

THE USE OF PROMPTING AND *CONSEQUATING* BEHAVIOURS IN STIMULATING CHILDREN TO USE ENGLISH AS THEIR SECOND LANGUAGE: A STUDY OF TWO INDONESIAN FAMILIES¹

Linggayani Soentoro², Heny Hartono³ and Emilia Ninik A.⁴

Abstract: English in Indonesia is still a foreign language. Yet, there has been a growing need within Indonesian society to raise the children in bilingual or multilingual contexts by having English as a second language within the families. This article is a report on the research of two nuclear Indonesian families who stimulate their children to use English as a second language. The research has been done through three procedures, i.e. recording, observation, and interview. In stimulating their children in using English, the parents used several ways, like prompting and consequating behaviours. Yet, the mix of two languages in using those ways made the results of this research unique and special. This article reports about the ways used by the parents. It is found that parents apply prompting but they only apply imitation to consequating behaviours. It is also found some unique phenomenon that occurred in stimulating the children to use English language.

Key words: bilingual children, parental contribution, second language, prompting, consequating behaviours.

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² **Linggayani Suntoro, S.S.** is an alumnae of the Faculty of Letters, Soegijapranata Catholic University Semarang.

³ **Heny Hartono, S.S., MPd.** is a lecturer at Faculty of Letters, Soegijapranata Catholic University, Semarang.

⁴ **Emilia Ninik Aydawati, S.P., M.Hum.** is a lecturer at Faculty of Letters, Soegijapranata Catholic University, Semarang.

INTRODUCTION

According to Spolsky (1998:45), the simplest definition of a bilingual is a person who has some functional ability in a second language. It brings the condition for the people to have and use two languages (Saunders 1983). It is also supported by Brewster et al.:

From the auditory and phonatory, as well as the neurological and biological view point, infants and young children have all that is required for acquisition of two or three languages at the same time, provided care is taken to ensure that contact with each of the languages is natural (1991: 9).

Based on the fact the children have capability to acquire two languages at the same time and also that there is a tendency that parents want to raise their children in bilingual context, Indonesian and English, the writers are interested in knowing the parental contribution in stimulating their children to use English.

A. Prompting

Prompting includes any parental behaviours that require a child's response. The definition above was stated by Morek (1972); A. Wilkinson (1971) as cited in Owens (1992:237). Parents try to socialize their children to the language by using three common types of prompting as stated by Owens (1992:237). Those are:

1. Fill-ins

In *Fill-ins*, according to Owens(1992:237), the parents will provide incomplete sentences to stimulate the children to complete the sentences. For example, the parents will give an incomplete sentence as given by Owens, "This is a _____". The child may respond or give an incorrect respond and thus it will result in additional prompts and recueing.

2. Elicited imitations

In elicited imitations, the parents will stimulate the children to say something. The parents could ask the children to say the words or phrases as the imitation of the parents' talk.

3. Questions

The type of questions that may be given by the parents could be the conformational type, like yes/no questions and *wh*- constituent variety. In addition, those kinds of questions may lead to the intonational interrogatives. Those are kinds of questions to correlate with gains in the child's pragmatic ability, for example, "Is this a ball?" "What's that?" and "You going home?" as given by Owens (1992).

4. Vertical Strategy

This strategy gives chances for the children to produce two related single-word utterances. Owens (1992:238) provides the example of the vertical strategy:

- Child : Daddy.
Adult : Uh-huh. What's Daddy doing?
Child : Eat
Adult : Yeah, Daddy eat cookie.

B. Consequating behaviours

There are three *consequating* behaviours as suggested by Owens (1992:238):

1. Expansion

It is a type that preserves the word order of a child's utterance. So, in this case mother will give response to the child in expanded version. Owens provides a good example, as follows:

- Child : "Mommy eat."
Adult : "Mommy is eating her lunch."

2. Extension

Cazden (1965) as cited in Owens (1992:239) states that extension is a semantically related comment or reply on a topic established by the child, may be even more helpful as a facilitative device. This is the example provided by Owens (1995):

- Child : Doggie eat.
Adult : Doggie is hungry

3. Imitation

In this step, mother or parents may imitate their children's speech. The children will imitate the adult's speech, in turn.

DISCUSSION

There are several ways that the parents can do in stimulating their children in using English language. In this research, the writers integrate several theories of Owens (1992), Andersson & Andersson (1999) and Brown (2001) about the ways that can be used by the parents to stimulate their children to use English.

