

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Language is an integral part of human life because with language one can convey intentions and goals to others. In other words, language is a communication tool used by humans in their efforts to interact with each other. Language functions as a communication tool and is an important tool in a child's life. Through language, children can interact with each other, share experiences, and can increase intellectually, namely to develop their knowledge and language skills. Language is unique and universal. Unique means to have characteristics or characteristics that are not owned by other languages and universal means to have the same characteristics that exist in all languages (Chanifa, Redjeki, Dayati, & Umi, 2020). The majority of the world's people speak more than one language (Grosjean, 1982). The learning of multiple languages has spread rapidly over the world in recent decades. The use of numerous languages by people or societies is known as multilingualism. Since over two-thirds of the world's population is thought to speak two or more languages, this phenomenon is common, according to several experts. (Hidayati, 2020). Even in most English-speaking countries like the US, UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, there are significant parts of the population that speak a language other than English. Mastering various languages can be said to have many advantages because humans can expand access to the outside world, as well as update and improve more external knowledge. This reason can underlie the increasing phenomenon of multilingualism between us. According to Canbulat (2005), from the beginning of the last century until now, teaching foreign languages is considered growingly important by societies in an incrementally shrinking world without borders.

Therefore, parents begin to introduce their children to learn foreign languages early on. Educational institutions ranging from kindergarten, elementary schools, and high schools to higher institutions teach their students international languages. In recent years, in Indonesia parents begin to put their children into institutional tutoring with the aim that their children are able to recognize and master foreign languages. These languages are usually English, Arabic, and Chinese. Such a phenomenon is driven, among other things, by the obsession of parents who want their children to speak foreign languages quickly. They have the view that the earlier a child learns a foreign language, the easier it will be for them to master that language. However, it turns out that there are pros and cons to multilingual phenomena among experts and also the community in relation to language and cognitive development in children. Many researchers are starting to acknowledge that the ability to achieve high language proficiency as a native speaker cannot be directly related to age, because other factors, such as cognitive, social, and emotional aspects also play a role. The pro says multilingual children are better than monolingual ones. For example, multilingual can master more vocabulary, understand other people's cultures so that they are more tolerant of differences, and have better test scores on verbal tests. Because multilingual children potentially bring different sources of diversity to the classroom, it is plausible that teachers establish different interactional practices with multilingual children—as compared with their practices with monolingual children (Langeloo, Lara, Deunk, Klitzing, & Strijbos, 2019). However, recent empirical studies have provided evidence to the contrary. The contra party says that there are losses experienced by multilingual children, where the child's brain works very hard and has a high burden, and has a slow ability to master a language, and they may experience speech delay. Since entering elementary schools, and even kindergarten, children are 'required' to master more than one language; local languages, and Indonesian. Both are used as the languages of

instruction in the teaching and learning process at schools. It will be a heavy burden for them to learn English later, or any other foreign languages. They must master three languages in one period, for example.

The researcher brought up this topic because it calls for it to be explored and researched. The researcher decided to conduct a study into parents' perceptions of young language learning in children. The researcher aims to highlight the various parents' perceptions on how important it is for their young children to learn a foreign language. This study attempts to expand the understanding of early language learning by exploring and understanding these perspectives. This study intends to educate parents and educators by collecting and examining parental viewpoints. schooling for children. Overall, this study is intended to provide valuable insight into parents' opinions of children learning foreign languages at a young age, contributing to a deeper understanding of this important aspect of early childhood education.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In this study, researchers found a problem formulation related to the core problems that will be discussed in this study. The problem formulation is: What are the parents' opinions on the learning of foreign languages by their children at a young age?

1.3. Objective of the Study

Based on the statement of the problem, the main objective of this study is to identify the parents' opinions about learning foreign languages by their children at a young age.

1.4. Significance of the Study

In addition to identifying the parents' opinions learning foreign languages by their children at a young age, this research is supposed to give significance to the researcher herself, parents, and subsequent researchers.

First, for the researcher herself, research is useful for educating, and adding insight, and also researcher can study various knowledge she has obtained at the university. In addition, the researcher can also study theories related to children learning foreign languages at a young age that she does not know before. This can be used to train the researcher and familiarize her with techniques for collecting data through interviews and distributing questionnaires to particular targets. Thus, the researcher will learn from and examine this as a new experience.

