

# PARENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS HERITAGE LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE

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## Abstrak

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat sikap orang tua terhadap bahasa warisan, khususnya mengeksplorasi strategi dalam mempertahankan bahasa warisan kepada anak-anak mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan lima pasangan orang tua yang menjadi partisipan dalam penelitian ini. Data untuk penelitian ini dikumpulkan dari partisipan dan narasumber. Data primer berasal dari wawancara mendalam dengan orang tua dan data pendukung berasal dari kuesioner. Secara umum, bahasa yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah Bahasa Indonesia dan Bahasa Inggris. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 20% orang tua setuju dan 60% orang tua sangat setuju dengan kesimpulan ini, hal ini menunjukkan sikap positif orang tua, hal ini menunjukkan bahwa orang tua memiliki sikap positif, terutama dalam keyakinan mereka dalam mempertahankan bahasa warisan mereka. Dalam mempertahankan bahasa ibu, mayoritas orang tua menggunakan strategi yang hampir sama dimana strategi-strategi tersebut lebih kepada hal-hal yang biasa, hal-hal yang alamiah yang biasa dilakukan di rumah, seperti tetap menggunakan bahasa ibu, menyanyikan lagu-lagu daerah, dan membacakan cerita-cerita rakyat dalam bahasa daerah. Temuan ini juga diperkuat oleh data kuesioner yang menunjukkan bahwa 60% orang tua memperkenalkan lagu-lagu daerah, menceritakan dongeng kepada anak-anak mereka. Lingkungan sosial dan sumber-sumber digital seperti TV, game online, dan YouTube yang tidak menggunakan bahasa ibu juga menjadi kendala bagi mereka dalam mempertahankan bahasa ibu karena akan terpengaruh untuk lebih banyak menggunakan bahasa sosial daripada bahasa ibu. Hal ini juga menjadi kendala bagi mereka dalam mempertahankan bahasa warisan kepada anak-anak mereka.*

**Keywords:** bahasa warisan, sikap orang tua, pemeliharaan bahasa warisan

## Abstract

*This study intends to examine parents' attitudes toward heritage languages, particularly explore strategies in maintaining the heritage language to their children. This study used qualitative research methods five parents couple are participants in this study. Data for this study were collected from participants and sources. Primary data comes from in-depth interviews with parents and supporting data comes from the questioners. In general, this study language is as important as Indonesian and English. The results showing that 20% of parents are in agreement and 60% of parents strongly agree with this conclusion this demonstrates parents' positive attitudes, this show that parents have positive attitude, especially in their belief in maintaining their heritage language. In maintaining the heritage language, the majority of parents use almost the same strategies where the strategies are more ordinary things, natural things that are usually done at home. such as continuing to speak the heritage language, singing folk songs, and reciting folklore in the regional language. This finding is also reinforced by questionnaire data which shows that 60% of parents introduce folk songs, tell folk tales to their children. The social environment and digital sources like TV, online games and YouTube that does not use heritage language is also an obstacle for them in maintaining heritage language because it will be influenced to use more social language than heritage language. It is also an obstacle for them in maintaining heritage language. to their children.*

**Keywords:** heritage language, attitudes, heritage language maintenance,

## INTRODUCTION

Heritage language is a type of language that is frequently used in the home or passed down through families; it differs from the language that is widely spoken in modern society (Pillai & Soh, 2015). With 718 native languages spoken there, Indonesia is renowned for being multicultural and multilingual (Antari, 2019). Recent research shows that heritage language use typically dies in the second or third generation. This indicates that the National Heritage Language Resource Center conducts language-of-origin surveys of students enrolled in language-of-origin classes (Carreira & Kagan, 2011).

One of the obstacles that occurred in maintaining the heritage language which can result similar to what happened in Indonesia, legacy languages are being lost. Thousands of Indonesians have temporarily migrated to other places for a variety of reasons, including employment, study, etc. Some families move to a different city with their children, not just the adults. This is one of the reasons people swipe language as heritage language to the majority language spoken in their new place community (Canagarajah, 2008). Within a certain period of time, immigrants living in other cities temporarily returned to their hometown. After returning, the situation was reversed. Especially for their children, their first language will turn into the majority language, while their second language will become a heritage language.