A. Prompting

1. Fill-ins

From the research, the writers found that the first family did *fill-ins* as follows:

- Mother : *This is a gi...*
Child 1 : *raffe!*
Child 2 : *Giraffe.*
Mother : *Yes, a giraffe. With long neck.*
(gesture To demonstrate)
Mother : *Nah, kalo ini? Ini ele... (And how About this?)*
(This is ele____)
Child 1 : *Elephant (answering loudly)*
Child 2 : *Elephant*

From the data collected above, the parents use *fill-ins* method to stimulate the children to complete the incomplete-sentence given by the mother. The cues are the incomplete sentences. The mother uses "Ini (this) *ele* _____". By saying "*ele*" she expects the respond from the children in English language, not in Indonesian, although she uses "Ini" (*this*) as the cue of *fill-ins*. If the mother uses "Ini _____", the children will possible respond the incomplete sentence by saying "*gajah*" ("elephant") not "*elephant*". The possibility can happen because the mother of the first family argues in the interview that she introduces the name of animals in two languages, Indonesian and English. Those phenomena will not occur in the monolingual families.

The second family did fill-ins as follows:

- Mother : Masak gosok gigi pake gosok gigi?
(Are you sure, to brush your teeth, use brushing teeth?)
Sikat gigi pake tooth...? (To brush your teeth use tooth...?)
- Child 1 : Brush
- Mother : And tooth... ?
- Child 1 : Pale...
- Mother : Ngawur... kok pale. Tooth... ?
(Wrong, not pale. Tooth...?)
- Child 1 : Tooth brush
- Mother : And tooth... paste
- Child 1 : Tooth paste
- Mother : And tooth...?
- Child 1 : Brush
- Mother : And tooth...?
- Child 1&2 : Paste... (Laughing together)

In the conversation above, the mother tries to stimulate the children by saying the incomplete word, not a sentence. "Sikat gigi pake tooth _____?" (To brush your teeth, use tooth _____?). The mother says "tooth" to expect the respond from the child: "brush" and or "paste". So, by saying "tooth" the mother can get the answer from the child that is "brush". Moreover, when she asked another tool for brushing teeth, she used the same method: "and tooth _____?". The respond from the child should be "paste" but the child answered "pale". The mother told them that it was wrong by giving explanation to the children: "Ngawur, kok pale" ("wrong, not pale"). The child did not respond it by giving another tool. Yet, he still said "brush". In this case, the mother attempts to make the child produce a word ("paste"). To make the child say a word, the mother says the full word ("tooth... paste"). Moreover, she makes the child remember with the word that he should answer it (by saying "paste", not "pale"). When the mother gives "the second chance" by repeating the incomplete word, the child can comprehend what his mother means because there is a kind of elicited imitation.

2. Elicited imitations

Both families do the elicited – imitation as one way to stimulate their children using English. The first family used elicited-imitation as follows:

- Child 2 : *Saturday, day...*
Mother : *Sunday A'...* (A' is for
addressing the little brother)
Child 2 : *Sunday*

When the child is unable to say the word or he makes a mistake by saying incomplete word (“...day”), the mother corrects him by saying the correct word to the child. Although she tells the child and asks him implicitly, without using the real pattern of elicited – imitation, the child is able to respond his mother by imitating the correct word given by his mother.

- Father : *Mat, ini papa ajarin yang
BMW (/bi:/ /m/
/dË bju:)*
Child 1 : *B M apa Pa?*
Father : *B M W* (English) ini lo, ada hurufnya.
(pointing to the logo) B..M. W
Child 1 : *B M W* (spelling)

The second conversation from the first family shows that the father attempts to introduce the “new item” of vocabulary to his son. Even though, it is only the name of the car (BMW), the father introduces it in English. So, the spelling is conducted in English. The elicited imitation occurs when the child does not get the complete name.

The child is able to imitate his father through two ways, the first one is due to the fact that the father spells the letters and the second one is the father shows the logo to the child. Instead of being able to spell the letter as the imitation of his father, the child will also recognize the sound and the letters of the logo.

- Child 1 : *like a diamond in the star*
Mother : *in the sky To.* (To is for addressing elder brother)
Child 2 : *in the sky*

Elicited-imitation in the third conversation of the first family occurs when the child is singing an English song. In the first family, they use elicited – imitation mostly when the child makes a mistake, unable to produce the complete form of word, or unable to produce the word/letter in English. The second family also did elicited-imitation as follows:

- Mother : La kalo ini, *what's this*, Jalu?
(And how about this, what's this, Jalu?)
- Child 1 : *Watermelon*.
- Mother : Ini? (This?)
- Child 1 : Anggur... (“Grape” in Indonesian)
- Mother : *Grape!*
- Child 1 : *Grape...*

When the mother attempts to introduce the picture in English and the child responds her in Indonesian language, the elicited imitation occurs. The mother says “grape” to emphasize that she wants the response in English when the child responded the question in Indonesian. Implicitly, saying “grape” can be a signal to the child to imitate the word said by the mother.

