

Language Attitudes and Classroom Language Performance of an Indonesian-Filipino Student in an Indonesian Elementary School

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Abstract

The existence of bilingualism in formal education requires students to develop a deeper understanding of language attitudes and the process of linguistic adaptation. This study aims to explore language attitudes, linguistic adaptation, and bilingual language performance among students from mixed Indonesian-Filipino families within the context of Indonesian education. This research employs a qualitative approach, with data collected through in-depth interviews, direct observations, reflective anecdotal notes, and document analysis of student learning outcomes. The validity of the data is ensured through source and technique triangulation. The collected data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study found that students demonstrated positive attitudes toward both languages, which were influenced by the intensity of language exposure, affective factors, linguistic competence, learning environment, instructional support, and personal learning preferences. Regarding academic achievement in the classroom, students' reading ability was stronger than their speaking ability, with English proficiency consistently more dominant and higher than Indonesian language proficiency. The main challenges affecting effective language use in the classroom include affective barriers, vocabulary limitations, communication difficulties, and the need for scaffolding in spontaneous communication. In conclusion, multicultural backgrounds contribute to strong English language preferences due to dominant exposure, while the development of Indonesian language proficiency is constrained by vocabulary limitations and confidence-related challenges. Therefore, students need adaptive instructional support, an inclusive affective approach, and interactive learning stimulation to strengthen their speaking confidence and expand their mastery of Indonesian vocabulary.

Keywords: Language Attitude; Language Performance; Mixed Student

Abstrak

Adanya bilingualisme dalam pendidikan formal menuntut siswa untuk mengembangkan pemahaman yang lebih dalam tentang sikap bahasa dan proses adaptasi linguistik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi sikap bahasa, adaptasi linguistik, dan performa Bahasa bahasa bilingual bagi siswa dari keluarga campuran Indonesia-Filipina dalam konteks pendidikan Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, dengan pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi langsung, catatan anekdot reflektif, dan analisis dokumen hasil pembelajaran siswa. Keabsahan data dijamin melalui triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Data yang dikumpulkan dianalisis menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman melalui tiga tahap, yaitu reduksi data, penampilan data, dan penarikan simpulan. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa siswa menunjukkan sikap positif terhadap kedua bahasa yang dipengaruhi oleh intensitas paparan bahasa, faktor afektif, kompetensi linguistik, lingkungan belajar, dukungan instruksional, dan preferensi belajar pribadi. Mengenai prestasi akademik di kelas, kemampuan membaca siswa lebih kuat daripada kemampuan

berbicara, dengan kemampuan bahasa Inggris secara konsisten lebih dominan dan lebih tinggi daripada kemampuan bahasa Indonesia. Tantangan utama yang memengaruhi penggunaan bahasa yang efektif di kelas meliputi hambatan afektif, keterbatasan kosakata, kendala interaksi komunikasi, serta kebutuhan scaffolding dalam komunikasi spontan. Kesimpulannya, bahwa latar belakang multikultural berkontribusi pada preferensi bahasa Inggris yang kuat karena paparan dominan, sementara perkembangan bahasa Indonesia dibatasi oleh keterbatasan kosakata dan tantangan terkait kepercayaan diri. Oleh karena itu, siswa membutuhkan dukungan instruksional yang adaptif, pendekatan afektif yang inklusif, dan stimulasi pembelajaran interaktif untuk memperkuat kepercayaan diri berbicara dan memperluas penguasaan kosakata bahasa Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Kata Kunci: Sikap Bahasa; Kinerja Bahasa; Siswa Campuran

Introduction

Cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom makes language proficiency a crucial educational competency today. Language is not only used as a means of communication, but also as a major means of cognition, identity, and intercultural connection (Alisoy, 2024; Purwaningsih and Handayani, 2024). Multilingual learners have an adaptive advantage in diverse social contexts due to communicative flexibility (Hukama et al., 2024). Thus, bilingualism still attracts considerable attention in international instructional research because of the considerable impact it has on students' active engagement in school, their convictions of learning interest, and social inclusion within the school environment.

Language attitude is an important concept in the field of bilingual education that is expected to affect students' academic achievement. In simpler terms, this language attitude is the expression of the cognitive belief, emotional reaction, and behavioral tendencies of the students in relation to the language (Handayani and Utomo, 2026). Both dimensions are directly linked to actual classroom performance on a language level, and positive attitudes lead to self-confidence, stimulate intrinsic motivation and strengthen the desire to communicate (Alrabai, 2022).

