

English or Indonesian Language? Parents' Perception Toward Children's Second Language Learning Context

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of teaching English and Indonesian language, especially in North Sulawesi, as a second language overlaps, where some argue that teaching Indonesian language should come first so that children will not forget Indonesian language or, in other words, children will master their national language. In this study, the method used is a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The sample used as respondents by the researcher is parents in North Sulawesi who have children who can speak English and Indonesian, in addition, to their mother tongue (Manado language/Regional language), and the respondents consisted of 10 parents. The researcher used questionnaires to gather parents' perceptions of whether the children should be taught English or Indonesian Language first. However, some people think teaching English is very important because mastering English as an international language is necessary. English is suitable for children as their second language, but teaching Indonesian language as the national language is also very important. Therefore teaching between these two languages must be balanced so that it does not only English that can be mastered by children or not only Indonesian language.

Keywords: *learning English; Indonesian language, Indonesian children; second language learning*

INTRODUCTION

The use of English in everyday life is increasing in Indonesia (Liando, 2012). We can hear people speaking English in offices, banks, schools, tourist attractions, and other public places. Some people do it by mixing it up a bit with Indonesian language. Aware of the importance, several schools, including kindergartens, provide English learning programs for their students. Some have even adopted the 'international' curriculum introduced by leading educational institutions such as Cambridge International and International Baccalauriette (Sinnema, C., Nieveen, N., & Priestley, 2020). Meanwhile, other schools developed their curriculum and became schools with bilingual programs.

Learning a language is a very long and complex activity and is not a series of easy steps that can be observed or programmed in a quick guide (Lumentut, Y & Lengkoan, 2021). Whatever humans do when they gather with their friends in various activities such as playing, fighting, and other activities, humans cannot be separated from speaking activities. This language ability distinguishes humans from other creatures; we often hear the expression that humans are talking animals.

A second language is usually the official language of a particular country. Therefore, a second language is indispensable for political, economic, and educational purposes. In (Chaer, 2003) explained that, in general, the first language of an Indonesian language child is their respective regional language because Indonesian language is only learned when the child enters school and when he has mastered his mother tongue. According to Krashen (in Akhadiyah, 1998), compared to first language acquisition, the second language acquisition process is not linear for children.

A second language is much more learned than acquired (Mawuntu, Y. R., Wowor, D., & Kumayas, 2020). Adults have two distinct, independent, and independent ways of developing competence in a second language. First, language acquisition is a process that coincides with the way children do. Develop skills in their first language. Language acquisition is a subconscious process (Persson, V., & Nouri, 2018). Language acquirers are not always aware that they use language to communicate. The acquisition of a second language naturally is the acquisition of a second/foreign language that occurs in daily communication, free from teaching or leadership, teachers. There is no uniformity of way. Each individual acquires a second language in their way (Potter, C. E., Wang, T., & Saffran, 2017). Interaction demands language communication and encourages language acquisition.

Language learning is related to the processes that occur when a child learns a second language after he has acquired his first language. So language acquisition is related to the first language, while language learning is related to the second language (Chaer, 2003). However, many also use the term language acquisition for a second language. In Indonesia, especially in North Sulawesi, learning a second language apart from the mother tongue (Manado Language/Regional Language) is taught from elementary school to high school level. This second language learning is learning Indonesian Language and English; although several other foreign language subjects are often taught, the most common are Indonesian language and English (Denizer, 2017).

Despite the rapid growth of international schools in Indonesia, some parents are worried because they think this trend will turn their children into bilinguals. They fear that their children who can speak more than one language can reduce their ability to master a language (Nushi, M.,

& Eqbali, 2017). Another concern is based on the belief that bilingual children will always mix up languages.

Bilingual children must deal with two or more languages (Mitchell, R., Myles, F., & Marsden, 2019). However, bilingual children have the same ability as children who can only speak one language to master a new language. Grosjean's theory (Grosjean, 1982) says that language spoken in a family context will not harm children's second language. In fact, language will enrich children's language learning process because they can still communicate with anyone who does not speak a second language (Jabbari, N., & Eslami, 2019).

