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Aspects of Successful Multilingualism

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***Abstract*—Multilingualism is always an interesting case, particularly regarding how multilingual individuals maintain their languages. Sometimes they are successful, but sometimes due to some factors, they fail to maintain their languages which leads to language attrition. This paper compares three multilingual Indonesians from two different generations in terms of how their languages were acquired, what those languages meant to them, and what has happened to those languages. Questionnaire and semi-structured interview results reveal that while attitude towards the second language is a factor not to be underestimated, the opportunity to use a second language also plays a significant role in one's language maintenance. In addition, government policy is a critical factor. One alarming finding is that positive progress does not always result in positivity in attitude, particularly attitudes toward the first language.**

***Index Terms*—multilingual, multilingualism, language shift, language attrition, language maintenance**

I. Introduction

Indonesia consists of hundreds of different tribes and ethnicities with their own languages. In fact, as many as 718 tribal languages are spoken in Indonesia ("Daftar Bahasa Daerah di Indonesia – kemdikbud", n.d.). In 1928, the young people of Indonesia pledged to use one language – *Bahasa Indonesia* – as a unifying language ("Indonesian Embassy Commemorates 93rd Youth Pledge Day, 31 October 2021). As a consequence, most Indonesian people are bilingual. They speak at least two languages: their ethnic/local language and the Indonesian language.

When Indonesia was occupied by the Dutch, the Dutch children attended exclusive schools and were taught by Dutch teachers. As far as Indonesian families were concerned, only the elite were allowed to send their children to those schools. At that time, Dutch was an official language in Indonesia.

After Indonesia was seized from the Dutch by the Japanese in 1942, the Dutch language was banned and it lost its status as an official language. However, not all of the Dutch left the country; many of them stayed. Some of them were teachers who went on to teach at schools attended by the children of ordinary Indonesians. Henceforth, it was not only the elite that had access to Dutch, but ordinary Indonesians as well. As a result, many urban Indonesians of that generation mastered the Dutch language. Not as many Indonesians speak Dutch today, primarily because it is no longer an official language and therefore not taught at schools.

It has been mentioned that Indonesia is a multiethnic country. In addition to the native Indonesians, there are the descendants of the Dutch, whose numbers are progressively dwindling, as well as Indonesians of Chinese descent. Unlike the Dutch, the Chinese settlers came to Indonesia to do business. In her paper, Said (2019) asserts that the Chinese merchants functioned as a bridge between the native Indonesian and non-Indonesian merchants. Consequently, the Chinese language was used as a lingua franca.

It is very unfortunate that although the Chinese – unlike the Dutch – did not colonize Indonesia, the *Orde Baru* (the New Order), which took over the Indonesian government in 1966, promoted negativity and animosity between the native Indonesians and the Indonesians of Chinese descent. In 1967, they even banned the Chinese language from being taught and used, and Chinese schools were forced to close as a result. Chinese New Year celebrations were also banned. Chinese Indonesians who used Chinese names tended to face even worse discrimination. As a result, many Chinese Indonesians chose to use Indonesian names. It was not until 1998 – by order of the late K. H. Abdurrachman Wahid (Gus Dur), the president of Indonesia at the time – that everything changed. Since then, Chinese New Year has been allowed to be celebrated openly and has even been designated as one of the national holidays. Moreover, Mandarin is now allowed to be taught and spoken (Said, 2019; Sutami, 2016).

As explained above, some of the older generation who lived before the *Orde Lama* era (the Old Order, which started sometime after Indonesian independence and ended in 1967) attended Chinese or Dutch schools. This, of course, resulted in their mastering another language besides *Bahasa Indonesia* and their local/ethnic language. The question that arises is: What do they do with the many languages they learned?

This study investigates how three people from different generations learned and acquired languages, what drove them to learn these languages, and how they retain proficiency in these languages. The languages concerned are Indonesian, English, Dutch, Mandarin, and Korean.

The respondents in this mini-research paper were two people in their late 70s and one person in her 30s. They reflect interesting language situations and conditions related to their educational backgrounds, especially prior to the university level. It was also interesting to observe the way they acquired their languages, why they were compelled to learn them, and what they do to retain proficiency in these languages.

