

# The Trajectory of English Foreign Language (EFL) Students' Language Attitude in Maintaining Local Wisdom using Snowball Sampling Technique Method

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**Abstract.** Indonesia is a multicultural country with more than 6 hundred languages spoken as a means of communication. Most speakers in this country use regional language as their first language, Bahasa Indonesia as their second language, and English as their foreign language. This research aims to describe (a) language trajectory spoken by EFL students; and (b) language attitude of EFL students in maintaining local wisdom. The type of this research is qualitative research which used triangulation to collect the data. The instruments of this research are questionnaire and interview. The population of this research is the English students of STKIP Muhammadiyah Bogor. Snowball sampling is used to take the sample of this research. The collected data are analyzed by using taxonomy theory of language attitude. The result shows that the participants have a positive attitude towards the language use and the local wisdom maintenance. They still manage the local wisdom well and it is reflected in their language use for daily conversation.

## 1. Introduction

Economic issues related to globalization require people to establish good communication even though they come from different countries, languages, and cultures. To create mutual understanding, English is chosen as a medium of communication by the international community (cf. [1], [2], and [3]). Since the adoption of English as a lingua franca, the number of speakers and learners of this language has continued to increase from time to time. More than a quarter of the world's population is English speakers. This language now belongs to native speakers and non-native speakers. Based on data adopted from the British Council, the number of English language learners in Indonesia increased by 40% in 2013 [2]. The strong flow of globalization has a significant influence on Indonesia. As a global language, obviously English has a fairly strong influence on the growth and development of the nation. Therefore, since a few decades ago people are increasingly being active learning this language.

The process of learning a new language requires learners to learn the cultural content contained in the language, including for EFL learners. The thing that needs to be anticipated from this phenomenon is the degradation of the local wisdom. There are some cultural elements that are quite different between western culture and eastern culture. The values of local wisdom contained in Indonesian are certainly closely related to Eastern culture. On the other hand, the values of English culture are very attached to western culture. The negative impact of globalization can be seen in part from the moral degradation of the nation's character [4]. The sensitivity of intellectual abilities and emotional maturity are needed to prevent the degradation of the values of local wisdom. These two elements are also needed to maximize the positive impact of globalization [5].

EFL learners have a significant possibility to be eroded in the negative currents of the globalization of western culture. Cultivation of moral and cultural values that have been taught by ancestors from generation to generation needs to be instilled in students. This is intended so that these learners have a good language attitude.

A good language attitude affects the language acquisition of English learners who learn this language as a first language, a second language, or a foreign language. Language attitude has an



influence on language behavior in certain domains [6]. Some effects of this language attitude are reflected in language variation, language change, language choice, and other sociolinguistic aspects. The sociocultural attitude of the language of EFL learners also has an influence on the maintenance of the values of the nation's cultural local wisdom. Socio-psychological cultural acculturation influences the attitudes and understandings of EFL learners to the limits of moral values and language choice which does not rule out making some of them westernized.

Departing from the description above, this research focuses on the following problem formulation:

- 1.1. What is the language attitude of EFL learners in everyday speech?
- 1.2. What is the language attitude of EFL learners towards the preservation of the values of local wisdom?

The main objective of this research is to investigate the degradation of local wisdom values in EFL learners' speeches to be followed up in more in-depth research on language revitalization and cultural values through a well-developed curriculum design for English learners.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. *Behavioristic Theory and Mentality Theory for Language Attitude*

Broadly speaking, the theory of the attitude of an individual is divided into two groups, namely behavioristic theory and mentality theory [6]. In behavioristic approach, the attitude of a speaker can be seen from the responses given to social situations. On the other hand, the other scientists believe that based on mentality theory, language attitude of the speakers is reflection of internal statement about the readiness that will appear from the stimulation received by each individual. These mentalists break language attitudes into three levels related to feelings, beliefs, and behavior. Researchers generally do not explicitly mention that they use a mentality-based approach, but the three levels are commonly found in their research studies [7].