The phenomenon of teaching English and Indonesian Language in Indonesia, especially in North Sulawesi as a second language, overlaps, where some argue that teaching Indonesian language should come first so that children will not forget Indonesian Language or, in other words, children will master their national language. However, some people think teaching English is very important because English is an international language that needs to be mastered. This phenomenon is widespread, where children are very fluent in English but not in Indonesian language, and vice versa (Abdullaev, 2021). Based on this, the writer feels that it is essential to study further parents' opinions about how and what should be taught first to their children as their second language, especially for children in North Sulawesi.

METHOD

The method used in this study is a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. According to (Nazir, 2011), the descriptive method is a method that examines a group of people, a subject, or thoughts in the present. This descriptive method is used to describe the results of data collection that has been carried out by the researcher, through the provision of questionnaires. The researcher chose the descriptive method because this method can provide an accurate description of the individual, situation, language, symptom, or group. In addition, this research focuses on parents' opinion on learning a second language, be it Indonesian Language or English.

The sample used as respondents by the researcher is parents in North Sulawesi who have children who can speak English and Indonesian Language, in addition, to their mother tongue (Manado language/Regional language), and the respondents consisted of 10 parents. In this study, the researcher used a questionnaire to gather parents' perceptions of whether the children should be taught English or Indonesian Language first. Since this study aims to ask parents' perceptions using a questionnaire, as pointed out by (Preston. V., 2009) "questionnaire survey is a technology

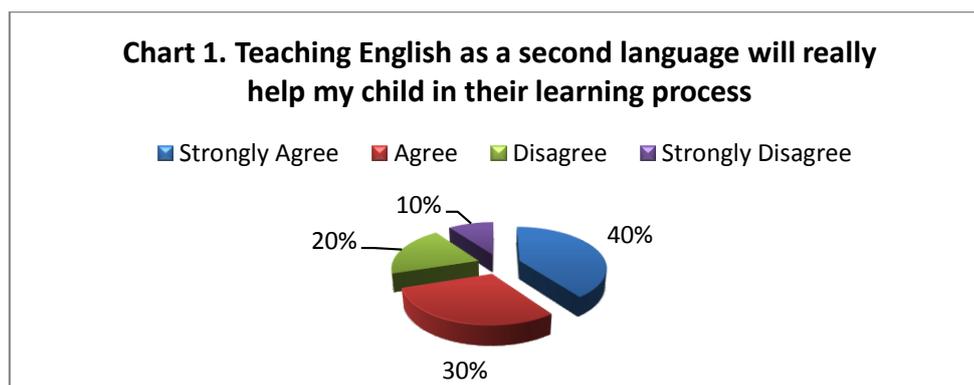
that collects statistical information about demographic attributes, attitudes, or behaviors through the structure of questions.” Therefore, this study is classified as survey research. Survey research was one of the most common forms of research conducted by educational researchers. Data were collected by observing the sample that would be used as data by distributing a questionnaire containing several questions related to learning a second language. However, in analyzing the data, the researcher followed some steps to get accurate data. First, distributing the questionnaire to the respondents; second, collecting those questionnaires right after the respondents finished answering the questionnaires; third, analyzing and counting based on the types in the statement and responses; and finally, providing the data results.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data obtained from this study are derived from questionnaires given to several parents who are respondents. The authors used a Likert scale to analyze the data in this study. Likert Scale is a research scale used to measure attitudes and opinions. In the Likert scale, respondents are asked to complete a questionnaire that requires them to indicate their level of agreement with a series of questions. As stated by (Sugiyono, 2004), the Likert scale measures attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of individuals or groups related to social phenomena that are researching objects. The forms of the Likert scale are quite diverse depending on the objectives to be obtained by the researcher. The first form is a scale of opinion which is usually on a questionnaire paper consisting of five choices, namely Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The presentation of the data's results based on those responses from the questionnaires regarding the parents' perception of children's second language learning showed that 40% of respondents agree with giving or teaching English to their children as a second language in their learning stage, 30% of respondents agree with teaching English as a second language, 20% disagree with the statement about teaching English as a second language. The last 10 % strongly disagree with teaching English as a second language. With this, it can be understood that learning English as a second language is approved by some parents even though some do not agree. To see the presentation of this data, can be seen in the chart (1) below.