Their views and attitudes toward the languages they have mastered are also examined. A further objective was to establish what other factors contributed to their ability to learn their various languages. Finally, we examine how the research findings can contribute not only to language teaching and learning, but also to language maintenance.

II. Research Questions

As briefly mentioned above, the following research questions were formulated for this paper:

1. How did the respondents acquire their languages?
2. What factors drove them to learn languages?
3. How successful are they in maintaining the languages they have mastered?

III. Literature Review

In order not to lose the languages one speaks, one needs to maintain them – a phenomenon known as language maintenance. Hudyama (2012) believes that the most effective way to maintain a language is by using it at home. In this regard, Rohani et al. (2005) state that parents, both consciously and unconsciously, create an environment that will either nurture or impair heritage language acquisition. This statement demonstrates how important it is to use a language at home if one wants to maintain it. At the same time, it emphasizes the importance of language policy at home. Moreover, Chick et al. (2017) point out that exposure "in both informal and formal environments" is necessary for language maintenance. This is particularly applicable to heritage language, which is the focus of their research.

One can also maintain one's language by interacting with people who speak the same language outside the home. Holmes (2013) uses the example of the Greek community in Wellington, New Zealand, who attend the same community church, the Greek Orthodox church, in which they use the Greek language. Greek is also used as a means of communication in a number of shops that sell goods imported from Greece. In addition, Alsahafi (2019) states that in their effort to maintain their heritage language, the Arab community in New Zealand established an Arabic weekend school.

One encounters the same thing among the Chinese communities who live in the various Chinatowns in the USA. They use their own dialect when they are doing business with their fellow Chinese. This is how they keep their heritage language alive even though they no longer live in their native land where the language is spoken.

A study on language shift in the Estonian-language community in Russia was done by Küün (2015). The circumstances are similar to that in Indonesia during the New Order period (1966–1998) in the sense that both governments prevented a certain language from being used for political purposes; and in so doing, they ensured that members of the community in which that particular language was widely used spoke the dominant language instead. The study revealed that in their communication outside their home, the respondents – all of whom are non-Estonians – used both the Estonian language and Russian. A small percentage used their native language at home.

A concerning finding in relation to motivation is that it decreases as the learner becomes older. This was found by Ghenghesh (2010) in her study involving students of English and their teachers at a high school in Tripoli. However, this may not always be the case, as motivation is quite strongly related to the character of an individual. A resilient person usually has stronger motivation than one who gives up easily. It seems that there is a factor that plays a more significant role in learning motivation than the learner's age.

IV. Materials and Methods

In order to answer the research questions, information on the respondents' language ecology was needed, and this information was collected by means of questionnaires. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted based on the respondents' answers in the distributed questionnaires.

In the first part of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to furnish their name, age, occupation, and cultural background, and to state which communities they belonged to. Even though all the respondents were Indonesians, information about their cultural background was necessary since Indonesia has over 1,300 different ethnic groups (Na'im & Saputra, 2010), each with its own customs, traditions, and languages. Questions relating to the respondents' languages, language acquisition, language attitude, and language maintenance were asked in the second part of the questionnaire.

When the respondents had completed the questionnaire, their answers were examined, and semi-structured interviews were conducted based on the answers. In the interviews, the respondents provided explanations and elaborated on their answers. Each respondent was interviewed separately, and there were two sessions of interviews. This was because once the data obtained in the first session had been processed, it became clear that more detailed information was required. The first session of the interview lasted for approximately 20 minutes for each respondent, while the follow-up session was much shorter – approximately 10 minutes per respondent.

With a view to answering the research questions, the answers obtained from the questionnaires and interviews were studied on the basis of theories related to second language (L2) acquisition.

