



Understanding Family Language Policy Among English Teachers: A Case Study

Fatur Rahmat Rasyid¹, Irfan Rifai^{2*}

¹Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya, Indonesia

² Universitas Pasundan Bandung, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: Irfan.rifai@unpas.ac.id

Article Info

Article history:

Received July 8, 2024

Revised July 20, 2024

Accepted July 31, 2024

Keywords:

family language policy;

English Teachers;

A Case Study

ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand family language policy, specifically focusing on the language policy of English teachers in the city of Sidoarjo. The study examines the rationale, implementation, and challenges of implementing a particular language policy. The research follows a qualitative case study framework, utilizing interviews with six English teachers and observations conducted by a co-researcher. The interviews provide primary data on the reasons for initiating, implementing, and facing challenges with the language policy, while observations offer supplementary data on daily conversations between participants and family members. The findings reveal that factors such as identity, ethnicity, social status, religious beliefs, and instrumental life expectations influence English teachers' implementation of family language policy. Most English teachers adhere to a Javanese language policy within their families, while others prefer an Arabic language policy. Despite encountering challenges during implementation, the participants express confidence in consistently following the rule of thumb for their family language policy. These findings highlight that although the participants are English teachers with an educational and professional background in English, they tend to apply a different language family policy within their own families.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

1. INTRODUCTION

The current research about language policy has primarily concerned of sociolinguists in the last few decades. The emerging issue in the language policy research is primarily focusing on a set of regulations, laws, or rules (Gao, 2020). In addition to the regulation and the rules, the current issue is on the language processes of a speech community or nation, taking the national, ideological, economic, and political factors (Zeng, 2021). Zeng (2021) notes that language policy and language planning manage and measure the current language issues or problems in a nation, social community, or even family.

Concerning the language policy, there are several layers in language policy, which cover macro, meso, and micro. Macro-level refers to the broader scope of language policy, including states or nations. Moreover, the meso level includes organizations, communities, political parties, and ethnic groups. While at the micro-level or the smaller level, there are families, relationships, and individuals. Those three levels indeed have various forms of rules and policies in their implementation. According to Baldauf (2010), the macro level is governments and governmental agencies, the meso level is sub-national institutions, and the micro-level are local agents whose decision-making influences local practices.

Based on these three levels, the family is included in the micro-level of language policy. Family language policy is part of more prominent speech community practices that includes language ideology, practice, and management (Schwartz, 2012). Therefore, some families adopt a policy about a particular language within the family circle. The implementation of language policy cannot be separated from these three factors because these three factors are fundamental aspects of the implementation of language policy. Larasati (2018) asserts that language

development includes the role of the family in minority language maintenance, family language ideology, practice, and management, as well as the associated challenges with these policies. Language practice in family language policy refers to language choice and preference patterns within the family.

Furthermore, Spolsky (2004) defines language practice as "the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistics repertoire." Several family elements are responsible for successfully implementing the family language policy. In certain language practices at home, several family members are responsible for making decisions, designing appropriate policies, and implementing agreed policies.

Most research in family language policy focuses on the practices, challenges, and factors behind the decision to implement a particular family language policy among the family members. A study conducted by Mila Schwartz (2013) in Israel argues that implementing a family language policy can be through the use of a second language in the communication process between families and letting the children watch tv or movies that contain a second language. Moreover, Huang (2020), through their study of factors influencing a family language policy, asserts that the factors behind the decision of implementing family language policy are cultural, political, and economic factors.

The reason underlies this research is to find out the uniqueness of the family language policy implementation. However, in the Indonesian context, the research that focuses on the application of family language policy is still underexplored. To address these issues, this study attempts to explore the applying family language policies, particularly in language practice among English teachers' families. Specifically, this study will explore the practices and challenges encountered by English Teachers in implementing a family language policy among their families.

This study, "understanding family language policy among English teachers," analyzes how English teachers practice a policy on using a particular language within the family. Furthermore, to illustrate the rationale, the implementation and the challenges while adopting the family language policy.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts the qualitative approach that refers to a case study. Case studies are a design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process on single or more individuals (Creswell, 2014). In this regard, Gustafsson (2017) argues that a case study can define as an intensive study about a person, a group of people, or a unit aimed to generalize over several units. Moreover, Catanzaro (1988) asserts that a case study is described as an intensive systematic investigation of a single individual, group, community, or another unit in which the researcher examines in-depth background data and current status environmental characteristics, and interactions.

Since this proposed study is planned to use interviews and observation to collect the data, The researcher will adopt a case study as an approach study. The underlying cause the researcher selected a case study as an approach of the study that the researcher only focused on a unit of study or case. The researcher focuses on understanding family language policy among English Teachers.