Figure1. English Learning Process



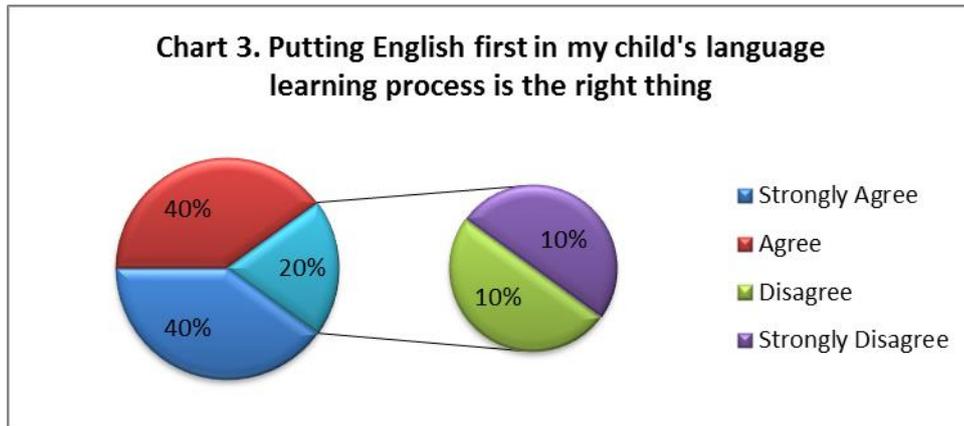
The following data collection is data or opinions from respondents regarding teaching Indonesian language as a second language. From this statement, the data obtained are that 30% of respondents agree with this statement, followed by 40% of respondents who have the same opinion, while 20% choose to disagree, followed by 10% who more or less have the same opinion. From the acquisition of this data, it can be understood that the respondents highly accept the teaching of Indonesian language as a second language. Some do not accept it. The presentation of this data can be seen in the chart (2) below.

Figure 2.



The following data presentation is about respondents' opinions regarding prioritizing English as their child's second language in the learning process. From the results of the questionnaire analysis of the data obtained, there were 80% of respondents chose to agree, each of which was separated into two categories, which are strongly agree and agree with the same number of points from each category, followed by 20% of respondents who chose not to agree with each of them, each separated by category, namely disagree and strongly disagree with 10% per category. The presentation of the data can be seen in the chart (3).

Figure 2.



The presentation of the results of the following percentage is data derived from questionnaires that have been circulated to respondents, with a percentage of 50% of respondents strongly agree with the statement that the introduction of the Indonesian language in the children's learning process is the right step, with 40% of respondents who have the same opinion. However, from the data obtained 20% of respondents disagree with the distribution in each category of 10%. From this statement, it can be understood that the opinion of each respondent is more or less the same about the introduction of English or Indonesian Language is the right step in the child's learning process, and this can be seen from the results of each chart which shows the same amount of 80% for the category strongly agree and agree while 20% for the category of disagree and strongly disagree. For more details, this percentage can be seen on chart four, and the results can be compared with the chart (4).

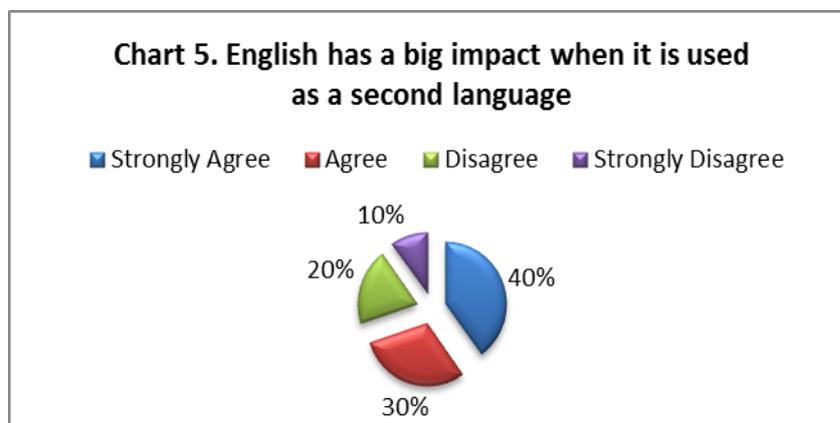
Figure 2.