V. Results and Discussion

A. Results

As mentioned above, there were three respondents in this case study. The first respondent was YS, a 79-year-old female who spoke Indonesian, Dutch, Javanese, and English. Javanese is an ethnic language spoken by the Javanese people, who originally resided in Central Java. The second respondent was RB, a 79-year-old male. Like YS, RB also spoke four languages, namely Indonesian, English, Mandarin, and Sundanese. The Sundanese language is an ethnic language spoken by the Sundanese tribe native to the West Java area. The third respondent was AJ, a 33-year-old female who spoke Indonesian, Sundanese, English, Mandarin, and Korean. The respondents' profiles are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Respondents' Profiles

RESPONDENT	GENDER	AGE	OCCUPATION	EDUCATION	CULTURAL BACKGROUND	LANGUAGES	COMMUNITIES
YS	F	79	Housewife	Bachelor of Law	Javanese Chinese Indonesian	a. Indonesian b. Dutch c. Javanese d. English	- Diocese marriage preparation & counseling division - Catholic parish
RB	M	79	Employee	Bachelor of Economics	Chinese Indonesian	a. Indonesian b. English c. Mandarin d. Sundanese	- Diocese marriage preparation & counseling division - Catholic parish - Catholic catechesis & conformation preparation
AJ	F	33	Lecturer	MA in linguistics	Sundanese Chinese Indonesian	a. Indonesian b. Sundanese c. English d. Mandarin e. Korean	- Fandom (online community)

(a). Respondent YS

Indonesian was Respondent YS's first language (L1) and mother tongue, which she acquired at home as a child. The second language she learned was Javanese, which she started learning at school when she was about six years old, and her third language was Dutch. She started learning English in junior high school when she was about sixteen years old.

What was most interesting about Respondent YS was her proficiency in Dutch and her obsession with improving her English, even at her current age. Although Respondent YS learned Dutch formally for only one year – when she was in the fourth grade of elementary school – her proficiency in the language was relatively high. Even though she had never taken any Dutch proficiency tests, she spoke the language very fluently and could communicate effectively with native Dutch speakers both orally and in writing.

When asked how she managed to master Dutch so successfully even though she had only learned it formally in the fourth grade, Respondent YS recalled that as the youngest of 19 children, she wanted to be able to speak like her siblings all of whom spoke Dutch fluently as they attended schools with Dutch as the medium of instruction.

Respondent YS's explanation above reveals that she was very highly motivated to learn Dutch. In her view, unless she could speak Dutch, her siblings would not take notice of her. This confirms Ellis's (1997) theory that motivation is of high significance in the success of L2 learning. In more precise terms, Respondent YS's motivation is integrative. In addition, Respondent YS seems to have good language aptitude as she can pronounce the Dutch sounds quite accurately and although she formally studied Dutch for only a year, her Dutch grammar is acceptable. This is confirmed by the fact that Dutch native speakers have no problem understanding her, both in spoken and written communication.

In her efforts to talk to her siblings in Dutch, Respondent YS listened to them when they were talking to one another and imitated what they said. Respondent YS uses Indonesian and Dutch every day. She uses Indonesian with everyone she interacts with, but Dutch only with certain people – often when she does not want others to know what she and the other speaker are talking about. When talking with her sisters, she uses Dutch 100% of the time, and when conversing with her late aunt, she used the formal type of Dutch. Knowing when and how to use the different types of Dutch reflects Respondent YS's high competence in Dutch.

Another interesting fact is that over the past few years, Respondent YS has been using Dutch more frequently when conversing with her husband and daughter, with whom she did not usually use Dutch. Not being aware of this, Respondent YS came to realize that this started in situations when she could not remember a particular word when she

speaking Indonesian. Moreover, she added that she suspected that she had become like her sisters who exhibited a similar language behavior.

Her sisters are all over 90 years old. In the past five years or so, they have been using Dutch on an increasingly frequent basis, even when talking to their nieces and nephews, with whom they usually spoke Indonesian. One of her late sisters even spoke exclusively in Dutch in her final years, including to her caregiver who knew no Dutch at all. She simply stopped speaking other languages including Indonesian. It seems that as they grow older, Respondent YS and her sisters find it easier to retrieve Dutch than Indonesian. This appears to be an early sign of language shift, and it is intriguing that Respondent YS is shifting from her L1 (Bahasa Indonesia) to her L2 (Dutch). This may, however, be an early sign of language attrition.