Departing from a series of empirical studies on language attitudes, Baker in [8] explained 8 types of attitudes that are covered by the concept of language attitude, including: (1) attitudes toward language variations, dialects, and the variety of speech; (2) attitudes towards learning new languages; (3) attitudes towards a particular minority language; (4) attitudes towards speech groups, minorities, and communities; (5) attitude towards linguistic material; (6) parental attitudes towards language material; (7) attitudes towards the use of certain languages; and (8) attitude towards language choice.

### 2.2. *Language Attitude and Perception of Multilingual Speakers*

In some multilingual areas, language attitude has a quite crucial role in speech society. Some research on language attitudes shows that there is language contact in multilingual speech community, allowing for the perception that one particular language or dialect will be considered more prestigious than other languages. Therefore, research on language attitudes is usually very close to be discussed with language maintenance, language loyalty, language choice, language policy, and several other sociolinguistic sub-studies (cf. [9], [10], [10], [11]).

In a broader domain, a number of local products have often been found using English as a medium for naming brands to influence the attitudes and perceptions of consumers. One of them is The Executive brand, an original clothing brand from Indonesia which is now going worldwide. A number of people assume that imported products have better quality than local products. This perception influences the language attitude of local brand producers to use foreign languages (especially English) in the naming of their products. Thus, the producers hope that the choice of language will influence people's perspectives on the goods offered [12].

## 3. Research Method

The object of this qualitative research is the EFL Learners of STKIP Muhammadiyah Bogor. The population of this research was the English language learners at STKIP Muhammadiyah Bogor class of 2015, 2016, and 2017. The total number of population was around 130 participants. The sampling

technique used to collect the data was snowball sampling technique. Snowball is a sampling technique wherein the participants can recruit the other sample from their society [13].

Researchers use triangulation to avoid data bias. Triangulation is a method of collecting research data by using two or more instruments to collect research data related to human behavior [13]. The use of this triangulation will strengthen the reliability and validity of research data [14]. The triangulation method used in this study is observation, questionnaire, and interview. Observations were made to observe the language use and language attitudes directly. The questionnaire was carried out to dig deep data related to the attitude and use of language. Interviews were given to the research sample to find out their language attitudes towards maintaining the values of local wisdom.

This study uses a questionnaire that was previously used by [15] in his study entitled Language Use and Language Attitude among Muslim Arabs of Vancouver / Canada: A Sociolinguistics Study. The questionnaire was then modified to suit the needs of this research. The questionnaire in this study consisted of two parts. The first section examines the use of the language of speakers in several domains, including at home, on campus, in housing (neighborhood), on social media and self-expression. In addition, questionnaires regarding language attitudes will be distributed to respondents to find out the attitude of the respondents' language towards their mother tongue and foreign languages they use. Likert scale is used in the distribution of questionnaires regarding language attitudes. The assessment parameters on the Likert scale used in this study are: (a) 5 = Strongly Agree; (b) 4 = Agree; (c) 3 = Neutral; (d) 2 = Disagree; and (e) 1 = Strongly Disagree. Pilot studies were conducted before distributing questionnaires to sample.

#### 4. Discussion

The data were taken from 35 informants who were born and grew up in Bogor. Based on the demographic of the data, more than a half of the informants are Sundanese, and the rest informants come from different ethnics like Betawi, Padang, Batak, and Javanese. 63% of the participants' mother tongue is Sundanese language and the rest 37% of participants use Bahasa Indonesia and other language as their first language. Furthermore, the participants of this research are multilingual speakers. Mostly they are able to use 3 languages or more, such as Regional language, Bahasa Indonesia as their National language, and English. Some of them are also able to speak in Arabic language which is spoken as foreign language.

##### 4.1. The Trajectory of Language Used by the Participants

By giving the questionnaire, the researchers draw a map of language trajectory of the participants based on their language use in two domains, at family domain and at University domain. The tables below show the trajectory of language use in 2 domains.

