

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

One of the most significant education competencies in the current globalized world is linguistic proficiency. Because language is both a medium for perceiving and enjoying cultural diversity and a medium for communication, language proficiency is critical to intercultural education. Students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds can communicate and learn from each other through language in a multicultural learning environment. Acquiring proficiency in numerous languages can enhance interpersonal relations and raise students' participatory roles in the learning process (Cummins, 2000).

Multilingual or bilingual proficiency in the classroom facilitates students to communicate more effectively with peers and teachers, grasp other people's positions, and communicate more extensively. Being bilingual or multilingual can also have significant cognitive advantages. (Hukama & Rachman, 2024) established that students who are capable of speaking more than one language possess enhanced critical thinking as well as problem-solving capacities. It is an indication that multilingual education does not just improve communication but also expands cognitive development, which contributes to enhanced students' academic achievement.

Language also helps students develop their identities in the context of intercultural education. When students feel appreciated and acknowledged in the language they speak, they have a better attitude toward school and have a greater motivation to learn. Understanding students' language and culture can help them feel more confident and motivate students to engage fully in class (Norton, 2013). In an educational context, this recognition is particularly important as it can create an inclusive and supportive learning environment. When students feel that their language and culture are valued, they are more likely to engage in learning, share ideas, and contribute to class discussions.

In Indonesia, there are so many schools that have students from various family origins, particularly those born to mixed parents. Students from varied origins may adapt to numerous languages and cultures, allowing them to form a distinct identity. According to Garcia & Wei (2015: 223-240), Linguistic identity is connected not just to language proficiency, but also to how students incorporate cultural components from their background into their daily interactions. It means that mixed students' linguistic identities may be a source of strength in a multicultural educational setting. Mixed students often show flexibility in language usage, allowing them to communicate well in a range of social settings.

Students who are exposed to many languages from an early age have better communication skills and can grasp diverse social environments. These abilities are useful not just in relationships with peers but also in identifying different classroom dynamics, which may improve the way they learn. On the other hand, mixed students may struggle to get social acceptability and respect for their linguistic identity. Students who believe their linguistic identity is not acknowledged in the educational setting may be less motivated and engaged in studying (Yeni & Susanti, 2023). Several factors in school might influence student's academic performance and motivation, including language attitudes. Language attitudes are described as emotional, cognitive, and behavioural predispositions toward a specific language that have an impact on how students use, learn, and achieve professionally with such languages. These perceptions can impact students' confidence, talking opportunities, and overall learning. This is particularly important for multiple language contexts, including bilingual educational settings where positive attitudes towards the teaching language are strongly related to students' higher academic engagement and performance (Salainti, 2023). Due to the influence of their cultural background, mixed students' perspectives toward language tend to be complicated. These attitudes have been linked to motivation and academic achievement.

According to Mercer and Dörnyei (2020), a positive attitude towards a second language is able to increase students' motivation for their learning and use. Mixed students who have exposure to multiple languages and cultures perhaps be more likely to be encouraged for an open mind that enables them to learn a language which could affect their academic achievement. A positive attitude among students

about English is a source of motivation for them to learn whatever is attached to the language (Pham, 2021). Mixed students, who typically speak more than one language, may learn from this experience to improve their second language. Students' feelings of high confidence about the language they are learning stimulate their willingness to learn the language, leading to a positive loop where the learner learns more, which enhances their confidence. Confidence is a vital psychological factor that directly influences language performance among bilingual and multilingual students.

Simanjuntak & Simanjuntak, (2025) show that increased self-confidence drastically reduces anxiety and encourages the willingness to communicate. Confident students tend to be more willing to take linguistic risks (dare to experiment with language) and actively engage in academic discourse in the classroom, which ultimately leads to improved language proficiency. Furthermore, Septiany & Zuraida, (2025) emphasize that self-confidence fosters a willingness to experiment with language without fear of making mistakes, thereby directly accelerating speaking fluency and active participation. Nevertheless, a negative attitude toward the language can demotivate a mixed student to study. A good knowledge of the teaching language typically contributes to a greater insight into the material. It is definitely crucial in bilingual education, since language proficiency may affect how students have access to and process information.

Students who are familiar with the language used in the classroom are more likely to actively engage in discussions and other learning activities. Furthermore, a strong command of the language may help students develop critical and analytical thinking abilities. Bialystok (2009) discovered that bilingual or multilingual students have cognitive benefits that may help them do better in school. The capacity to switch between languages and grasp diverse contexts improves students' problem-solving abilities. Thus, language is more than just a tool of communication; it is also an element that determines how students think and learn.