In terms of her use of English, Respondent YS exhibits a very positive attitude; she likes the English language very much. Sadly, since she uses English only infrequently, she possesses only a pragmatic knowledge of the language. In the interview, she mentioned several times that she really wanted to improve her pronunciation to make her "sound more English" (verbatim). Not having a partner with whom to speak English is the main reason why she rarely uses the language. She sometimes has the opportunity to use English when delivering a church marriage preparation program. Since this program was adopted from an American program, it includes terms that have no Indonesian equivalent, and it is in such instances that Respondent YS has to use English. Moreover, she sometimes uses English to explain some of the concepts in the program.

Another reason why Respondent YS wants to regain her proficiency in English is that she likes English literature. Relating this to Ellis's four types of learning motivation, this clearly belongs to integrative motivation, as literature is part of culture.

Respondent YS uses Javanese when talking to her siblings, domestic assistants, and members of the *lingkungan* (a sub-area of a parish) most of whom happen to be Javanese-speaking people. This enabled her to retain her Javanese, despite having stopped learning it when she finished elementary school – she moved from Centra Java, where Javanese is spoken, to Bandung, when she started high school. Her level of proficiency in Javanese is almost the same as her Indonesian, but certainly higher than her English. Frequent use of the language enables Respondent YS to maintain her Javanese as she has the opportunity to use it with a relatively high number of people around her.

(b). Respondent RB

Like Respondent YS, Respondent RB also speaks four languages. In addition to Bahasa Indonesia, he speaks English, Mandarin, and Sundanese – all at the intermediate level. Moreover, just like Respondent YS, Respondent RB is a coordinate bilingual.

Interestingly, when Respondent RB started to learn Indonesian at school, he felt proud because at that time the language used by the Indonesian people was *Bahasa Melayu* (Malay); at that time *Bahasa Indonesia* was considered more prestigious than *Bahasa Melayu*. Being able to speak *Bahasa Indonesia* demonstrated that one was educated and intellectual; when he was young, therefore, Respondent RB valued Indonesian as a language of the intellect. When he mentioned this in the interview, which was conducted many years later, there was still a sense of pride in the way he referred to this. Moreover, Respondent RB also regarded Indonesian as being on a higher level than Malay. This valorization and positive attitude meant that he liked learning and speaking Indonesian.

In terms of his English language acquisition, Respondent RB recalled that being able to speak English at that time was also a source of pride because he was one of the few students at the Chinese-speaking school he attended who could speak English, which at that time was regarded as a prestigious language. This also demonstrates how valorization boosts an L2 learner's interest in learning.

Regarding his current use of English, Respondent RB admitted that he does not use it very often since he has no-one with whom to converse in English. As in the case of Respondent YS, not having anyone with whom to use the language is a factor in the decline in Respondent RB's proficiency in English, in addition to the fact that he had only reached the level of pragmatic knowledge. However – and again similar to Respondent YS – Respondent RB is motivated to maintain his English language. He plans to attend an English course at church when he retires. When asked why he did not ask YS, his wife, to be his English conversation partner, he replies that Respondent YS did not take him seriously.

Respondent RB's Mandarin is an interesting case. He learned the language when he was in elementary school and in fact attended a Chinese-speaking school until he finished high school. As was to be expected, his proficiency in Mandarin was high; he used the language daily when conversing with his school friends. Respondent RB's knowledge of Mandarin can therefore be regarded as being at the sociolinguistic level.

Valorization also played an important role in Respondent RB's acquisition of Chinese. He also views Chinese as a language of the intellect, but for a different reason than in the case of English. Respondent RB was strongly influenced by his father; he was proud of the fact that it was only he and his father who were able to speak Chinese at home.

Unfortunately, when he finished high school and moved to Bandung, he lost contact with all the friends with whom he used to speak Mandarin. He was nonetheless, able to maintain the language as there were always Mandarin books and magazines to read.

In 1966, the Indonesian government banned the use of Chinese characters in newspapers and magazines by issuing decree TAP MPRS No. 32/1966. This ultimately resulted in the Chinese language being banned. This is similar to what the Slovenian government did to the Italian language as Jagodic (2011) has pointed out; and to what happened in

Estonia, as explained by Küün (2015). Consequently, Respondent RB's access to the Mandarin language became even more limited and his Mandarin skills deteriorated as a result. At present, he maintains his skills in Mandarin only by reading books he has had in his possession for decades. He sometimes practices writing Chinese characters and occasionally he calls his friends with whom he can chat in Chinese. However, as he does not do this regularly, it hardly helps.

