LANGUAGE CHOICE IN INTERMARRIAGE FAMILIES IN JAPAN (FOCUSING JAPANESE-INDONESIAN COUPLE)

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ABSTRACT

Recently, the number of intermarriages in Japan has increased rapidly. Many studies have shown that language and communication are significant problems in intermarriages. This study analyzes the choice of language and the factors that influence the language choice of Indonesian women in intermarriages using the life story method. In all surveyed households, the primary language at home is Japanese. Most children of intermarriage learn only Japanese. The positive attitude of parents and families towards bilingualism affects the use of language. There are several Factors Affecting Language Choice in Intermarriage Families, namely, lack of enthusiasm and effort to teach Indonesian to children, the lack of support from Japanese families, the husband's speaking ability, and the lack of knowledge about parental language education. The results show that Indonesian wives' knowledge of bilingualism and parents' positive attitude toward bilingualism greatly influence language use in the home. Therefore, Indonesian wives need bilingual education knowledge so their children can communicate in Indonesian and Japanese.

Keywords: Indonesian Wife, Intermarriage, Japan, Language choice, Life Story Method

INTRODUCTION

With the progress of globalization, the movement of people, goods, and information has increased dramatically worldwide. As the contact between people has increased, the number of people who have intermarriages has also increased. The number of intermarriages in Japan has risen rapidly in recent years. According to Ito (2007), about 70% of the rising and diversifying intermarriages in Japan are the combinations of "Japanese husband and foreign wife. Ito points out that many foreign wives are from Asian countries such as the Philippines, South and North Korea, and China. According to Satake (2017), international marriage families are multicultural families. Then the problems in multicultural families in Japan are as follows: (1) language and communication; (2) cultural differences and family views; (3) domestic violence; Income trends; and (5) child care and education. Although research and support systems on internationally married families have been carried out in Japan, it can be said that it is still very little. Ito (2006) points out that language is the most common problem foreign wives face in Japan. However, according to Ito (2006) and Satake (2017), more research still needs to be conducted on intermarriage in Japan. In other words, language and communication are one of the problems of intermarriages in Japan and need to be researched.

The family is the smallest socio-cultural unit in society. Intermarriages create a bilingual (multilingual) situation in the family. Therefore, in intermarriages between Indonesian and Japanese couples, it is also estimated that multilingualism is used. Intimate, informal situations characterize communication in intermarriages, and the language commonly used can be considered a familiar, informal variety. When an Indonesian marries Japanese, many questions arise about the language used by wives in intermarriages, whether they only use the language of their wives or husbands, whether their use of language follows a specific pattern, etc. Based on the above background, this study examines the choice of language in Japanese and Indonesian intermarriage families living in Japan. This study aims to

analyze the selection of speech and the factors that influence the choice of language in intermarriages between Indonesians and Japanese.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research on intermarriage has been widely carried out. Hanai (2016) uses quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the factors that influence the choice of language in Korean-Japanese intermarriage families living in Korea and living in Japan. According to Hanai, Japanese mothers who live in Korea tend to pass Japanese on to their children, while Korean mothers who live in Japan tend not to pass on Korean to their children. Hanai stated that using their mother tongue, which has long contact time with their preschool children during parenting affects their children's language acquisition. In addition, various factors, such as how language education is at home, the educational environment at home, the social environment, and parental awareness.

Through quantitative analysis, Matsuo (2004) analyzes language choice and its factors among Japanese descendants living in Jakarta and surrounding areas. The results of Matsuo's research show that few informants speak only one language at home, not a few informants use Indonesian, Japanese, and English, and most informants use Japanese and Indonesian. Three factors significantly influence language choice in Japanese families, namely: the husband's ability to speak, whether he is suitable for relatives' events, and whether the husband is Chinese or of Chinese descent.

Suzuki (2016) researches the acquisition of language and culture as well as the factors behind it from the parent's point of view, taking the case of children from internationally married families where one of the parents is Japanese, and the other is a foreigner (children of Japanese descent). In all families, the primary language at home is Japanese, and children only learn Japanese and do not inherit Indonesian. As a foreign language, they are more likely to learn English. In addition, the Japanese couple, except for one, cannot speak Indonesian. The reason why children only learn Japanese and do not inherit Indonesian is because of the regularity of the place of residence, the prestige of the language (the order of languages in the international world), the lack of enthusiasm and efforts of parents (especially foreign parents) to pass on the Indonesian language, lack of opportunities (institutions) to give on Indonesian in Japan, and close relationships with Japanese grandparents.