The results of the calculation of respondents' opinions regarding the significant influence of English is used as a second language are presented according to each category consisting of 40% of respondents who chose to agree with this opinion strongly, then followed by another 30% of respondents who have an opinion of more or less the same. However, 30% of people have

different thoughts, and each consists of 20% for the disagree category and 10% for the strongly disagree category. It can be seen in the chart (5).

Figure 2.



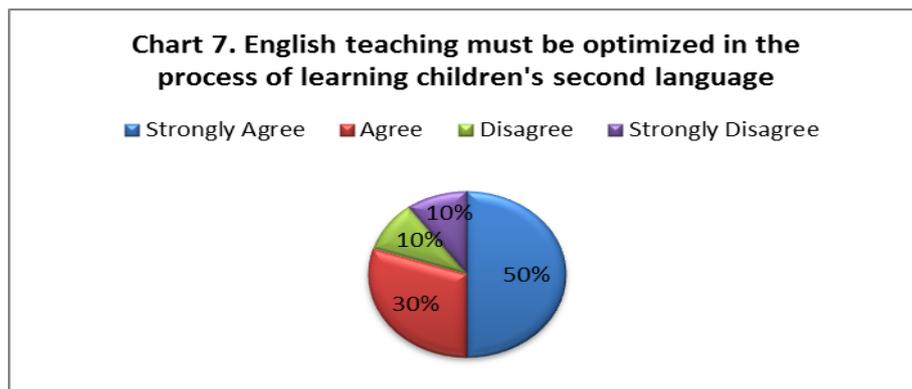
The results of the subsequent data analysis show that there are, 30% of respondents choose strongly agree with the statement regarding Indonesian language, which has a significant impact if it is used as a second language, followed by 40% of respondents who agree. 20% of respondents disagree, followed by 10% who more or less share the same opinion. Each of these data can be seen in the chart (6).

Figure 2.



English teaching must be optimized in learning a child's second language. From this statement, the data obtained is there are 50% of respondents feel strongly agree with this opinion then there are also 30% of respondents who more or less have the same opinion, but not so with there are 20% of respondents who disagree, each of which falls into the 10% disagree category and the other 10% strongly disagree, clearly shown in the chart (7) below.

Figure 2.



The following data is data on respondents' opinions regarding optimizing the Indonesian language as a second language which gives the results of a percentage of data such as, there are 60% of respondents think strongly agree with this with 20% of respondents who also have the same opinion in the agree with category. Still, 20% with the 10% category disagree, and 10% strongly disagree with the opinion regarding the optimization of the Indonesian language as shown in the chart (8) below.

Figure 2.



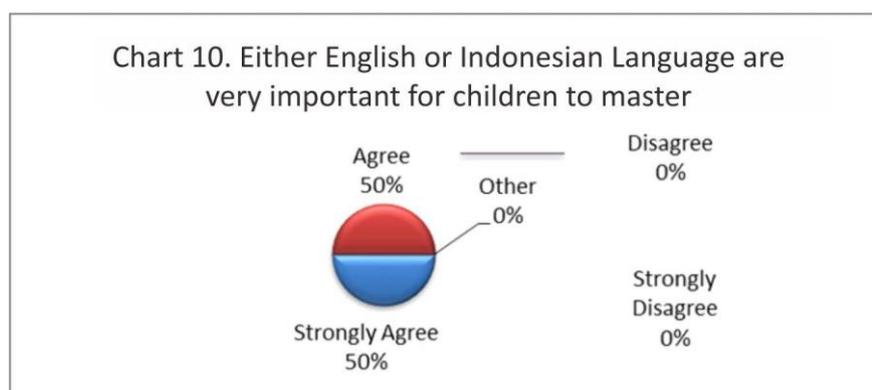
The following statement is about the opinion of each respondent on the balance of English and a language to be taught to children other than their mother tongue. The result is, 90% of respondents are very positive about this, where each falls in the category of strongly agree with a total of 50% followed by agreeing 40%. In addition, from this statement there are 10% of respondents chose to disagree, and 0% strongly disagree. This can be seen in the chart (9).

Figure 2.