When asked how he felt about the deterioration in his Mandarin, Respondent RB expressed his regret and profound disappointment. He even held the Indonesian government responsible for this. In his opinion, he currently retains only 40% of his previous ability to speak and read Mandarin. He believes that his once advanced level in Mandarin has declined to the intermediate level. Again, having hardly anyone with whom to use the language causes a serious deterioration in one's language ability. In addition, it is clear that government policy can cause one's language skills to deteriorate. This fact saddens Respondent RB and has made him determined to find communities in which he can sharpen his Mandarin skills.

(c). Respondent AJ

The case of Respondent AJ differs slightly from Respondents RB and YS. She speaks Indonesian, Sundanese, English, Mandarin, and Korean. She took the UKBI *(Ujian Kompetensi Bahasa Indonesia/*Indonesian Language Competence Test) and was awarded the grade of *sangat unggul* (excellent), only one level below the highest grade, which is *istimewa* (exceptional). As an English lecturer and a very active user of English, her IELTS score is 8.5, which is also high. Respondent AJ claims that her level of Sundanese is intermediate, although daily observations have revealed that she is extremely fluent in Sundanese and is able to use all three levels of the language – *lemes, sedeng, kasar* (high, medium, low) – appropriately. Moreover, she states that she is a beginner in Mandarin and Korean – having passed TOPIK 1, which is the lowest level of the Test of Proficiency in Korean.

Respondent AJ acquired Indonesian and Sundanese in early childhood and uses both languages in her daily interactions. She learned English at elementary school and uses it every day at work with her fellow English teachers and her students. In addition, she improves her English significantly as a member of the fandom internet community, which consists of fans of certain TV serials or characters. The members write fiction using the characters of their favorite TV serials and exchange their stories. All her interaction in this community is done in English. She also uses English online as she has many international friends. Like the other two respondents, Respondent AJ is a coordinate bilingual.

Respondent AJ has not been using her Mandarin and Korean very often lately. The reason for this is that there is no one with whom she can speak these languages and there are no opportunities for her to use them. Another reason she uses Korean so seldom is that she has stopped taking Korean lessons; moreover, she barely has time to watch Korean series since her job as a teacher takes up much of her time. She is not happy with the fact that she hardly ever uses Korean or Mandarin, which is the reason for the decline in her proficiency in these languages. She also intends to practice on her own or even encourage a friend or sibling to learn Korean so that they can practice together.

What makes Respondent AJ interesting is the way she mastered the languages she speaks, especially Mandarin and Korean. Unlike English and *Bahasa Indonesia,* which use the Roman alphabet, Korean and Mandarin have their own characters and alphabet. It is significant that Respondent AJ learned Mandarin by herself when she was ten years old. Respondent AJ was motivated to learn Mandarin by the proliferation of TV series from Hong Kong, which reached a peak of popularity around that time. She started acquiring Mandarin by listening to what the actors were saying and matching their words with the English subtitles. This enabled her to build up her Chinese vocabulary. She went on by imitating how the characters speak, and ultimately she bought a Chinese dictionary to learn how to write the characters. Subsequently, she tried arranging sentences by combining the words she had learned. Interestingly, she did not feel any strong emotion when Chinese-speaking people understood what she said to them.

This was not the case when it came to learning Korean – although one of the factors that made her keen to learn Korean was the many television series in that language. Another factor was that she found the characters in the series appealing. Different from her experience with Chinese, Respondent AJ felt ecstatic when she could make herself understood by using Google Translate; she felt that she had actually accomplished something. She felt a stronger sense of pride because, in her opinion, Korean grammar is far more complicated than that of Mandarin; in fact, more complex than any of the languages she has learned so far.

When asked to share the secret of her language success, Respondent AJ said she did not regard herself as a successful language learner. In her opinion, what makes her able to learn and master so many languages is the fact that she is relentless when she wants to learn something; she tries to access as many teaching aids as she can – such as books, dictionaries, and recordings, for example.