According to Holmes (2001), some factors that influence people to choose one language are the participant, social context, function, and topic of the discussion. It is essential to consider who the addressee is. Different languages may apply to other people, for example, wife to husband, student to teacher, or boss to worker. Social context or setting, where and when the conversation happens, also can affect the choices.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach, using the life story method to achieve the research purposes. The life story method is the most suitable for this research based on previous studies. According to Sakurai (2002:58), the life story method is an edited biographical record of the lives and events of individuals. The procedure follows the steps of the life story method of Koji Okubo (2008). After completion of the interview, make a transcription of the recorded data. Then print it out and ask the informant to read it. After the informant approved the written material, editing was done, taking the essential parts of the interview and analyzing it. The languages used in the interview are Indonesian, Javanese, and Japanese. The informants of this study are 7 Indonesian wives married to Japanese and living

in Japan. The informants of this research are Indonesian women living in Japan who are married to Japanese people:

① A

Thirty-two years old from Lampung (Javanese). She lives in Hiroshima. She graduated from junior high school, a housewife. Her husband is 48 years old, part-time, and her son (is one year old). She met her husband in Hiroshima. She was married for four years.

② DE

Forty years from Central Java (Javanese). She lives in Hiroshima. She is a college graduate company employee. Her husband is 42 years old, a company employee, the son is 11 years old, and the daughter is six years old. She met her husband in Hiroshima. She was married for 16 years.

③ DI

Thirty-five years old from East Java (Javanese), Indonesia. She lives in Hiroshima. She graduated from high school as a part-time worker. Her husband is 47 years old (a company employee), and her daughter (is seven years old). She met her husband in Jakarta. She was married for 13 years.

④ E

42 years old from Yogyakarta (Javanese). She lives in Tokyo. She graduated from university as an Indonesian teacher. Her husband is 44 years old and a company employee. The son is ten years old. She met her husband in Yogyakarta. She was married for 14 years.

⑤ F

Thirty-three years old from Central Java (Javanese). She lived in Yamanashi and graduated from a university. Recently she has been an employee. Her husband is 32 years old Japanese lecturer. She met in Semarang, Indonesia. She was married for three years.

⑥ H

Forty years old from Central Java (Javanese). She lives in Hamamatsu, graduated from college, and was a part-time worker. Her husband is 37 years old and a part-time worker. Her daughter is four years old. She met her husband on SNS. She was married for nine years.

⑦ S

Thirty-seven years old from Central Java, Indonesia (Javanese). She lives in Nara and is a graduated university housewife. Her husband is 38 years old (a company employee). She has a son who is six years old. She met her husband in Osaka. She was married for eight years.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

1. Language Choice of Intermarriage Families

The interviews with seven informants found that all families used Japanese as the primary language. The topic and conversation participation are factors that determine the use of language between mother and children, husband and wife in the majority of the family of informants. Most Indonesian wives use Indonesian with their children and husband only on specific topics, namely when joking and angry. In the case of the husband being able to speak Indonesian, the informants use Indonesian when joking and angry. The two husbands can talk to Indonesian, but the husbands only use Indonesian when joking.

All informants choose Japanese when communicating with their husbands. The husbands of A, DE, DI, H, and S do not speak Indonesian, so the only way they communicate with their wives is in Japanese. The husbands of informants E and F can communicate in Indonesian at the level of simple conversation; when joking, their husbands sometimes use

Indonesian. Two informants use Japanese, Indonesian and Javanese when speaking with their children. In terms of language inheritance, the informants choose Japanese as the primary language for their children. The majority of children understand Indonesian but cannot speak Indonesian and Javanese. All informants want their children to be able to speak Indonesian to share with their families in Indonesia, even though most children can only understand the everyday conversation and cannot talk to Indonesian and Javanese.

2. Factors Affecting Language Choice in Intermarriage Families

Husband's language ability

The majority of husbands cannot speak Indonesian. Therefore, the majority of informants choose Japanese to communicate with their husband. The two informant's husbands can speak Indonesian; when joking, the husband sometimes uses Indonesian and Japanese. At the same time, most wives use Indonesian when joking or getting angry.

Lack of enthusiasm and effort to convey the mother tongue of Indonesian wives to their children.

When the informants were interviewed about their use of the language with the children, some answered like this.

