

**Research Article**

# Local Wisdom In The Use Sundanese Language of Early Childhood In Indihiang Sub-District Tasikmalaya City (Analytical Descriptive Study)

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**Abstract.**

The basic problem of this research is related to the use of Indonesian language in the daily conversations of Sundanese children. This study aims to analyze descriptively and analytically the use of Sundanese language based on the local wisdom perspective of Sundanese culture about the importance of introducing the use of regional languages. This study involved a population of Kindergarten students in the Indihiang sub-district, Tasikmalaya City, West Java, amount 7 institutions and 120 students. The results of the study were obtained based on data collection techniques consists of observation, questionnaires, and interviews equipped with research instruments and the recording of research results concluded that the lack of use of the Early Childhood Sundanese language both in the family environment, non-formal social environment (playmates) as well as the formal environment ( educational institutions). The solution to this problem; 1) The movement introduced the use of Sundanese in households, especially households consisting of couples from the same ethnic group. 2) Introducing Sundanese learning in official institutions. The "Rabu Nyunda" program is not only a partial program limited to regional symbols such as the use of traditional clothing but must be comprehensive with other cultural components such as dance, music and Sundanese "unggah-ungguh".

**Keywords:** Culture, Language, Local, Sundanese, Wisdom

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**Published** 03 March 2023

Publishing services provided by  
**Knowledge E**

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Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the PVJ-ISHESSH 2021 Conference Committee.

## 1. Intruduction

A number of studies discussing shifting regional languages and efforts to maintain have been carried out in some places. Refer to Fanny.H.Tondo, studies on language shift, preservation and maintenance efforts have been published in various journals and proceedings. [1]

These conditions indicates that the problem of language shift is a serious problem, thus encouraging researchers to conduct studies because it support by the fact that many regional languages have shifting and even their existence have been extinction.


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In most case, the research results revealed by the researchers concluded that there were three main factors causing shifts in the use of regional languages, these are; (1) Family factors, (2) Educational factors, (3) Peer factors.[2]

The factor of inter-ethnic marriage (*intermarriage*) is the most prominent factor that is often revealed in a number of studies. Inter-ethnic marriage not only eliminates the use of regional languages but also results in cultural fading.[3]

The conditions that shift in language are very probably if it occurs in children who are born to parents of different ethnicities, or come from migrating families, as revealed by Sahril's research (2017) when conducting a research on language shift in the Kuala Tanjung Sumatra community. But in fact, the subjects studied in this study came from parents who had the same ethnicity, that is Sundanese people, the location the research was also not an industrial area which the driving force for the migration process of the immigrant community.

Tondo refer to SIL as providing information that Sundanese language ranks second largest in terms of its users after Javanese [1]. So if it is not preserved, not impossible that the two reasons above are very possibility to threaten the extinction of the Sundanese language.

As one of the cultural treasures, language must be passed to the next generation through education and learning, formal and non-formal. the use of regional languages must be taught from an early childhood because the early age level is the first level of language learning.

In the context of cultural preservation which is reflected with the use of regional languages, a student should be encouraged to use regional languages in daily conversation. must be given understanding from an early childhood when to translate language codes, when to mix language codes, with whom to speak, and where is the environmental context [4]. In communicating, students are expected to communicate in accordance with the context of communication where and when they have to communicate in a formal situation, they must use Indonesian language. Indonesian as an official means of communication and listed in government regulations. Indonesian must be used as the language of instruction in official institutions such as educational institutions, offices and public services.

As a cultural product, language is not only born as a means of communication but as a moral identity of an ethnic group which contains messages of local wisdom when used by its users.

When the Sundanese speak their language reflexively, so the manner of speak will take body language and facial expressions. When a Sundanese child invites an

older person to eat, there are two language messages in progress, these are a good communication and polite communication at the same time. The politeness shown through the bowing motion, the gesture showing with the thumbs up while smiling are the noble messages of the Sundanese people that are tucked in through the use of regional languages.

The same is true of Javanese society. The moral message that is reflected through the use of regional languages is shown by the Javanese people, for example when they cross paths. The pronunciation of the sentence "monggo" animates the interaction between the speaker and the interlocutor. So it can be concluded that every language that is born adapts to its natural conditions. This can be seen from the difference in the tonal pressure of the Batak, Minang and Makassar people in the letter "e" which clarifies the respective characters in which the language was born.