Parent in preserving the heritage language gives greatly affects their children. Additionally, according to Baker (1992), parents' attitude toward their children's acquisition of a heritage language can have a significant impact on those sentiments. It shows that the parents' attitude plays a substantial role in preserving their heritage language. The absence of parents' awareness about maintaining heritage language is a big problem for their children.

Furthermore, the parents need strategy to maintain the heritage language. Moreover, the strategy is a collection of practical resources and an active one that involves people in preserving heritage languages. (Putrayasa, 2016). There are numerous studies in the literature that provide empirical data about linguistic attitudes, strategies and obstacles to maintain the heritage language. Previous research shows by Backer (2013) that several variables affect parental language attitude. who see a positive attitude towards their heritage language and its preservation for their children despite differences in the strategies used. Muhammad (2013) conducted research on parents' attitudes towards bilingualism in the Aceh-Indonesian context, showing that of the ten families participating in this study; only two families use Acehnese as the main language in the family. Jendra (2010) explained that gathering with fellow heritage

language users, fostering their belief and pride in cultural identity and heritage language, are the strategies that can be relied upon in maintaining heritage language.

Lee (2013) found the obstacles to language preservation in Auckland's Chilean community. In his research, he concluded that there is still a risk of language shift occurring in this community from three to four generations, it seems that the lack of awareness and enthusiasm to prevent or at least slow down the shift.

Kipp, Clyne, and Pauwels 1995 confirm the obstacles in maintaining the heritage language under the influence of various factors based on two categories, namely individual and group categories. Furthermore they explain the Individual Category that includes the person must take into account age, gender, education, marital pattern, place of birth, knowledge of the majority language, length of stay in the host country, and language differences. For group categories, including ethnic groups, policies in the host country and the importance of minorities to majorities in language (Kipp, Clyne and Pauwels 1995).

The researchers are identifying gaps and needs based on the previous findings the further action by exploring the involvement of the parents about their language attitude, strategies and the obstacles in maintaining the heritage language to assist their children maintaining heritage language and also sustain the heritage language to avoid language loss. So this paper will study about parents attitude towards heritage language: strategies and obstacles to assist their children in maintaining heritage language.

## **METHOD**

This study used qualitative research methods. This sort of research involves the collection, classification, analysis, and drawing of conclusions from the data analysis without the use of generalizations. Qualitative research, according to Creswell (2009: 4), is an investigation into and understanding of what people or groups interpret as a social or human problem. It is used to understand a social phenomenon's causes and mechanisms.

### **Participants of the study**

Five parents couple will be participants in this study. One family from West Java using Sundanese as heritage language, one family from Yogyakarta using Javanese as heritage language, one family from Medan using Bataknese as heritage language, one family from west Sumatra using minangnese as heritage language and the last one family from Jakarta. Fathers aged between 30 and 46 year ; mothers aged between 30 and 40 years .It highly educated participants, representing with a bachelor's degree, 2 bachelors of economics, 2 masters economics, one bachelor of pharmacy degrees.

**Sources and data collection**

Interviews are one of the most important sources of information in qualitative research for gaining deeper insight into how people experience, feel, and interpret the social world (Creswell, 2012). In this study, researchers used semi-structured in-depth interviews. The in-depth interview component will consist of the family background, the used of heritage language at home, language attitude, the role of parent in maintain the heritage language, language maintenance strategy, and the obstacles in maintaining the heritage language.