- Mother : *And this?*
- Child 1 : (silent)
- Mother : *Cookie* (Loudly)
- Child 1 : *Cookie...* (Loudly)

In the second conversation the child did not give any response. To progress the conversation, the mother gives the word that is the name of the picture. The mother says the word loudly to get the child’s attention and the result is the imitation of the child. Elicited imitation occurs as the mother says something (the name of the picture) and the respond of attention-getter is the imitation.

- Father : Jala buat apa? (Pointing to the picture)
(What is net for?)
- Mother : *Catch fish*.
- Child 1 : *Catch fish*.

In the third conversation the father asked the child what the net is used to in Indonesian while pointing to the picture. The mother answered it

firstly to give the example to the child what the answer in English should be. To make the child comprehend and stimulate him to use English, the mother takes the chance that is by implicitly asking him to respond in English.

- Mother : Sini lo, ni liat ni... ini apa ni, Le?
(Come here, look at this... What's this, boy?)
("Le" is like "boy")
- Child 2 : Ndak tau. (don't know)
- Mother : *dragon*...
- Child 2 : *dragon*...
- Mother : *fly*
- Child 2 : *fly*...
- Dragon fly* tu mau apa?
(What will the dragon fly do?)

Here, the elicited imitation also occurs. The child answered the question by "ndak tau" (don't know). So there are two possibilities here, the first one is the child did not know the name of the animal shown, and the second one is the child did not know how to say it in English. So the mother decided to give the first part of the word that is "dragon" and waited the child to imitate her. Then, she continued by saying the following part that was "fly" and waited the child to imitate her. The child was able to imitate the broken words ("dragon" and "fly") and combined them into one word ("dragonfly"). Elicited imitation by breaking the word into several parts can be successfully implemented in the bilingual families.

- Mother : *and tooth... paste*
- Child 1 : *tooth paste*
- Mother : (looking at Child 2) *toothbrush*
- Child 2 : *toothbrush*
- Mother : *Toothpaste*
- Child 2 : *Toothpaste...*

This elicited imitation is resulted from the previous section. By looking at the child, the mother asked him to imitate the words "toothbrush" and "toothpaste". By holding the repetition many times, the expectation from the mother is to make the child remember the words.

Mother : *goat? Ghost.*
Child 1 : *ghost*

The mother of the second family used elicited imitation to stimulate the children to use the appropriate word of English. The child used the inappropriate word to relate the “scary situation”. He was supposed to use “ghost” instead of “goat”. After the mother said “ghost”, the children imitated it. This can also be included in the *imitation*.

3. Questions

Question is one type of prompting. The first family did *question* as follows:

Child 1 : Pa... *Look! That's
Merci..(Pointing to The Merci)*
Father : *How do you know itu Merci?*
(How do you know that it's Merci?)
Child 1 : *di depannya ada starnya.*
(There's a star in front of it) Ya kan Ma?
(Isn't it Ma?)
Mother : Yes.

The father uses *wh*-question in prompting to stimulate the child to produce English. Although the child still produces very limited vocabulary which is a concrete noun, he has produced English which is still mixed with Indonesia as the father has also done it. His answer also proves that he has been able to understand his father's question in English. The following is another example of using question in the first family:

Father : *To, are you sleeping? Yes or no?*
Child 1 : *No Papa...*

The second conversation has showed that the father used yes/no question. By asking “are you sleeping?” to his son, he expected to get the response by saying yes or no. Additionally, by asking “yes or no?” it indicates that the father would like to emphasize the question and ask the child to respond by saying yes or no. This also happens in the following conversation.

- Mother : A, ini apa A? (Pointing to the picture)
Child 2 : Mana Ma?
Mother : *This, you know what's this?*
Child 1 : *Butterfly*

The mother used Indonesian to ask what the picture is. The response from the first child was also in Indonesian. Since she wanted to stimulate the children to use English, the mother repeated the question in English to the second child. She also used intonational question to the child.