The balance that occurred in the previous chart, the following statement is about the crucial points of both English and Indonesian language to be mastered by children, and from this statement, obtained such data, 50% respondents strongly agree as well as 50% of respondents who have more or less the same opinion that is agree, in addition, there are 0% respondents in the category of disagree and strongly disagree. As clearly shown in the chart (10) below.

Figure 2.



After all the data analysis series that have been carried out, the author will discuss any findings related to this research. In the study, the subjects taken as respondents were parents in North Sulawesi Province who have children who can speak English and Indonesian Language, respectively.

The results of this study are each categorized in 10 charts following the number of questions in the questionnaire. The results of each statement are collected based on the findings in each statement in the questionnaire, which is divided into four categories, namely, Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), (Gon, S., & Rawekar, 2017).

Language is a central part of life. Humans use language not only for survival like animals, but humans use language for various aspects of life. Therefore, humans are equipped with LAD (Language Acquisition Device) so that they are able to develop themselves in language (Mukminin, A., Haryanto, E., Sutarno, S., Sari, S. R., Marzulina, L., Hadiyanto, H., & Habibi, 2018). The use of this language is inseparable from the language learning process experienced by humans from childhood to adulthood. The language children use from childhood and become the tool most widely used in their social interactions is their first language. If there is a first term, there is a second language term. The first language (L1) is the language that is most mastered and most often used by a person, while the second language is a language that is acquired through learning and tends to be learned intentionally. The second language does not mean that it is limited to a second language, but another language learned by someone, whether one language, two, or more. For learning and learning a second language, one must know more about the introduction and various hypotheses regarding the problem.

First language learning is closely related to the social development of children and, therefore, closely related to the formation of social identity. Learning the first language is one of the overall developments of a child to become a full member of society (Sidupa, 2018). Language makes it easy for children to express their ideas and desires genuinely socially acceptable way. Language is a medium that children can use to acquire cultural, moral, religious, and other values in society (Kandati, S. P., & Tatipang, 2021). When the first language is considered a language acquired without conscious effort, this second language has its characteristics in the process and conditions of its learning.

Moreover, the second language is not limited to the language learned by children but includes more heterogeneous acquisition in various aspects. Second language learning (SLL) also refers to learning a target language (Target Language) either by individuals or groups with specific language goals and learning objectives. The scope of SLL includes L2 informal learning that occurs naturally.

Learning a language is the process of mastering a language, both in the first language and in the second language. In learning a first language, it is necessary to know that a child does not suddenly have an L1 grammar in his brain and is complete with all the rules. The first language is acquired in several stages, and each subsequent stage is closer to the grammar of the adult language. Knowledge of this first language is acquired informally from the age of eighteen months. In addition, this learning process is received indirectly through mothers/fathers, families, and the surrounding community. The child's misunderstanding is the complete responsibility of adults, especially parents, to straighten out what they do not understand, where the surrounding

environment influences language acquisition. At this time, parents are needed to guide so that children's language learning develops by paying attention to their children's interactions and interactions. Children can absorb a second language well and faster than adults because the child's ability to pronounce a second language with the correct accent occurs at 2 or 3 years, then the child's second language also decreases with age. Therefore, many researchers agree that, in essence, the cognitive and linguistic processes in second language skills for children are the same as the strategies used in first language skills.

In essence, language learning is the same for every child, namely through the formation and testing of hypotheses about language rules. The formation of the rules is made possible by the innate ability or innate structure that every child mentally owns and is called a Language Acquisition Device (LAD) (Saddhono, K., Hasibuan, A., & Bakhtiar, 2019). Therefore, even if adults want to compete with children in the effort to learn a second language, it is clear that there is a difference between language learning for adults and children because of the difference between the results obtained by children and adults. Children in a critical period will acquire better abilities than adults whose first language will have been significantly reduced so that inevitably the elements of their first language will influence their efforts in learning a second language.