The 23-items questionnaire will intend to determine participant information in use heritage language at home do they communicate using heritage language their spouse and/or children. The next questioner concentrates more deeply on their ideology regarding heritage language. This questionnaire is used to support and validate interviews of parents. Questionnaires are distributed before researchers interview the participants

**Data analysis**

Regarding the data collection method. Data for this study were collected from participants both are from in-depth interviews with parents and supporting data comes from the questionnaire. The researchers examine the interview data once it has been gathered. Data analysis in qualitative research, according to Wiersma (1991: 85), is a process of categorization, description, and synthesis.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Findings**

**The parent’s attitudes and views on heritage language.**

Table 1 percentage distribution of Parents attitude on heritage language

No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Heritage language and Indonesian is equally important for my children.	60%	40%	20%	0%
2	Learning the heritage language is helpful for learning the heritage culture.	60%	40%	20%	0%
3	Proud to be able to speak the heritage language which is more honourable, and easier to communicate in our society	55%	25%	20%	0%
4	Learning the heritage language is very helpful for connecting with relatives back home.	80%	0%	20%	0%
5	Learning the heritage language will interfere with Indonesian	20%	0%	20%	60%
6	Learning the heritage language will interfere with other languages	20%	0%	20%	60%
7	Using heritage language, it seems old fashion.	20%	0%	0%	80%
8	Using the heritage language feels intimidated in your environment	20%	0%	0%	80%



In table 1 above, it is quite obvious that the majority of parents have positive attitude towards heritage language. 60% of parents think that learning a heritage language is as important as any other language. This means that parents seem quite concerned about maintaining heritage language for their children. And 60% of parents also believe that learning heritage language really helps their children to learn the culture of their origins. It can be said that parents want their children to always remember their culture. In addition, 55% of parents also stated that they were proud of their heritage language. However, on the other hand, this data also shows a negative attitude of parents towards heritage language, namely 20% of parents stated that heritage language seemed old-fashioned and they felt intimidated when they were in the midst of people who spoke heritage language.

### **The Language strategy and efforts that parents adopt to maintain heritage language**

Table 2 Strategies in maintaining heritage language

No	Statements	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
1	My partner and I communicate with the children on a daily life using heritage languages.	80%	0%	0%	20%
2	I introduce my heritage culture to my children.	60%	20%	0%	20%
3	I provide heritage language books at home.	60%	20%	0%	20%
4	I occasionally play songs in my and my partner's heritage language to the children at home.	60%	20%	0%	20%
5	I take my kids to family events that use the heritage language at the event	80%	0%	0%	20%
6	I let our parents and our extended family use the heritage language when communicating with our children.	60%	20%	0%	20%

If we look at table 2, 80% of parents always use heritage language as daily communication, both with fellow parents with their children. Then 60% of parents introduce their culture through local language, this means that parents have the notion that teaching heritage language can also introduce the culture of origin to their children. 60% of parents also provide books with heritage language to teach heritage language at home. Besides that, 80% of parents bring their children to family events so that their children can get used to using heritage language. While 60% of parents also allow other family members to talk to the children in heritage language. As their strategy in maintaining heritage language for their children.

## Discussion

### The parent's attitudes and views on heritage language maintenance.

In general this study shows the majority of parents have positive attitude of heritage language they believe that heritage language is as important as Indonesian and English, through heritage language parents can continue to introduce ethnic culture, instill a sense of pride in their tribe, maintain the identity of their origins and can also teach life values such as courtesy, ethics in socializing with older and younger people who they think have started fading in this era of globalization.

They choose to continue using Indonesian as their language of communication at home. although based on questionnaire data as much as 20% of parents do not speak heritage language. It also showing by questionnaire data that 60% parents always use the heritage language quite intensively and make it obligatory to communicate with the heritage language and even involve other family members using the heritage language with their children. The literature also has identified in which parents involve themselves in maintaining Heritage language (Arriagada, 2005; Kouritzin, 2000) For example, parents may establish a rule that only their heritage language is permitted at home or refrain from reprimanding their children when they speak a language other than their own. (Krashen, 1998) Meanwhile, even though they involve other family members to support their children master the heritage language, about 20% show the frequency of their flexibility to mix heritage language and Indonesian. It supported by (Gleason and Switch, 2017) stated the code mixing is quite common in families where two languages are spoken, the speaker selects the words of the language that best express their intention

Most parents expressed a strong feeling on heritage language, which is, to them is crucial to them for their children to communicate using heritage language. other parent think that through the heritage language they can maintain their identity and their children will also be proud of their identity. the other hand some parent commented.

