically and culturally. In turn, mother tongue literacy can foster cultural identity and support the strengthening of ethnic communities as well as the pursuit of ethnic continuity (Ramahobo, 2010). Laba (2012) stated language plays a very vital role in social interactions, particularly in the process of cross-culture communication. He further remarks that this is in line with the function of language as an index of the culture in which language also serves as a tool to depict the cultural background of the interlocutors engaged in communication. In other words, the early 20th century view that monolingual people perform better than bilingual and multilingual people is being increasingly accepted as erroneous. Students whose mother tongue language is different than the national language are often at a considerable disadvantage in the education system (Paauw, 2009). This is especially true for children living in remote areas. The farther away a child lives from urban areas, the less Bahasa Indonesian he or she uses. Children in Bali, for example, only people in the city such as Badung and Denpasar who are accustomed with Bahasa but people in some rural area such as Buleleng or Nusa Penida, most of the people there don't understand it.

In addition, while monolingual education systems are often adopted in states with cultural and linguistic diversity, histories of ethnic rivalries or social conflict with the intention of promoting national unity, they can also add to a widespread, grassroots anxiety about the status of endangered and minority languages. Such anxiety has become apparent enough in UNESCO member countries to prompt UNESCO to promote initiatives such as ‘World Mother Tongue Day’ and ‘International year of Languages’ to change public perception about the importance of languages (ACDP Indonesia, 2014). Although there are obvious advantages in having a multilingual society and education system, choosing the language to use in education remains a highly contentious topic. Official policy in Indonesia recognizes the right of different language groups to maintain their languages. However, the large ethnolinguistic communities in western Indonesia have been more successful in accessing resources and institutional support than smaller linguistic communities in the center and east (Cohn & Ravindranath, 2014). While Bali have devoted a significant amount of time in the curriculum to ensuring mother tongue literacy, including gaining community support, accessing resources and improving teacher training. Although Bahasa Indonesian is used as the language of instruction, in provinces like Bali the government has enacted policy to accommodate the needs children from rural and remote areas. There is a law stating if Bahasa Indonesia cannot be used as the introductory language in delivering education, the local language can be used as the introductory language. the statement of problem of this study is: 1) What is the role(s) of mother tongue for education field in multilingual society, Bali, Indonesia?, and 2) How important is

the existence of mother tongue in the context of education field in multilingual society, Bali, Indonesia?

II. METHODS

In order to answer those questions, the researcher used library research and interviewing some teachers in rural and city area with a help from Interview Guidelines (see Appendix 1). The researcher used library research method to collect the data and find out the role of mother tongue and used the interview to find out the importance mother tongue's existence in multilingual education, Bali, Indonesia.

III. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Multilingual society absolutely has multilingual situation especially in Indonesia, in which they have their own local language and Bahasa as their national language. In Indonesia itself there are 10 mother tongue language based on the original speaker, they are Bahasa Jawa, Bahasa Melayu-Indonesia, Bahasa Sunda, Bahasa Madura, Bahasa Batak, Bahasa Minangkabau, Bahasa Bugis, Bahasa Aceh, Bahasa Bali, and Bahasa Banjar. This situation makes the education in Indonesia, specifically in Bali must accustom the education with the language used by the students in the classroom. Although, they have Bahasa Indonesia as their national language, but in fact, most students don't receive Bahasa Indonesia as their first language, they receive it as the second language because their first language is known as Bahasa Bali. Thus, students especially in Bali rural area feel difficult in learning process if the instruction is given in Bahasa Indonesia. ACDP Indonesia (2014) states that children who have access to mother tongue based multilingual education (MTB MLE) develop better language skills in their mother tongues as well as national languages. When knowledge of a second language (L2) is added to a rich knowledge of a mother tongue language (L1), a child forms complex knowledge networks (additive bilingualism). In contrast, teaching basic skills to young children in a foreign language through language immersion is shown to even be detrimental in some cases. Children who have limited vocabulary in their first language will not benefit as thoroughly from bi/multilingual instruction and will use elements of the second language to replace the first (subtractive bilingualism). For a better result of multilingual education, L1 is used as the primary medium of instruction during all of primary school. Then, L2 is introduced as a subject of study to prepare children for eventual transition to using L2 as the medium of learning in some academic classes. Even after L2 has been introduced, children are instructed in L1 and L2. L1 continues, often as a subject of study, to ensure ongoing support for children to become academically proficient in L1. This is also called 'additive bilingual education' because one or more languages are added but do not displace L1.

ACDP Indonesia (2014) also adds that the role of mother tongue in multilingual education is for an act to (1) improve academic achievement. Bi/multilingual students often develop stronger academic abilities than similar students in monolingual schools. An evaluation of mother tongue instruction in northwest Cameroon reveals that first grade children taught in their mother tongue, Kom, perform significantly better across a range of subjects, including English and maths, than those taught solely in English. Similarly, third grade students at bilingual schools in Mali perform better on assessments of French language skills than those taught exclusively in French despite only starting to learn French in second grade. Malians who are given bilingual instruction continue to outperform those given monolingual instruction at the end of primary school.