Introducing the use of the mother tongue (regional language in this context) is important so that every generation understands that language is not just a matter of communication but is also related to moral and ethical issues.

This research started from the condition of the use of the regional language of early childhood students in several kindergarten educational institutions in the Indihiang sub-district which more problematic considering that the study area was not dominated by migrants where language shift usually occurred due to the presence of industries that had an opportunity to migrate between residents, or as a result of inter-marriages that have the opportunity to use two languages (bilingual) generations who were born as revealed by Nandhita Putri, who said that the problem of language shift was caused by problems of cultural acculturation (inter-ethnic marriage) and industrialization which made society heterogeneous and plural.[5]

## 2. Literature

### 2.1. The Early Childhood Language Development

Using of mother tongue or regional languages will make it easier for a child to learn a second, third and so on. This is because regional languages have a rich vocabulary that is not found in any language, so that children who master their mother tongue as their first language will have a more diverse vocabulary than children who speak the national language and foreign languages as their first language.

Not to mention that the use of regional languages contains norms, for example in regional languages each word will be used differently according with to talk. If the

interlocutor is an older person or to glorify the listener, more polite language will be used, and the same sentence will be pronounced differently from relatives or younger ones. This makes the speaker understand the importance of respecting the interlocutor.[6]

Various studies prove the importance of the role of mother tongue in students' cognitive development. Research on bilingual education shows the following: (1) early childhood is not a good time to learn a foreign language (second language). Therefore forcing children to learn Indonesian, for example, at a very young age is not appropriate. We also need to pay attention to this in austerity to face globalization by forcing the children, for example the students of kindergarten that to start learning English. (2) Language is a necessity as a social interaction, therefore the language needed is the language of social conversation. Young children need time to master complex academic language mastery skills, (3) skills learned in one language can be transferred to master another language, (4) reading learning must be taught through the mother tongue. Reading skills can then be transferred to learning other foreign languages. A child who is born in Sundanese society, his reading ability can be used to learn reading Indonesian text book or other foreign languages, (5) bilingual children are not an obstacle to children's cognitive development.[7]

In the phase of language development, the phonological aspect is the first aspect that is absorbed by children. From the pronunciation of the sounds heard, the child will try to take the morphosynchronous aspect. After person can pronounce words and sentences, children will understand other aspects. All of the acquisition of the language as a whole requires a long process. Ideally, parents teach their first language or mother tongue until the child has mastered it completely. If the foundation of the first language is strong, the child will not experience confusion in learning a second language. This is because children who have mastered the first language as a whole will know the difference between the first language and the second language. If parents use a language other than the first language in face of the child, they will find it difficult to understand the language due to differences in pronunciation patterns. [8]

Learning several languages by together will limits the number of words that children can learn in time which has been specified. For example, toddlers have the cognitive capacity to learn about 20 new words a month. When a toddler's language input comes in bilingual form, he can only learn 10 words in the original language and 10 other words in the foreign language. This has the risk of making children unable to grow according to language development. [9]

## 2.2. Value of Local Wisdom in Local Languages

In its use, regional languages contain norms, in regional languages each word is used differently interlocutor. If the interlocutor is an older person or to glorify the listener, more polite language will be used, and the same sentence will be pronounced differently from relatives or younger ones. This makes the speaker understand the importance of respecting the interlocutor.[6]

The introduction of a second language to early childhood has also indirectly introduced children to other cultures, especially when a child is from a multi-ethnic background. For example, it may be natural if a child who lives in a community where the majority is not of his ethnic group, is surrounded by a group of different neighborhoods then he follows the language of the majority, it will be different if a child living in a community is introduced and even taught a language other than his native language. can cause him to question his identity, especially in adolescence when self-identity is so important and so linked to social circles that eventually the child is slowly and surely uprooted from his cultural roots. That is known as an identity crisis.

As mentioned by Charlotte.A. Harun (2018), Vygotsky emphasizes that the process of language acquisition in children is through dialogue or conversation. Through conversation or dialogue, adults transfer knowledge contained in culture to children. During the learning process, the language used by children becomes a means of intellectual transformation. By repeating, or imitating the speech used by parents, children learn the language and culture of their parents.[10]

The introduction of early childhood thinking skills will provide an understanding of efforts to introduce second and third languages to early childhood.