*(Excerpt 1)*

*“Mastering heritage language would make it easier for our children to learn culture. and our children will continue to be able to stay in touch with relatives in our hometown.”*

They state their reasons why they care about heritage language the majority of parents stated that because children interact more with their parents, it is very important to cultivate heritage language through communication at home as one of the mother emphasized that.

*(Excerpt 2)*

*" Home is the most comfortable place for them to do that we want take the heritage language also their comfort zone" this is approved by the father.*

Besides that, most of parents also agree that heritage language is as important as other languages, because preserving the Heritage language is an advantage for their children in building links between their communities. this is also shown by the father's statement which was agreed by the mother.

(Excerpt 3)

*"Because in our culture there are many values of attitude that must be taught to our child, also philosophy of life that is appropriate for our children to uphold. and we are more comfortable teaching it in heritage language compared to other languages"*

Most of the parents also agree that heritage language has a role for their future besides being able to continue to be passed on to the next generation some parents argue that heritage language is important for their future because it is so they can stay in touch with their community. This can be seen from the excerpt below.

(Excerpt 4)

*"Through the heritage language it will open up many opportunities in the future. Because our solidarity among our fellow communities is very high"*

and there is parent think the heritage is unimportant they also asserted that,

(Excerpt 5)

*"Our children need to be prepared to welcome the era of globalization, which is English that should be honed than heritage language".*

They also think that there are many children nowadays who are fluent in heritage languages but their identity does not appear as users of that Heritage language because they don't feel confident. besides that, they also think now everything is digital, information is more open enough for us to learn about certain cultures without having to master the heritage language.

### **The Language strategy and efforts that parents adopt to maintain heritage language**

The findings show that parents' strategies to preserve heritage language the parents realize that living far from hometown requires them to make extra effort in teaching heritage language to their children because their social environment does not use their heritage language. Most parents do is introduce their folk songs and sing them together, telling folk stories about the origins of their likes is a strategy that is routinely carried out by parents, besides that parent also often bring their children to family events such as family gatherings. families, weddings for relatives who are of the same ethnicity, then bring their children back to their hometown and then take their children to religious activities such as recitations where

the da'wah uses the heritage language. Through this strategy, their children will be motivated to always use heritage language both at home and in the social environment.

All parents who have positive attitude of heritage language think that this strategy will continue to be applied until their children grow up and also will not change their strategy to other children. This is in line with, Edwards and Newcombe (2005: 135) have investigated on the same issue and suggested that who used the heritage language with their parents at home were tend to repeat the similar process with their children later.

This finding is also reinforced by questionnaire data which shows that 60% of parents introduce folk songs, tell folk tales to their children. Yoshida (2007: 31 ) mentioned that activities like singing and watching films have assisted the certain communities to maintain their language. and bring their children to family events its also remarked by Holmes's theory (2006: 64) that regular social interaction between community members, frequency of contact with the homeland are some strategies in language maintenance. 20 % parents do not carry out any strategy to maintain heritage language.

The data found that most parents mentioned that that they were quite intense in teaching reading and writing in the heritage language. This can be highlighted from the result of an interview excerpt below.

(Excerpt 6)

*"We teach our child Javanese script too namely Aksara Jawa because it's important for my child to learn the culture from which they come"* the statement was approved by the father.

While some other parents use folk tales, of course, as their media to maintain their heritage language at home. Here are some interviews results taken from parents' point of view.

(Excerpt 7)

*"there are Batak philosophical values that have been held until now by using heritage stories to tell my children"* some parent commented that

(Excerpt 8)

*"We teach our child the Heritage language by sending electronic messages to each other using our Heritage language"*

Apart from that, to support the development of children, another strategy is carried out most parents say that they always and enforce rules to communicate with their children at home using heritage language is a fairly effective strategy. Singing the local song with their children it's also the strategy that usually they do with their children. There are also parents who bring their children to religious activities that use heritage language as the



communication. Besides that, bringing their children together with their fellow communities is also a good strategy, some parents asserted their expression through the interview result below.