Second, for parents, this research certainly provides new insights into the importance of learning foreign languages for children. The role of parents in terms of education is so important, considering that parents are responsible for the development of their children while learning foreign languages and also for the future.

Third, for subsequent researchers, the benefits of this research for other researchers are that it can be a reference, source of information, and reference material in future research so that it can be further developed in other materials to improve the quality of learning.

1.5. Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is only: the parents' opinions about learning foreign languages by their children at a young age. In addition, the researcher's target was only twenty voluntary parents who have young age children (3-8 years old). The twenty voluntary parents were asked to fill out a questionnaire, and then six out of twenty parents

were selected based on the uniqueness of their answers for further interviews. The study was carried out employing 2-4 days of distributing the questionnaire to twenty parents and conducting the interview a duration of approximately one to two hours to parents. The questionnaire was conducted once without a try-out, and so was the interview.

1.6. Operational Definition of Key Terms

1.6.1. Learning

Learning is a process of change in human personality, and these changes are manifested in the form of increasing the quality and quantity of behavior such as increasing skills, knowledge, attitudes, habits, understanding, skills, thinking power, and other abilities. The term “learning” can also be used to describe the process through which a person makes an effort to improve their overall behavior as a result of their interactions with their environment. According to Djamaluddin & Wardana (2019), the definition of learning can be interpreted as all psychological activities carried out by each individual so that their behavior is different between before and after learning. Changes in behavior or responses, due to new experiences, having intelligence or knowledge after learning and practicing activities. Meanwhile, in Whandi (2009) Learning is a process in which an organism changes its behavior as a result of experience. From this understanding, there are three main attributes or main characteristics of learning, namely: process, behavior, and experience. The definitions of these characteristics are as follows: 1. The process of learning involves both mental and emotional activity, or thinking and feeling. When a person’s mind and feelings are active, they are said to be learning. 2. Change in behavior learning outcomes in the form of changes in behavior or the behavior of someone who learns will change or increase in behavior, whether in the form of knowledge, skills, or mastery of attitude values. 3. In the sense that learning happens through interactions between people and their

surroundings—both the physical environment and the social environment—learning experience is experiencing.

1.6.2. Learning Foreign Languages

Foreign language learning and teaching refers to teaching or learning a foreign language outside of the environment in which the language is commonly used. A language is considered foreign if most of it is learned in class and is not used in the society where the teaching takes place. Learning another language provides access to perspectives other than one's own, enhances the ability to see connections across content areas, and promotes interdisciplinary perspectives while gaining intercultural understanding. Language is a necessary vehicle for effective human-to-human interaction and results in a better understanding of one's language and culture. Learning a language provides learners with opportunities to acquire linguistic and social knowledge and to know when, how, and why to say what to whom National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (NSFLEP) (2014). Language scholars distinguish between the terms acquisition and learning: 'acquisition' refers to the natural process of learning one's first and second language, without formal instruction, whereas 'learning' is reserved for the formal study of a second or foreign language in the classroom (Moeller & Catalano, 2015).

1.6.3. Young Age Children

Early childhood or young-age children is a small individual figure who is growing and developing rapidly both physically and psychologically. The definition of early childhood according to law no. 20 of 2003, concerning the national education system which is called early childhood, are children aged 0-6 years, while according to experts are children aged 0-8 years. Early childhood has unique characteristics physical,

social, moral, and so on. Sunanah (2017) stated that childhood is also a very important age for the rest of his life because childhood is the period of forming the foundation and basis of personality that determines the child's experience in the next life. The limits used by the National Association of Children (NAEYC), and experts, in general, are: "Early childhood" early childhood is a child from birth to eight years of age. So, from the time the child is born until they reach the age of eight years, they will be categorized as an early child. Some people call this phase or period the golden age because this period will be like when they become adults both physically, mentally, and intelligently.

1.6.4. Foreign Language

A foreign language is any language that is not native to a particular area or people (Rankin, 2023). This definition varies from region to region and by individuals within a given area. Many countries have more than one official language or have significant populations that speak their language. Foreign language teaching is often required or strongly encouraged in primary and secondary education. Foreign language study is about learning how to communicate and connect with other people – very important life skills that can only be developed by interacting with other people. Learning a foreign language allows direct access to people and cultures other than one's own and advances the development of global understanding and sensitivity. Proficiency in foreign languages is an important tool in a wide variety of professions.