## 2.3. Efforts to Preserve the Use of Local Languages

languages and cultures, including Sundanese language and culture, are sociologically is valuable assets in Indonesia. As a very valuable asset, the existence of such cultural and linguistic diversity needs to be continuously developed, fostered and protected. If this culture and language is not preserved, it is possible that this culture and language will gradually become extinct.[11]

The important thing that need to know and realize in relation to local culture and language is the issue of inheritance. Rosidi (2006) as quoted by T. Fatimah Dj.Sudarma, et al., that inheritance is related to the inheritance of skills and the inheritance of

appreciation to younger generations [12]. Parents and society with all awareness must help children in learning local languages because it is their responsibility.

The Institution of education as a agent for cultural and linguistic inheritance must be able to present culture and language as subjects with an adequate number of hours, especially in urban areas because parents can no longer be expected at home.

Raising awareness to the public to use Sundanese is not an easy thing because it involves attitudes. It is necessary to make various efforts, both at school, at home, and in the community to foster a positive attitude in Sundanese language.

Sundanese language is so important to be preserved because it stores knowledge and cultural value systems, both in the form of vocabulary, expressions, proverbs, literary works both oral and written. Thus, it is necessary to make various efforts to preserve it.

### 3. Research Method

This study aims to determine the use of Sundanese language among the Sundanese speaking community itself, involving students and parents of Kindergarten students in the Indihiang sub-district, which consists of 7 kindergartens with a total of 134 students.

The seven schools which were located in the Indihiang sub-district were selected based on the following reasons; (1) this area is not a city with a very high level of mobility of the immigrant community, (2) this area is not an area with very plural community conditions, (3) the research subjects are not dominated by cross-ethnic families. These three reasons usually encourage the intensity of the use of Indonesian and cause the weakening of the use of regional languages.

The technique of collecting data in the research was carried out through observation, interviews and document study. These three techniques will support each other in providing valid and reliable information. In data collection, direct observations were made to students through observing and recording the context of a conversation, recording speeches, and interviews with kindergarten students with the aim of gathering information about linguistic symptoms that can be indicators of language shift and looking for factors causing language shift.

The data analysis carried out in this research is a qualitative descriptive analysis technique which refers to the data analysis techniques proposed by Miles and Huberman starting from data collection, data reduction, data display, then making conclusions (conclusion drawing and verification) about the data or facts about the shift in Sundanese language that were collected from the views of the parents of students on the use of

Sundanese, the role of parents related to the use of Sundanese in communicating in the family domain and the frequency of use of Sundanese language

## 4. Result and Discussion

### 4.1. Use of local languages by parents to children

Based on the results of research that were filtered through a questionnaire distributed to parents, it was revealed that parents did not use Sundanese in communicating and very rarely invited their children to speak Sundanese. They reasoned that the use of Indonesian was easier based on the structure and pronunciation.

This situation, sociolinguistically, has a very negative effect on the mastery of local languages by children. By teaching a second language to children under five will have several impacts, among others; (1) confusion, (2) cognitive load, (3) identity crisis.

Lack of parental awareness and concern for the importance of local languages as mother tongue in early childhood will result in local languages being threatened with extinction.

The condition of the majority of the ways of communicating in the family environment also has an effect on the way these children interact in the educational environment. Research observations prove the atmosphere in the school environment where children often use Indonesian when talking with friends, teachers, and also other school members such as security guards and canteen guards.

TABLE 1: Using of Sundanese Language.

No	Description	F	%
1.	In communicating more often use Indonesian	90	75%
2.	Regional languages are difficult	60	50%
3.	Indonesian is easier	78	65%
4.	Indonesian is more prestigious	108	90%
5.	Language Indonesia has a wider reach	96	80%

Table above shows a very significant figure, that is 75% of parents admit that they use Indonesian in their initial communication with their toddler.

The results of direct observation of students through observing and recording the context of a conversation, recording speech, and interviews show that there has been a shift in language which is manifested through linguistic symptoms which can be an indicator of the language shift. The children did not use Sundanese when communicating

with their playmates. When invited to communicate in Sundanese by researchers, the children's mastery of Sundanese was very worrying. This condition is getting worse by the formal education environment when these children communicate with their teachers in non-formal situations (during break sessions) the language used is Indonesian.

This condition should be used as study material for teachers and parents and the community regarding the nature of the use of regional languages between the national language and its placement. Indonesian is the official language that must be used in formal situations such as in educational institutions or public facilities.

The problem is why parents choose to use Indonesian for their toddler. a fantastic answer was captured through the results of interviews and questionnaires because Indonesian has a higher prestige compared to regional languages (90%).