(Excerpt 8)

*"We also often take my child to cultural exhibitions so that our children are proud of their ethnicity and this is where my child can communicate with the heritage language besides his parents"*

Bringing their children to family gatherings is also one of the most frequently strategies used by all parents that positive attitudes towards heritage language in this study. Some parents acknowledged that some family' occasion are the also a good strategy to have their heritage language spoken. This can be proven from the following excerpts.

(Excerpt 9)

*"we do it, because we are a big family, our culture has many activities so I often involve my children in the event so that their heritage language can be honed better and also so that they are more proud of their identity "*

Some parents think that their strategy is effective enough to pass it on to their other children. One of the participants and an interesting strategy who mentioned that;

(Excerpt 10)

*"So far I don't think the strategy that I use needs to be changed because the strategy that I use is suitable for all ages"* this was also agreed upon by her husband.

While for parents that have negative attitude of heritage language they didn't use any strategy in maintaining the heritage language. They explain that they often bring her their children to family gathering but at that event the relative do not use heritage language as communication. And they do not introduce the folk book , folk song to their children. This can be obviously seen from the following excerpt.

(Excerpt 11)

*"Because we use full Indonesian at home and in social circles, we don't have a strategy for our children to use the heritage language"*

Parents who think that the use of heritage language must be preserved, can't be separated from the challenges in preserving the Heritage language itself. This can be seen from two sides, namely internally and externally. According to data obtained internally, their children have never refused to use the Heritage language. This happened because they have been accustomed to using the Heritage language since childhood to communicate at home or in their communities. In addition, parents also do not give rewards or compliments to those who use the heritage language because parents think that using the heritage language is a natural thing to give praise and rewards have never been done by parents who are pro with heritage

language. So it can be concluded that parents have no problems and obstacles internally in applying the Heritage language in their family. Its supported by data questioner that 80% intensively, parents using the heritage language at home with their children. This result in line with (Pillai & Soh, 2015) stated that Heritage language as a language is often naturally used at or inherited from home, and that is different from the language used in mainstream society

However, with external factors, the challenges in external factors are quite felt by parents, namely foreign culture and languages that have entered Indonesia and the heritage content in schools is not in accordance with the parent's child's Heritage language. The influence of online games, YouTube, and television is also an obstacle for parents in preserving heritage language. This is supported by questionnaire data where 80% of families agree that the social environment that does not use their heritage language is quite a challenge for them to learn the heritage language. In addition, 90% of parents also agree that the impact of social media such as YouTube, Instagram, which uses Indonesian and English, is also a challenge for parents in preserving heritage languages. However, 10% actually agree that social media and the social environment already use Indonesian and English because it is more dynamic and can be understood by all ethnic groups in Indonesia. This result also supported by (Tondo,2019) explain that in recent time when times have changed, when information technology has taken over the archipelago, heritage languages have experienced a decline in usage.

## CONCLUSION

This research uses qualitative to examine what parents think about heritage language, what strategies are used, and what obstacles parents face in maintaining their heritage language to their children. The research findings show that parents want to raise their children by continuing to speak heritage language at home or in their community. they think that heritage language is as important as Indonesian and English. because in heritage language there are cultural values, philosophy of life, ethics and decency that can be applied by their children. they consider it very beneficial for the future of children in order to face this era of globalization.

In maintaining the heritage language, the majority of parents use almost the same strategies where the strategies are more ordinary things, natural things that are usually done at home. such as continuing to speak the regional language, singing regional songs, and reciting folklore in the regional language. another strategy they employ is bringing their children to family gatherings where their children will also get used to using the local language not only with their parents but with other relatives.

The social environment that does not use heritage language can become an obstacle for them in maintaining heritage language because it will be influenced to use more social language than heritage language. Apart from that, the influence of digital sources such as TV, YouTube and games is a challenge for parents in maintaining heritage language for their children. Besides that, they also think that existing schools do not teach their heritage language.

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