The data in this study is categorized into two types, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data is transcriptions text resulting from interviews between the researcher and correspondents who works as English teachers at various level of education. Furthermore, secondary data was obtained with the cooperation of the co-researcher as the second person of the observation process. The co-researcher is a family member of the correspondents. Therefore, the co-researcher has access and permission to always be in the same environment with the correspondent and his family members. In the observation process, a co-researcher will record various activities carried out between each family member in conversations and talks using an audio recording device.

Meanwhile, the observation data that co-researchers have collected will be submitted to the main researcher. The correspondents of this research are 6 English Teacher, which is still actively teaching from various levels of education. The following are the details of the corresponding data in this research.

The researcher arranges an individual interview with related correspondence, and the resulting data will be used as primary data in this study. According to Burns (2000), "an interview a verbal interchange, often face to face, though the telephone may be used, in which an interviewer tries to elicit information, beliefs or opinion from another person." In addition, Kumar (2019) argues that interviews are a person-to-person interaction, either face to face or using a tool, between two or more individuals with a specific purpose.

The researcher used an unstructured interview to obtain the data from correspondents. This type of interview demands the researcher to adopt every flexibility in question, explanation, wording, and sequence (Kumar, 2019). Moreover, Kumar (2019) asserts in terms of unstructured interviews that the researcher may formulate questions and raise issues on the spur of the moment, depending upon what occurs in the context of the discussion.

The participants for this study were English teachers who teach at different educational levels. The participants consist of 6 teachers, including two teachers at the high school level, two teachers at the junior high school level, and the last one is two teachers at the elementary school level. The interview process will be conducted face-to-face directly, or the second option is through video conference media (such as Google meet, Zoom, Etc.) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, The researcher will adopt the observation method to obtain secondary data for this research. Observation is a qualitative research method that includes participant observation and covers ethnography and research work in the field (Gray, 2009). Furthermore, Baker (2006) argues that observation requires the researcher to spend considerable time in the field to adopt various roles to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the people being studied. Therefore, observation can be interpreted as a study of how to understand people within their natural environment.

In this research process, the researcher collaborates with someone who is a co-researcher. Nevertheless, Given (2008) asserts that co-researchers refer to a participatory research method that situates participants as joint contributors and investigators to the finding of a research project. A co-researcher is someone who already has access and permission to always be in the same scope, with the object of observation. In the observation process, a co-researcher will record various activities carried out between each family member in conversations and talks using a recording device. The co-researcher is needed in the observation process for data collection is the access and permission factors that the co-researcher has owned. In addition, due to the privacy factor of the research object and the uncontrolled covid 19 pandemics.

The data obtained from the interview and observation process with the help of a co-researcher will be analyzed using content analysis. Content analysis has been defined as a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Krippendorff, 2018). In addition, Holsti (1969) argues that a broad definition of content analysis is "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristic of messages." Moreover, according to Krippendorff (1989), content analysis commonly contains six steps that define the technique procedurally: Unitizing, sampling, coding, reducing, inferring, and narrating.

1. Unitizing: systematic differentiation of segments or schemes in the form of text, images, sound, and other things that can be observed and interesting to analyze. The researcher will carry out the process of familiarizing with the data obtained after conducting the interview and observation process. Therefore, from the data that has been obtained, researchers can find out and conclude which data have similarities.
2. Sampling: limiting the data to a manageable set of units that's statistically representative of the set of units. After becoming familiar with and unitizing the data in several segments, the researcher will create a data unit based on the relevant representation of the data.
3. Coding: generating initial code to the data and collecting relevant data to each code. In this phase, the researcher applied different colour highlights to systematically encode data features of interest across the entire data set and then collected the relevant data for each code.
4. Reducing: techniques for summarizing or simplifying data to manageable representation. After collecting relevant data to each code, the researcher will reduce which data is unnecessary.
5. Inferring: inferring contextual phenomena from the data that has been obtained. In this phase, the researcher will conclude after going through some previous analysis processes.
6. Narrating: explaining a comprehensive able result to others. In the last phase, the researcher will narrate data that has been analyzed from several previous processes.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

3.1. The Rationale of Implementation Family Language Policy Among English Teachers

Data analysis of the current research shows that the background/underlying of implementing a family language policy among English Teachers is principally affected by the identity factor. This identity is closely related to ethnicity, social status, and religious aspect. The rationale when implementing language policy tends to consider the ethnicity aspects.

One of the participants, named, Kinanti, told that she is more often to communicate and interact with family members using the Javanese Language and Bahasa Indonesia or his native languages. Moreover, all of his family members are Javanese.