Respondent AJ believed that Korean is a more difficult language to learn than Mandarin. The reason for this is that she started learning Korean in her thirties, whereas she was only ten when she started learning Mandarin – although nobody taught her. In her opinion, if a person starts learning a language before the age of 14, they are more likely to be successful than those who start learning it after the age of 14.

Regarding the characters, she said that the Chinese characters are more difficult than the Korean ones; while Korean has its own alphabet, if one forgets a character in Mandarin, one forgets the entire word. Interestingly, despite her claim

that Mandarin is easier to learn, Respondent AJ believes that when it comes to reading, Korean is obviously far easier. She is currently learning Spanish on her own.

B. Discussion

Indonesian is the mother tongue of all three respondents. They all learned Indonesian formally at school, although they had started using the language at home even before they attended school. Since they were exposed to *Bahasa Indonesia*, Respondents YS, RB and AJ have been using it in their daily interactions – at home, at work, when doing business, and so forth.

Their different views and attitudes towards *Bahasa Indonesia* are the results of the way Indonesia's education system developed. In the case of Respondent RB, in particular, Indonesian is a prestigious language. As mentioned before, when he attended school in the 1950s – which was only shortly after Indonesia gained its independence – most Indonesians spoke a colloquial, the variety of *Bahasa Indonesia*. According to Sneddon (2003), at that time formal Indonesian was only taught at school. He further asserts that "formal language… is mastered by better educated (and therefore usually wealthier) people, it is generally regarded as superior to informal speech; it is the prestige form of the language." In other words, being able to speak formal Indonesian indicates a person's level of education. This lent a sense of exclusivity to the language, which is what led Respondent RB to regard the Indonesian language as prestigious.

At that time, less than 40% of Indonesians spoke the language. A 1970 census documented that the proportion of Indonesian native speakers had reached 41% of the population, which was considered rapid growth. Based on this information, it can be concluded that the number of Indonesian speakers in the 1950s must have been very small. This emphasizes the exclusivity attached to the use of *Bahasa Indonesia.*

Respondent AJ, who was born in the 1980s – long after Indonesia gained independence in 1945 – was faced with a different situation. Education in Indonesia has developed over the course of time, and most Indonesian people can speak and use formal Indonesian. According to a census carried out in 1990, 83% of the Indonesian population speaks formal Indonesian (Sneddon, 2003). This means that the language has lost much of its exclusivity since Respondents YS and RB were at school. Consequently, being able to speak formal Indonesian is no longer regarded as a sign of prestige. However, as a university lecturer, Respondent AJ still appreciates Indonesian as she is aware of the importance of a national language. Notwithstanding the different attitudes towards Indonesian, all the respondents consistently use it as a medium of communication.

In terms of the English language, all of them were exposed to it years after their exposure to Indonesian. As a foreign language in Indonesia, it is a compulsory subject in junior and senior high school. Respondents YS, RB, and AJ have positive attitudes toward English. To RB, particularly, English is a prestigious language. Sadly for respondents RB and YS, they have close to no opportunity to use it which leads to an early stage of language attrition. Even though both RB and YS are highly motivated and eager to maintain their English, there being no one to use it with causes them to slowly lose their ability to speak the language.

Respondent AJ is a lot more fortunate than Respondents RB and YS. As an English lecturer, she has many opportunities to use it every day – both when conversing with her students and colleagues and when writing academic papers. The fact that she is a member of the fandom community also enables her to use her English consistently. This also explains how she managed to achieve a high IELTS score.

It is clear from the questionnaire and interview results that the three respondents are coordinate bilinguals. Quoting Ervin and Osgood (l954) and Lambert et al. (l958), Javier (2007) explains that coordinate bilinguals have a so-called coordinate linguistic system. He explains that a coordinate linguistic system is typical of a person who learns a second language independently and in different contexts – for example, exclusively outside the home or only after infancy. All coordinate bilinguals learn their languages one after the other. In addition, they speak the languages they master equally well, with hardly any interference between them. It is for this reason that Brooks (l964) and Diller (l974) as cited in Javier (2007) categorize coordinate bilinguals as "truly" bilingual.