The second family also did *question* as follows:

- Mother : La kalo ini, *what's this*, Jalu?
(And how about this, what's this, Jalu?)
Child 1 : *Watermelon*.
Mother : Ini? (This?)
Child 1 : Anggur... ("Grape" in Indonesian)
Mother : *Grape!*
Child 1 : *Grape...*
Mother : *And this?*
Child 1 : (silent)
Mother : *Cookie* (loudly)
Child 1 : *Cookie...* (loudly)

The second family also combined Indonesian and English for questioning. Yet, for getting more emphasize of the question in English, the mother used the same question repeatedly. To repeat the same question, she simplified the pattern. "What's this?" to be "and this?" She preferred using "and this?" as the intonational question to using "and what's this?" The mother used intonational question to ask what the name of the next picture is. Yet, in the middle of the conversation, she asked the question in Indonesian by asking "ini?" ("this?"), kind of intonational question in Indonesian. As the result, she got the respond from the child in Indonesian too by saying "anggur" ("grape"). On the other hand, there was another possibility that the child did not know the name of the fruit or forgot its name in English.

- Mother : *How many?*
Child 1 : (silent)
Mother : *One, two, three, four? How many?*
Child 1 : (counting) *four!*



Based on the data collected, the mother of the second family also used common phrase of interrogative. "How many?" is the common phrase of interrogative to ask the number of things. To make the child accustomed to the phrase, the mother used it repeatedly as shown in the following conversation. In addition, the child still did not understand the question, so the mother gave the cue by counting numbers "one, two, three, four?" to be an intonational question. This way is used to make the child understand the question.

- Mother : *Did you brush your teeth?*
Child 2 : *Yah.*
Mother : *Ow... how many... times?*
Child 2 : *One two three four.*
Mother : *Ow... (laughing) four times?*
Child 1 : *Aku sepuluh times. (I ten times)*

The mother also used the yes/no question to stimulate the child to use English. Yet in this case, the mother of the second family did not stimulate the children to answer by saying yes or no. The child could answer the question by saying "yah". It might happen because the conversation about "brushing teeth" and "tooth brush" happened before the mother asked whether the child had brushed his teeth.

- Mother : *Go out ya?*
Child 1&2 : *Nooo... (calmer)*

This conversation indicates that the mother used intonational question that was combined with the Indonesian filler. Some people use the word "ya" in the end of the intonational question in Indonesia. This linguistic phenomenon also occurs when the mother uses English. So there is interference of the first language to the second language in the intonational question that might not occur in the monolingual families.

4. Vertical Strategy

In the second family, vertical strategy occurs and it is special because there are interferences from Indonesian.

- Child 2 : *Dragonfly tu mau apa?* (“What does the dragonfly want to?”)
- Mother : *Mau makan* (wants to eat)
- Child 2 : *Makan apa?* (Eat what?)
- Mother : *I don't know. Frog?*
- Child 2 : *Frog?*
- Mother : *Dragonfly eats frog.*
- Child 2 : *Iya.*

The mother uses the opportunity made by the child when asking “Dragonfly tu mau apa?” (“What does the dragonfly want to?”) and the mother replied “mau makan” (“wants to eat”). The child followed her by asking “makan apa?” (What does he eat?), then the mother answered him that she did not know and gave the intonational question, “frog?”. Thus, the child confirmed the mother’s reply by repeating the intonational question “frog?”. The vertical strategy occurred as the mother responded the confirmation from the child by saying the complete sentence “dragonfly eats frog”. In the conversation, even though the child asked the question to his mother, as he was eager to know what the dragonfly wants to do and the mother produced the related words that described the dragonfly (“dragonfly eats frog”), the vertical strategy occurs. In this case, the mother stimulated the child to use English even though in passive way. The child is not stimulated “to produce” the related words but the mother tried to use the opportunities by using vertical strategy. The child can be stimulated passively without producing the word. Yet, the mother gave the complete sentence for the conclusion that the dragonfly ate frog to the child and he responded it by saying “iya” (yes), means that he could follow and comprehend about “the story”.

B. Consequating behaviours

Although there are three ways in *consequating* behaviours, the writers find that only imitation occurs. Imitation in the second family occurred in this way:

- Mother : *goat? Ghost.*
- Child 1 : *ghost*

The mother imitates the child's response by changing the intonation into a question. She gives the correction or the appropriate word and the child imitates her afterwards.

CONCLUSION

The results of this research show that parents stimulate their children through the application of prompting (fills in, elicited imitations, questions, vertical strategy). In applying prompting, parents usually mix the English words with Indonesian, yet the children understand that the parents try to make them produce English words so they respond by saying English words that the parents try to stimulate. However, they only apply imitation in terms of consequating behaviours.

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