Extract 1.1

Kinanti *"Because of culture, yes, it's culture because we are Javanese, so we use Javanese."*

Another factor underlying the implementation of family language policy among English Teachers is social status. Why social status is an important/crucial factor in generating a particular language policy, these participants also want to show their social status in the social strata. Meanwhile, the participants seemed accustomed to being exposed to a foreign language. Furthermore, their English teachers' background will also be carried over in their interactions with their families. Although, the frequency of using English as a foreign

language varies from one participant to another. However, it is inevitable that social status as an English Teacher still affects the implementation of family language policy.

In a similar vein, Bhisma, one of the participants in this research, asserts that his status also affects the implementation of family language policy in his family. Moreover, Bhisma often speaks in English when communicating with his family.

Extract 1.2

Bhisma *“Coincidentally, my wife and I are also English teachers. So I also teach my child to speak English. So my son and I also often speak in English.”*

In addition to applying English as a foreign language, several participants also adopted the Arabic language as a foreign language in implementing the family language policy. The primary factor in the implementation of the Arabic language is based on religious aspects. Bhisma shared his experience of implementing the Arabic language with his family in this regard. Bhisma asserts that implementing the Arabic language is beneficial during the worship process.

Extract 1.3

Bhisma *“For Arabic, because I am also a Muslim, so learning Arabic is very helpful for me when I worship. Then for Arabic, as a Muslim myself, I really have to know it so I don't just memorize it but also have to know it. So, for example, to pray, you have to know what it means.”*

Recorded observation: *The Researcher found that the family of a participants often use mixture of Bahasa Jawa, Bahasa Indonesia, English and Arabian Language.*

3.2. The Implementation of Family Language Policy Among English Teachers

The data analysis presents at least two ways the participants implemented a family language policy, and there are mundane interactions and practice with the tools—these tools related to the technology and social media. One participant named Guntur explained his experience about practising a family language policy with mundane interaction.

Extract 2.1

Guntur *“Yes, it can be said in practice yes in daily interactions. Almost all families use Javanese in communicating. Besides that, it can also be said that the practice is easier, yes, the mother tongue. Apart from being speakers from an early age, the environment also plays a role in the practice of using it.”*

Meanwhile, implementing foreign languages has more various ways than native languages. In this regard, Kinanti shared his experience of practising a foreign language. One of the methods is the use of technology. For instance, watch videos from youtube, tik tok, and other social media apps.

Extract 2.2

Kinanti *“So it's like usually a small child who likes to vlog uses English, right, now he likes to make videos on tiktok when he uses English, right?”*

In a similar vein, Laksmi asserts that she also takes advantage of technology in the practice of implementing foreign languages. Moreover, the technology she uses is Google translate. She added that on Google translate, it could be written in various kinds of words and sentences in various languages. Besides translating words, Google translate can also pronounce written words and sentences. That is what makes Laksmi use Google translate to practice foreign languages.

Extract 2.3

Laksmi *“Then hmm, we take advantage of the ones from Google translations, right there, so they are more interested in listening to the voice, that's where the voice can be played, so they are fun, just like that. Sometimes I also record my voice, then they play it themselves.”*

Recorded observation: *The Researcher found that the family of a participants practicing a mundane interaction and utilizin the tool while implement the family language policy.*

3.3. The Challenges of Implementation Family Language Policy Among English Teachers

The data analysis presents several challenges that the participants encountered during implementing a family language policy. The challenges of the implementation of family language policy consist of three factors there are; pronunciation, grammatical factors and vocabulary.

In this regard, Kinanti argues that there are no challenges in implementing the native languages. Furthermore, it is the first language and the environmental factor that support the implementation of native languages.

Extract 3.1

Kinanti *“If it's Bahasa Indonesia and Javanese language, there's no challenge at all, I can say. Because we are from Java.”*

Meanwhile, the Challenges of implementing foreign languages has more complex than native languages. Laksmi asserts that the challenges often faced when learning a foreign language are that the pronunciation is different from writing. In this regard, pronunciation is the most challenges thing while practising a language.

Extract 3.2

Laksmi *“The challenge that is often faced when I make observations, it's the challenge in pronunciation is different from the writing.”*

Moreover, Laksmi added that grammatical and courage factors are the challenges in implementing foreign languages. Therefore, the difficulties in pronunciation and grammatical can make his children feel reluctant to learn a foreign language.

Extract 3.3

Laksmi *“The difficulty in English is on average, one writing is different from the pronunciation and finally the children find it difficult and then they are afraid. Then the second, there are vocab, the third they are afraid of making mistakes, because the grammar structure is not the same. Then the fourth one is just a lack of courage, so that's the challenge.”*

In a similar vein, Kinanti asserts that the lack of vocabulary in foreign languages also affects the implementation of the family language policy. Furthermore, this limited vocabulary makes the interactions disrupted.