The case of Respondents RB, YS and AJ's English demonstrates that in terms of language maintenance, aspects other than attitude and valorization also play a key role. Opportunity and a partner with whom to use the language are also crucial in helping a person maintain their language skills.

This study agrees with Curdt-Christiansen (2016), Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1998), Dobrin (2014), King (2000), Kroskrity (2009), Ó hIfearnáin (2013) and Senayon (2016) – as cited in Roche (2019) – that positive attitudes towards a language do not automatically entail positive actions towards it. The case Respondent RB's Mandarin confirms this. Respondent RB's very positive attitude towards Mandarin, which is his heritage language, was repressed due to the Indonesian government's policy in the late 1960s, which prohibited the use of the language. The massive and systematic ban on anything related to China caused him to lose his skills in Mandarin. His efforts to maintain his heritage language by reading and practicing to write the characters helped only to a limited extent. Respondent RB's case also demonstrates that valorization and attitude are not sufficient to maintain one's language. This paper therefore also agrees with Chick et al. (2017) that in order to maintain heritage language, "regular exposure in both informal (e.g. home) and formal (e.g. education) environments" is crucial.

It appears that age did not reduce the respondents' motivation to learn. This was reflected particularly in Respondents YS and RB, both of whom were still eager to improve their English language skills. This is the opposite of what Ghenghesh (2010) found in her study, namely that motivation decreases with age; moreover, it may be due to the

respondents' positive attitude towards English. In addition, Respondent YS's high level of motivation is complemented by her resilience. This demonstrates, once again, that motivation is highly significant in successfully learning a language, and so is one's character.

Respondent AJ's experience in learning Chinese seems to confirm the golden age theory of language acquisition. Overall, however, Respondent AJ's positive attitude and aptitude for language in addition to her strong motivation are the factors that played a significant role in her language learning success.

The three respondents in this study were successful language learners. All of them displayed positive attitudes, high learning motivation, as well as early exposure to most of the languages they learned. It was their different circumstances in their adult lives that led either to positive development or language attrition.

VI. Conclusion

As mentioned above, this study aims to find out how the respondents acquired their languages, what factors drove them to learn languages, and how successful they are in maintaining the languages they have mastered. The questionnaire and interview results reveal that motivation is one of the key requirements for a language learner to succeed. Motivation is also important for one's language maintenance. Language aptitude or language talent also plays a role in one's success in learning a foreign language, as L2 learners who have a good language aptitude will require less effort to master a foreign language than those who have no language aptitude.

Government policy and a country's political situation can have a serious impact on the language(s) spoken in that country. They may result in language shift or even language death. Therefore, those who make language policies must have sufficient and accurate knowledge of the languages in the country concerned. It is also essential that language teachers are involved in language planning and language policy making.

A significant cause for language shift is the lack of language maintenance at home. If, for example, a multilingual family were to establish a one-language policy day for each language, they might not have a problem finding partners to maintain their foreign languages.

There seems to be a positive correlation between language knowledge level and the "vulnerability" of one's language. If a person's L2 knowledge is already high, the likelihood that the language will be well retained if it is not used frequently is higher than if the L2 knowledge is low. In terms of language teaching, this mini research has revealed that an L2 learner who is strongly motivated and has a positive attitude and good aptitude is an ideal student. The task of the foreign language teacher is to motivate their students and reinforce the positive value of the language their students are learning. Such an approach is likely to result in a more fruitful language teaching process.

Concerning attitudes towards *Bahasa Indonesia*, it is unfortunate that positive progress in one area can bring about a decline in another. In this case, developments in education resulted in the language losing its exclusivity status as a prestigious language. This is a dangerous thing since it could result in the younger generation being less motivated to learn their national language.

The researcher is of the opinion that significant measures should be taken by the Indonesian government to inculcate a positive attitude in the younger generation and motivate them to learn and use proper Indonesian. It is alarming that the younger Indonesian generation prefers using English to Indonesian. Unless this is addressed seriously, the Indonesian language may lose its speakers and its status as a national language.

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