However, students' academic achievement may be affected by language challenges, particularly for those studying a second language. Garcia & Wei (2015) stated that students who struggle to follow lessons and do well academically are often those who have not acquired the language of teaching well enough. There is

a clear correlation between students' attitudes toward the language they are learning and their academic achievement. Since success in language acquisition often increases self-confidence, students who are successful in their efforts tend to have positive attitudes about the language. Students' motivation and language acquisition may be increased by academic achievement in a second language, which can encourage them to participate more in language learning activities. Students are more disposed to have a more optimistic approach to language usage and learning when they perceive that they are making progress. On the other hand, low academic achievement in a language can result in negative attitudes toward it (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). Students who struggle with language acquisition often feel discouraged, which can decrease their motivation and interest. Furthermore, a positive attitude towards language can assist students to achieve better academically in the future. Positive attitudes about language motivate students to participate in class and take risks with language use, hence creating a more interesting learning environment (Gardner, 1985).

Indonesian educational systems, which mostly emphasize Bahasa Indonesia, can become a challenge for multilingual students. As emphasized by Mercer & Dörnyei (2020), the role of positive environmental support on students' language attitudes and performance was significant, especially pertaining to the L2 students who had exposure to several languages. The school context has much influence on language learning, especially students' language use in their daily life. Students' language skills can be improved in a class that promotes an appropriate language of instruction, such as Bahasa Indonesia. Cummins (2000) argued that if students experience cohesive language input in all aspects of instruction and learning, they are more likely to understand and acquire the content taught. This is particularly crucial in linguistically varied settings where students may be more used to speaking the local tongue on a daily. Additionally, language acquisition is influenced by social interaction in the classroom. Students are more likely to be motivated to learn when they engage with teachers and their peers in environments that utilize the same language of teaching. Students' comprehension of the language they are learning may be enhanced by encouraging active participation in learning activities in a supportive and positive environment.

However, difficulties can occur when the classroom environment does not promote good language usage. For example, if the majority of students utilize local languages and no attempt is made to standardize the usage of the language of instruction, students' knowledge of the topic may suffer. As a result, schools must design policies that encourage the use of the language of instruction in the learning process, allowing students to acquire the language skills required for success in academic and daily life.

Bali is one of the provinces in Indonesia where many schools have students with different parental backgrounds. One of the schools that has a student with different parental backgrounds is Widiatmika Elementary School in Jimbaran, Badung. After pre-observation, this school is a private school which uses the Merdeka curriculum, and the language of instruction is Indonesian. However, there is a student in grade 6 who comes from a family with a different background it is Indonesian and Filipino parents. The student has grown up exposed to two main languages: English from his Filipino mother and Bahasa Indonesia as the language of the neighborhood and school. The uniqueness of this student is in the way he navigates two different language systems, where English may be the home language and Bahasa Indonesia is the academic and social language. This phenomenon creates interesting dynamics in the classroom, such as the possibility of code-switching, differences in the perception of the two languages, and challenges in understanding the subject matter. Therefore, it is important to examine how these student's language attitudes and academic performance develop in the context of bilingualism and multiculturalism. Thus, this research is entitled “Language Attitude and Performance of a Mixed Indo-Filipino Student Exposed to English and Bahasa Indonesia in an Indonesian School”.

1.2 Problem Identification

Widiatmika Plus Elementary School is a national school located in Jimbaran, Bali. The school predominantly serves Indonesian students, and the language of instruction across subjects is Indonesian, except for foreign language subjects such as Japanese and English. Despite the dominant use of Indonesian in the classroom, there is one student who stands out due to his unique linguistic background. He is a mixed-marriage child; his father is Indonesian, and his mother is Filipino, and he

joined the school as a new student in Grade 4. Now in Grade 6. Before enrolling in Widiatmika, he attended school in Australia, where English was the primary language of instruction. As a result, he is fluent in English both orally and in writing.

At home, English is the primary language used for daily communication. His parents communicate with him exclusively in English, adapting to the family's language dynamics, also predominantly use English. Indonesian is rarely spoken at home and is limited to occasional interactions with peers and teachers. Tagalog is part of his heritage but is not actively used in his family.

In the case of a mixed Indo-Filipino student in an Indonesian school, the interplay between English (typically used at home or in informal contexts) and Indonesian (used in formal education) may significantly influence both their language attitude and language performance. However, little is known about how such students' attitudes towards these two languages and how these attitudes impact his language performance.

1.3 Limitation

The research presents several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, it employs a single-case study design, focusing on only one participant, a student mixed Indo-Filipino background. His mother is Filipino, and his father is Indonesian. The student communicates in English at home, using it as the primary language when interacting with both parents and siblings. However, the student attends a school where Bahasa Indonesia is the dominant language of instruction, creating a distinct linguistic contrast between the home and academic environments.