It is also for an act to increase efficiency. Children who struggle to understand lessons in an unfamiliar language are more likely to skip school, repeat grades, drop out and fail to learn than those taught in their mother tongue. This is supported by an analysis of the educational attendance patterns of children in 153 linguistic groups across countries, which finds instruction in mother tongue to be correlated with higher school enrolment and attendance. That study concludes that if mother-tongue instruction is available at half or more of the schools attended by members of a linguistic group, the percentage of out-of-school children in that group is about 10% lower compared to groups for which mother-tongue instruction is not available or is only available in a smaller proportion of schools. Another study finds that Malian students instructed in their mother tongues are five times less likely to repeat a grade and three times less likely to drop out than those instructed in a second language. By reducing dropout and grade repetition, mother tongue-based multilingual education can also be more cost-effective in the medium and long run than monolingual alternatives. A World Bank study in Mali has found that mother tongue-based programs cost 27% less over the 6-year primary cycle than programs taught exclusively in French, largely because of reduced drop out and repetition. Similarly, a sixth-grade graduate of a bilingual program in Guatemala has been found to be nearly 10% less costly to produce than a graduate of a comparable monolingual school. Evaluations suggest that covering the costs of providing mother-tongue instruction requires an initial increase of between 1-5% in a country's education budget, but that the resulting improvement in internal efficiency would greatly reduce the cost of the education system in the long run (ACDP Indonesia, 2014).

The next role of mother tongue is as the socio-cultural benefits. Encouraging and supporting parents in teaching their infants and young children the local language in the home, and delivering early childhood education program and formal education systems in the children's mother tongue can ensure the transmission of a community's linguistic heritage and prevent this cultural and linguistic loss. In supporting diverse communities to conserve their languages and culture, bilingual (use national and local languages) program have been found to promote greater

social cohesion, rather than the disintegration feared by proponents of monolingual education. The use of local languages also has an impact on adult literacy. As parents see their children successfully learn to read and write in their language, they are often motivated to attend literacy classes themselves (ACDP Indonesia, 2014).

The role of mother tongue can be also as the introductory to second language. Introducing a second language to children is most advantageous when it is introduced to them at an early age and in low anxiety situations, containing familiar and easy understood messages rooted in their culture and traditions (use of mother tongue language). Giving a child a strong foundation in his/her mother tongue language helps L2 learning much more than early or long exposure to L2 by itself. Young students are able to transfer literacy and curriculum content skills learned in one language while learning another, and high achievement in L1 helps students maximize this skill. Differences in reading and academic performance may be dramatic between students who receive bilingual education and those who receive instruction only in L2. In addition, although introducing L2 early is beneficial, early childhood education programs such as preschool, which play a critical role in providing students with “school readiness skills” in preparation for the literacy and numeracy skills to be acquired in the early grades of elementary school, are more effective when conducted in the medium of the learner’s mother tongue, or the language that the learners know best (ACDP Indonesia, 2014).

Understanding that the role of mother tongue is very important, the researcher also attempted to interview some teachers in rural area and city to find out their opinion about how important mother tongue as their instruction in the classroom is. There is a teacher in rural area Sampalan, Klungkung, named Juli (pseudonym) who has been teaching English subject for 5 years. He agrees that English subject in his school if it is taught in Bahasa Bali as instruction, his students receive the information well than it is given Bahasa Indonesia as the instruction. He also believes that mother tongue can be used as the main instruction in the classroom because mother tongue can make the students don’t feel under-pressure when learning in the class. He also believes that mother tongue will be useful in learning a subject if it is combined with good material such as comics or interactive media (games in computer). Students who are given games combined with their mother tongue when learning English subject tend to have more passion in answering the question given and they tend to give response immediately after teacher gives them feedback. He adds that to conserve Bahasa Bali can be done in the simplest thing, that is, familiarizing the students to hear it as much as possible in the class but still in the context of English subject. This is in contrast with what a teacher in the city had stated. Yuda (pseudonym) a teacher in Badung Regency who has been teaching English Subject for 4 years in an elementary school believes that teaching English subject is better to be conducted in Bahasa Indonesia or sometimes the use of English is needed to make the students more accustomed with it. He also confess that he seldom hears students speak in Bahasa Bali, but he ever

used simple Bahasa Bali, such as “*Nyen ngelah ne?*”, “*tulungin bapak apus papan nggih*”. He also believes that if a student is given Bahasa Bali as the main instruction in the classroom, he must change his style of teaching because he has to make the students understand it and it is not a simple task to do and he has also been comfortable with his teaching style for all this time. He adds that Bahasa Bali is absolutely important because it was coming from our ancestor, but the rapid improvement of globalization and technology can't be denied and “*Kids jaman now*” tend to use Bahasa Indonesia and even use English in making caption or status in social media to show their self-pride. Maintaining Bahasa Bali in big city, such as Badung or Denpasar must be done from up to bottom, what he meant is the policy makers have to go down and see what is happening in the field and after that they can help the educators to find a way to solve this problem. What he can only do in order to maintain the Bahasa Bali in his class is making a simple instruction in Bahasa Bali and then asking his students again, after that repeating it in English language.

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APPENDIX

Interview Guidelines

1. Berapa lama sudah mengajar Bahasa Inggris?
2. Lebih sering menggunakan Bahasa Bali atau Bahasa Indonesia saat mengajar Bahasa Inggris? Atau full menggunakan Bahasa Inggris? Kenapa?
3. Menurut bapak/ibu, petingkah Bahasa Bali digunakan sebagai “Main Instruction” dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris?
4. Apakah murid-murid mengikuti jalannya pelajaran saat bapak/ibu menggunakan Bahasa Bali?
5. Bagaimana cara bapak/ibu melestarikan Bahasa Bali di kelas dan di satu sisi anak-anak dapat memahami pentingnya belajar Bahasa Inggris juga?