Extract 3.4

Kinanti *“When it comes to English, my sister sometimes forgets the vocabulary, right, we don't speak it fluently because maybe there's a lack of vocabulary.”*

Recorded observation: *The Researcher found that the family of a participants encountered severela challenges while practising a family language policy, such as lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammatical aspect.*

4. CONCLUSION

The current study aims to examine family language policy among English Teachers. A case study was chosen as the research design. Individual interviews with six participants and the observation process with cooperation between co-researcher are utilized to explore the family language policy among English Teachers.

The most obvious result of this study is all of the participants adopt a family language policy within the family. The primary factor underlying of implementation a family language policy is the identity factor. Identity factor related to ethnicity, nationalism, social status, and religious. Further analysis shows that social status is influences the implementation of a family language policy. English Teachers tend to adopt English as a foreign language among the family members. The implementation of family language policy among English Teachers is practised inflexible method. The flexible method is in the form of including a certain language in daily conversations. However, this method is considered suitable because there is no element of compulsion. Meanwhile, some challenges emerge in implementing a family language policy related to lack of communication. There are various kinds of factors that become challenges of implementing a family language policy, and there are pronunciation, grammatical, and vocabulary factors.

Another important result regarding implementing a family language policy among English Teachers was the language adoption within families. English Teachers tend to adopt English as a foreign language. The underlying reason for adopting English as a foreign language was affected by their background as English Teachers.

5. REFERENCES

BAIDAuf Jr, R. B. (2006). Rearticulating the case for micro language planning in a language ecology

- context. *Current issues in language planning*, 7(2-3), 147-170.
- Burns, R. B. (2000). *Introduction to research method*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Catanaro, N. F. (1988). *Nursing research*. St. Louis : The C.V. Mosby Company.
- Cooper, R. L. (1989). *Language planning and social change*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design*. London: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Curdt-Christiansen, X. L. (2009). Invisible and visible language planning: ideological factors in the family language policy of Chinese immigrant families in Quebec. *Language policy*, 351-375.
- Denzin, N. K. (1970). *Sociological Methods*. New York: Routledge.
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). *Sociological Methods: a Sourcebook*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Dharmaputra, G. A. (2018). *Language policy, ideology and language attitudes: A study of Indonesian parents and their choice of language in the home* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Larasati, E., & Murni, S. M. (2018). Bilingual Families Language Policy. In *3rd Annual International Seminar on Transformative Education and Educational Leadership (AISTEEL 2018)* (pp. 285-290). Atlantis Press.
- Curdt-Christiansen, X. L., & Gao, X. (2021). Family language policy and planning in China: The changing landscape. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 22(4), 353-361.
- Given, L. M. (Ed.). (2008). *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Sage publications.
- Gray, D. E. (2009). *Doing Research in the Real World*. Sage Publications.
- Gustafsson, J. (2017). *Single case studies vs multiple case studies: A comparative study*. 1-15.
- Holsti, O. R. (1969). Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities. *Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley (content analysis)*.
- Curdt-Christiansen, X. L., & Huang, J. (2020). Factors influencing family language policy. *Handbook of social and affective factors in home language maintenance and development*, 174-193.
- Johnson, D. C. (2013). *Language policy*. Palgrave macmillan.
- Krippendorff, K. (1989). *Content Analysis*. Oxford University Press.
- Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content Analysis : An Introduction to It's Methodology* . SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Kumar, R. (2019). *Research Methodology : a step-by-step guide for beginners*. Sage Publications Ltd.
- Kurniawan, S. T. (2021). Chinese Family Language Policy in The Context of Trilingual Schools in Surabaya. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra* , 339 - 354.
- Mila Schwartz, V. M. (2013). *Parents' Choice of a Bilingual Hebrew-Arabic Kindergarten for the Children*.
- Restuningrum, N. R. (2017). Motivation for raising children bilingually. *International journal of Educational best practices*, 53-66.
- Rizki, A. B. (2021). *Acquiring English then reacquiring Indonesian: a study of family language policy*.
- Robert B Kaplan, R. B. (1997). Language Planning: From practice to Theory. *Multilingual Matters*.
- Sapriati, R. S. (2020). Language ideologies: family language on bi/multilingualism. *Jurnal bahasa & sastra*.
- Schwartz, M., Moin, V., & Klayle, M. (2013). *Parents' choice of a bilingual Hebrew-Arabic kindergarten for the children* (pp. 23-51). Springer Netherlands.
- Spolsky, B. (2004). *Language Policy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Spolsky, B. (2009). *Language management*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Spolsky, B. (2012). Family language policy - the critical domain. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 3-11.
- Zeng, Y. G. (2021). An exploratory study on national language policy. *Cogent Education*, 1-15.