This unique linguistic and cultural background makes the subject's experience highly individualized. Therefore, the findings cannot be easily generalized to other bilingual or mixed-marriage students who may have different language combinations, proficiencies, or sociocultural exposures. The discrepancy between the language used in familial contexts (English) and that used in formal education (Bahasa Indonesia) may influence the student's language attitude, confidence, and academic language performance in a way that is not representative of broader bilingual populations.

Secondly, the research is carried out within a specific school setting, where the findings may also be influenced by the specific education environment, including the education policies, the attitude of the teachers, or peer interactions, which may not represent different school settings. Academic achievement is measured from school records or teacher reports instead of standard assessment, which may influence the objectivity or the consistency with which the achievement is measured. Lastly, the research time limitations restrict the research from observing changes occurring in the student's language attitude or academic progress over the long term. Despite the limitations, the study seeks to initiate meaningful insight regarding the correlation between language attitude and language performance of the students from multicultural backgrounds.

1.4 Research Problems

Based on the results of pre-observation, the problems can be formulated as.

- 1.4.1. What kind of the language attitude of a mixed Indo-Filipino student towards English and Bahasa Indonesia lessons?
- 1.4.2. What factors influence the student's attitude toward each language?
- 1.4.3. How is the student's language performance in the class?
- 1.4.4. What challenges does the student face when learning in the English and Bahasa Indonesia classes?

1.5 Research Objectives

The objectives to be achieved in this research are.

- 1.5.1. To identify the language attitudes of a mixed Indo-Filipino student towards English and Bahasa Indonesia lessons.
- 1.5.2. To explore the contributing factors that shape the student's language attitude.
- 1.5.3. To examine the student's language performance in the classroom.
- 1.5.4. To provide insight into the challenges faced by the student during learning in the English and Bahasa Indonesia classes.

1.6 The Definition of Keywords

1. Language attitude

Language attitude is the attitude of a person or group of people that is shaped by their feelings, beliefs, and values about a particular language, a particular dialect, or the people who use them. Gardner (1985) Defined language attitude as the emotional and cognitive orientation people have toward a language or its speakers. These attitudes may be positive (for instance, pride and prestige), or negative (for instance, stigma and not wanting to speak the language) (Lambert, 1973). Their development is greatly determined by social, cultural and political forces. In educational environments, attitude is directly related to motivation and achievement in second/foreign language acquisition success or failure.

2. Language performance

Language performance is the real, current use of language by the person in a concrete situation, both in speaking and writing. Performance can be imperfect and is often affected by external and psychological factors such as nervousness, fatigue, distractions, or a lack of real-world exposure. Chomsky (1965), The concept of performance was contrasted with competence to highlight the difference between knowing a language and using it effectively.

3. Mixed student

Mixed student is a broad educational term whose meaning depends on the specific context of the classroom or institution. Most commonly, it refers to mixed-ability students, who are grouped in a single classroom despite having widely differing levels of language proficiency, academic skills, or learning speeds (Tomlinson, 2014). Alternatively, in a demographic context, it can describe mixed-heritage students whose parents come from different racial, ethnic, or national backgrounds (Banks, 2019; Root, 1992). Finally, in modern education, it can refer to mixed-mode students who are enrolled in blended learning programs that combine traditional face-to-face classes with online instruction.

1.7 Research Significance

The results of this study are anticipated to be relevant and beneficial in both theoretical and practical contexts. It contributes to the understanding of language attitude and language performance in a unique cultural-linguistic context, namely, a mixed Indo-Filipino student navigating English and Indonesian within an Indonesian school environment.

1.6.1. Theoretical Significance

This research adds to the growing body of research in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics by providing insights into:

- 1) The interplay between language attitude and language performance in a bilingual learner.
- 2) How language preference and emotional orientation can influence classroom behaviour and participation.
- 3) The lived experiences of a mixed-nationality student, a group often underrepresented in linguistic research, especially in Southeast Asia.

It also enriches the literature on language identity, code-switching, and language policy in education, particularly in contexts where students are exposed to more than one dominant language both at school and at home.

1.6.2. Practical Significance

This research may be valuable for:

- 1) Teachers and school administrators: By highlighting how language attitudes can affect performance, they can design strategies to better support bilingual students, especially those from mixed cultural backgrounds.
- 2) Curriculum developers: The findings may guide the integration of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching methods.
- 3) Parents of bilingual children: to understand how their child's language environment (at home and school) impacts confidence and academic outcomes.
- 4) Future researchers: as a case-based foundation for broader studies on bilingualism and multiculturalism in Indonesia or similar multilingual societies.

Ultimately, this study aims to encourage inclusive, language-aware education that supports all learners in achieving both linguistic and academic success.