**Table 1.** The Trajectory of language used at home by EFL learners in Bogor

Question	Sundanese	Javanese	Indonesian	Others
1 – Family				
What language do you use at home with:				
• Your father	54%	6%	34%	6%
• Your mother	57%	5 %	33 %	5%
• Your brothers	54%	6%	37 %	3%
• Your sisters	56%	6%	32 %	6%
• Your relatives in Bogor	36%	0%	59%	5 %
• Your relatives outside Bogor	18%	0%	76 %	6%

Question	Sundanese	Javanese	Indonesian	Others
What language do you use at family meeting?	53%	3%	37%	7%
What language do you use when you send personal message/ chatting with your family?	48%	0%	48 %	4%

The data on the table above show that more than a half of participants still use regional language in family domain or at home. They speak in Sundanese language to communicate with their father, mother, brothers, and sisters. Nevertheless, they switch their language into Bahasa Indonesia when they have to communicate with their relatives but they keep using their indigenous language when they held family meeting. The interesting fact is that both Sundanese language and Bahasa Indonesia are equally used by the participants for chatting with their family. In short, Sundanese language is still normally used in family domain.

**Table 2.** The Trajectory of language use at University

Question	Sundanese	Javanese	Bahasa Indonesia	Others	English
2 - univarsity					
What language do you use when you talk to your lecturers?	0%	0%	30%	0%	<b>70%</b>
What language do you use when you talk to your colleagues?	24%	0%	<b>59%</b>	0%	17%
Which language is used in giving university's instruction?	0%	0%	45%	0%	<b>55%</b>
Which language is used in classroom teaching?	0%	0%	0%	0%	<b>100%</b>
Which language is used in the course syllabus?	0%	0%	0%	0%	<b>100%</b>

As required by the university, English is massively used in several occasions. Based on the percentage, we can figure out that most of the participants used English to communicate with their faculty member. Regional language, which becomes their mother tongue, is used in small frequency only when they communicate with other EFL learners. It is because the learners commonly use Bahasa Indonesia as national language for their daily conversation.

#### 4.2. Language Attitude of EFL Learners

The questionnaire and interview were held to investigate EFL learners' language attitude toward English and Sundanese Language. Here are the results.

**Table 3.** Language attitude of EFL learners towards English and Sundanese language

Statement	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
I believe that English language is:					
1. More useful than Sundanese language	5.6	27.7	55.6	11.1	0
2. More prestigious than Sundanese Language	5.9	17.6	53	17.6	5.9
3. More important than Sundanese Language in my class	11.8	50	38.2	0	0
4. Important because it is spoken as foreign language in my country	20,6	44.1	29.4	5.9	0
5. The language in which I express my emotions	9.1	21.2	60.6	9.1	0
6. Important because this is the international language	39.3	48.5	6.1	6.1	0
7. Important because this is the language used in my textbook and university's reading resource	17.6	53	29.4	0	0
8. Important to be taught to my children since the globalization grows rapidly	15.8	52.6	26.3	5.3	0
9. The language I do not like the most	0	0	34.3	42.8	22.9
10. The language that is easy to be learnt	5.8	35.3	47.1	11.8	0
11. The language I am proud of	0	29.3	47.1	11.8	11.8

The score of EFL Learners language attitude show that they are at medium level. Based on the results of the questionnaire and interview they argue that English and Sundanese language are equally prestigious. Nonetheless, they realized that English is important to be learnt since it is used as the International language and spoken as foreign language in Indonesia. Besides, English is also used in university's reading resources.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the EFL learners in STKIP Muhammadiyah Bogor are still quite stable in using their indigenous language. They frequently used Sundanese language at home while when they are at University they switch their language into English. It shows that they have positive attitude in using language. Somehow the percentage of each part of the questionnaire for language attitude is still under 65 %. It means that the level of their language attitude are in the medium level. Further research and treatment are needed to improve their language attitude towards English and Sundanese language into High Level of attitude.

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