(1) *Mengajar bahasa Indonesia ribet dan susah*. (Teaching Indonesian is troublesome and difficult)

Lack of Japanese family support

There is an informant whose mother-in-law does not like it if the informant uses Indonesian at home and teaches Indonesian to the children. Therefore, the use of the Indonesian language is limited. As stated by the following informant:

(2) *Mertua saya sebal, kurang suka pemakaian bahasa Indonesia karena tidak paham artinya. Dia menganggap tidak perlu bahasa Indonesia karena tinggal di Jepang*. (My mother-in-law is annoyed and doesn't like the use of Indonesian because she doesn't understand the meaning. She thinks Indonesian is not necessary because she is living in Japan.)

Lack of parental knowledge about language education for children.

Most informants acknowledged that Indonesian or the subject's mother tongue was necessary for communicating with Indonesian families but needed help understanding how to teach the informant's mother tongue and Japanese or provide bilingual education to children. All of the informants only use Indonesian on specific topics.

Child development

Some children had difficulty or confusion when the informant used Indonesian and Japanese, therefor the informant's husband suggested not to force the children to use Indonesian. As stated by the following informant:

(3) *Anak saya bingung kalau saya pakai bahasa Indonesia*.(My child is confused if I use Indonesian)

Three factors influence the choice of family language: participants, social context or setting, and function. Most informants choose different languages depending on the addressee. Some informants use Japanese when communicating with their husband and their children. Some of them use Japanese to communicate with their husband and only use Indonesia when speaking with children. The setting also can influence people to choose a specific language. Bilingual speakers usually select different languages in different

environments. Informants use Japanese at home, Indonesian when visiting family in Indonesia, and when communicating with Indonesian people in Japan or Indonesia. But the children of informants use only Japanese in Japan or when they visit Indonesia. The children cannot talk with their Indonesian families. The third factor which can influence language choice is function. Each interaction has a purpose which can determine what language they will choose. All informants who live in Japan choose the Japanese language as a first language for their children because of its function as a community language.

(4) *Bahasa Jepang karena tinggal di Jepang*. (I choose Japanese because living in Japan)

The function of a language is the factor why DE, DI, E, H, and S choose to use Indonesian with their children, even if only on specific topics. They found that Indonesian still bring benefits to their lives. One of the benefits is their children can communicate with their families in Indonesia.

Discussion

The analysis results in a show that intermarriage couples choose Japanese as the primary language in their family. Their children can understand simple Indonesian conversations but cannot speak Indonesian. Children of intermarriage couples naturally acquire Japanese as their first language because they live in a Japanese-speaking country and their parents often talk to Japanese. Unlike Japanese, the first language they use regularly, information uses Indonesian only for specific topics. The children cannot communicate with relatives in Indonesia. To Gupta (2010) that a child can acquire more than one language if adults around them frequently use more than one. Children of intermarriage between Indonesians and Japanese cannot speak Indonesian because they rarely use it, even though the informants used Indonesian and Javanese on specific topics.

To Holmes (2001), some factors influencing people to choose one language are the participant, social context, and function. It is essential to consider who the addressee is. Different languages may apply to other people. Social context, where and when the conversation happens, also can affect the choices. The theory of Holmes (2001) follows the situation of this study's informants, where most informants use different languages when communicating with different recipients. But the use of language by the children of the informants is not following this theory because the children of the informants only use Japanese, both with the father and the informant. Informants mix Japanese and Indonesian with their children and only use Japanese when speaking to their husbands. Social context or setting also plays a vital role in determining language choice (Holmes, 2001). This study found that all informants choose different languages in other locations. Most informants choose Japanese when communicating with their husbands, and when they go to their hometown in Indonesia, they use Indonesian and their ethnic language (Javanese). The other factor is function. All informants found that they still need Indonesian and their ethnic language (Javanese) to communicate with their families living in Indonesia. The children of the informants can also feel the difficulty when meeting with Indonesian families; they can't communicate because they can't speak Indonesian.

CONCLUSION

In all surveyed households, the primary language at home is Japanese. Some factors influence their language choice, namely, lack of enthusiasm and effort to teach Indonesian to children, the lack of support from Japanese families, the husband's speaking ability, and the lack of knowledge about parental language education. Therefore, Indonesian wives need knowledge of bilingual education so that children from Japanese and Indonesian international marriages can communicate in Indonesian and Japanese. The positive attitude of parents and families towards bilingualism affects the use of language. Children from intermarriage families do not necessarily grow up to be bilingual or multilingual. The results show that Indonesian wives' knowledge of bilingualism and parents' positive attitude toward bilingualism greatly influence language use in the home. Therefore, Indonesian wives need bilingual education knowledge so their children can communicate in Indonesian and Japanese.

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