Based on the order, a second language is a language that children acquire after acquiring another. The language obtained is referred to as L2 if the language obtained first has been mastered relatively perfectly. If the mastery is not perfect, the language obtained later is also called L1. Based on its function in the learner's life, L2 plays a less influential role than L1. If L1 is used for all aspects of life, especially emotional ones, L2 is for certain aspects only. Second language learning is a phenomenon that appears in a multilingual society, in this case, referring to the national language or second language. This multilingual society makes children learn languages through great exposure, and they practice listening and speaking new words or speech they have heard before. We know that motor skills can only be trained with practice, and it is not surprising when children have better motor skills than adults.

The discussion of second language learning (L2) is inseparable from the first language acquisition (L1) discussion. The second language is obtained after mastering the first language. The difference between learning a second language and acquiring a first language lies in acquiring it (Kusumaningputri, R., Ningsih, T. A., & Wisasongko, 2018). Mastery of L1 is through an acquisition process, while mastery of L2 is through a learning process. Only deliberately and consciously L2 learning can be obtained through formal and informal education. This is different from the acquisition of the first language, which is natural and unintentional, and unconscious.

Seeing the development of learning and technology in today's era makes it easier for children to learn languages with various exposures they can meet (Lengkoan et al., 2019). This makes children more vulnerable to exposure to various languages that make them remember and even say words from the language they hear from the surrounding environment and exposure from the media.

In line with that, the understanding of parents teaching languages other than their mother tongue at home needs to be studied considering the many facts that occur where many children whose second language is not only Indonesian but also English. According to (Iskandar, 2019), parents need to teach a language other than their mother tongue, which is a habit from childhood, not only their national language (Indonesian) because Indonesian is also vital for them, but English too. The researchers found that parents' opinions and the theory can be aligned that parents should have a good understanding of children's second language learning so that children can understand well. When the child is at home, communication must go well between parents and children so that Child development can be achieved according to the child's growth and development. According to (Iskandar, 2019), Parents are indeed required to have the ability in everything, including of them being able to understand language learning from children because parents are children's first teachers. After all, children will ask their parents more questions than teachers because they spend more time at home than children at school. Each opinion from this parent provides a reasonably precise answer to every question provided in the study, these opinions then become the source of data in this study.

Statements in this research are structured so that they can be submitted to respondents. Each statement is made as easy as possible to be understood by the respondent (Pujihastuti, 2010) because the respondent's role is vast in this research so that what is being answered in this research can be obtained and appropriately described.

Based on the findings from those statements that have been described previously, it can be said that most parents agree with giving or teaching English as a second language to children, but some parents do not agree for several reasons:

1. Children will not be able to get along with their peers when they cannot adapt their language.
2. Parents will find it difficult to understand what their children say when they constantly use English.
3. English is excellent, but Indonesian language must come first because the Indonesian language is the national language.

The reasons above come from parents regarding any statements containing questions that prioritize English as the second language of their children. Talking about prioritizing, in the

statement, some questions lead to opinions about prioritizing the Indonesian language as a second language. From these statements, some parents disagree with the reasons:

1. Indonesian language can be adjusted later in the child's environment.
2. Indonesian language is easy to learn.
3. Indonesian language is already a language that will blend with children (naturally)

In addition, there is a statement in the questionnaire which contains questions about parents' opinions on teaching English and Indonesian Language, which are placed in the same position, in this case, not favoring English only or Indonesian language only. From this question, the data obtained are the overall respondents' agree, where each respondent's response is 50% divided into each category, namely Strongly Agree and Agree.

CONCLUSIONS

Having the skills to communicate with other people with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds is one of the keys to success in today's global era (Tatipang, D., Oroh, E. Z., & Liando, 2021). In this regard, the need to be able to speak English as one of the most spoken languages in the world is considered necessary. Opinions about teaching English and Indonesian language are significant if done together is a good thing. Both perspectives show that children can acquire a second language simultaneously or sequentially. Interestingly, both camps were not concerned that learning a second language in school would result in losing the first language.

Based on the conclusion that has been stated previously, it can be suggested that learning English is suitable for children as their second language, but teaching Indonesian language as the national language is also very important. Therefore teaching between these two languages must be balanced so that it does not only English that can be mastered by children or not only Indonesian language. Mastery of one of these two languages is likely to have an impact on the child and indirectly on the family. Therefore, the authors hope that with this research, future researchers can use the results of this study as a starting point to develop further research that may be based on the same problem.

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