This condition is very unfortunate considering that the majority of the subjects research came from a homogeneous ethnicity or only 2% of the research subjects came from cross-ethnic marriages, even then it was limited to Javanese and Sundanese ethnic groups.

The prestige factor is not only a trend for urban young couples with a fairly high level of education and a standard of living eligibility. This research documentation study concludes that 69% of kindergarten students' parents come from junior high school level educational backgrounds.

The reason they use Indonesian to their children is because it is considered easier to give understanding when using Indonesian because children are already familiar with Indonesian, especially in socializing or playing and learning with their friends, they do use Indonesian, even though there are a few regional dialects are combined in Sundanese.

The low awareness and attitude of parents towards this regional language will ultimately have an impact on the loss of pride in the younger generation of cultural heritage which will slowly lead to identity problems.

Data from various studies reveal that the use of regional languages by parents to their children greatly affects their local language skills.

The results of this study, among others, were proposed by Sun (2000) in a study of language maintenance in Chinese immigrant families, where the role of parents in maintaining their language was very significant. The results of this study are also in line with the results found by Tannenbaum & Pauline Howie (2002) in which the family plays an important role in keeping Chinese children using their parents' mother tongue. Meanwhile, Benjamin (1993) also found the important role of family in maintaining



Spanish in Mexican children. Similar to what Bodnitski (2007) found, he also concluded that a very important factor in maintaining the first language is the use of minority languages in everyday life. [13]

#### **4.2. Perception that local languages are not prestigious**

People may not use the language due to various factors, for example, because it does not have the ability to use the language or the language is deemed not to have prestige. Indonesian, which has a wider function than regional languages sociolinguistically has a higher prestige than regional languages so it is a natural thing if speakers of regional languages switch to Indonesian speakers. [12]

This shows that the attitude of those who use Indonesian has contributed to the existence of regional languages. This is because the Indonesian language has a more prestigious status.

A person's perception of the regional language will gradually encourage him to leave the regional language for various reasons those who view the regional language as less prestigious, difficult to learn, not slang, and so on. Not to mention the various types of violations of language and linguistic rules such as the use of regional language grammar among Indonesian which further obscures the value of the regional language. The use of Sundanese language which is "Indonesianized", has even contributed to shifting the structure, grammar to messages from Sundanese language which is a cultural heritage at the same time has damaged grammar and structure and elements of the Indonesian language as the National language.

#### **4.3. The transmission of Sundanese Inter-generations**

The results prove that there is a problem of loyalty to the use of regional languages in the family sphere. In fact, it is from the family that a child gets language.

The phenomenon of impurity in the use of Sundanese in the family realm that is revealed through the answers to the questions in the questionnaire is justified and reinforced by the results of observations which reveal that families prefer to speak Indonesian with their children, whether the family with high, middle, or lower class economy and education background.

They consider Indonesian as a more polite language, therefore when communication is carried out with their children, they use Indonesian, so that these children no longer recognize that there is a structural system in Sundanese language which has its own

uniqueness. More than, there is a moral message that will not shape a child's identity. This can be exemplified in the use of verbs for oneself, peers, animals and parents who have their own characteristics in the phonological structure and morphology of the Sundanese language.

The minimal frequency of language use affects the level of habitual use of the language consciously.

## 5. Conclusions and Suggestions

Language as a cultural wealth can only be passed on to the next generation through transferred learning in both non-formal situations, that is the realm of the family and the formal realm of education. In the realm of regional language education, it must be taught officially in certain educational units, even at the basic levels, for example in Early Childhood Education because this level is the initial level of language learning. However, the facts that can be observed in the field the ability of students to speak Sundanese are not in accordance with what is expected.

Various factors can be the cause, both internal factors of language and external factors. The most prominent factor that can influence language shift is the speaker's attitude towards their own regional language. This situation certainly cannot be tolerated, so there must be a solution to maintain Sundanese as part of the cultural wealth of the region and the nation's culture, even world culture. Perhaps to overcome this, it is necessary to make efforts through teaching, especially for early childhood student, local languages can be used as the language of instruction.

If speakers of Sundanese do not feel proud and have negative perceptions of their regional languages or speak violently of the rules, it is possible that the Sundanese language will gradually experience a shift and even lead to extinction.

## Acknowledgements

Special Thanks to the leadership of the University of Muhammadiyah Tasikmalaya who have support to the author in conducting the research.\*\*\*

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