In contrast, negative attitudes to language have also been reported as a source for causing language anxiety, lowering affective dimension involvement and restricting students from learning new language skills. A number of previous studies have empirically demonstrated the significance of these psychosocial factors in second language acquisition. A supportive learning environment has consistently been found to contribute significantly to fostering self-confidence, which directly impacts students' linguistic performance (Hukama et al., 2024; Septiany and Zuraida, 2025; Simanjuntak and Simanjuntak, 2025).

Furthermore, in managing this diversity, successful bilingual students generally utilize flexible communication practices (translanguaging) as a tactical strategy to negotiate their social identities amid dynamic language contact situations (Juhana et al., 2026). In the field of international schools regarding the perception of identity in learning, Sukanto et al., (2021) found that Indonesia students who are studying in international schools did not have a high proficiency knowledge of their mother tongue whereas the school atmosphere is the use of English teaching media, but it is still found that Indonesian students can be considered as having good emotions towards Indonesia which is expressed as a language attitude. At the higher education level, Saragih et al., (2021) found that home country language protection specifically for Indonesian for the students was performed at high level, that is, the majority of students strongly felt protected the

nature language of the country, although they knew the value of foreign language skills in order to compete successfully in the era of Industry 4.0. Moreover, positive attitudes in teaching students directly contribute to the linear correlation with academic involvement and general communicative ability (Salainti, 2023).

Positive language attitudes measured as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation correlate linearly with academic achievement as well as active participation, whereas negative attitudes (shame feeling) have a negative impact on the language performance of students. Salainti (2023) has thus proven in his study on early childhood that positive language attitudes, Indonesian intrinsic and extrinsic motive, can correspond linearly with academic achievement and active participation and the negative attitude such as feelings of shame has an impact on the Indonesian language performance of students.

The differences in attitudes can be found according to the educational levels and regional background as can be seen in the study conducted by Pradipta and Artini (2020) in North Bali, their findings are that the elementary school students do not give too much attention to the English language learning, so there is no enthusiasm or rejection. In monolingual context in the southern Philippines, it is reinforced by the result of Cahapay (2020) which revealed that there is a direct positive relationship between student's positive attitude towards their mother tongue and their academic achievement in the school.

This relationship between attitude and performance is increasingly urgent in the context of Indonesia, where the number of schools that support the education of children with mixed nationality is increasing. The complexity of circumstances in which children grow up in these contexts naturally leads to a language contact situation with language preferences at home differing from institutional requests in school. A balanced bilingual school setting has been found to positively affect students' academic success Morales (2024), on the other hand.

However, the lack of such linguistic matching can also cause students to experience difficulties in adapting themselves, losing confidence in their ability to use the language at school and engage less in classroom discussions (Yeni and Susanti, 2023). Although previous literature has thoroughly examined the issue of language attitudes, most of these studies still have a research gap because they focus on adult bilingual populations, college students, or multicultural societies at a macro level. There is still a lack of research that specifically focuses on children aged 6 to 12 years who come from a mixed-nationality family in Indonesia, especially in settings where the family's main language is English, but the school's language of instruction is Indonesian.

Consequently, the mechanisms of linguistic transition, the formation of language attitudes, and their impact on children's academic performance in this specific transitional situation have not been thoroughly understood. To address these contextual and methodological gaps, this study presents a qualitative case study examining the language attitudes and classroom experiences of a sixth-grade student at Widiatmika Elementary School, Bali. The participant represents a unique case of a mixed Indonesian-Filipino family background, where English functions as the primary language used at home and where the student previously studied within the Australian education system.

The transition from an English-dominant linguistic environment to an Indonesian national curriculum provides a valuable context for understanding how children experience linguistic, emotional, and academic adaptation when entering a new language environment. Unlike previous studies that have predominantly employed large-scale quantitative approaches through surveys and statistical measurements, this research adopts a micro-level qualitative approach to explore the personal experiences, psychological factors, and adaptation challenges experienced by a bilingual child in a

specific educational context. This approach enables a deeper understanding of how family language practices, school environments, and individual experiences contribute to the development of language attitudes and influence students' classroom communication and academic engagement.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the language attitudes, linguistic adaptation experiences, and classroom language performance of a bilingual elementary school student from a mixed Indonesian-Filipino family background within an Indonesian educational context. Through this exploration, the study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how differences between home and school language environments influence students' confidence, participation, and learning experiences in bilingual education settings.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using a single-case study design to explore the language attitudes and language performance of a mixed Indo-Filipino student in an Indonesian primary school. It was conducted at Widiatmika Elementary School, Jimbaran, Bali, where Indonesian is used as the primary language of instruction while English is taught as a foreign language. The data was collected during a period of approximately three weeks from 4th August to 2nd September of 2025. The primary data source consisted of a sample of one student from the 6th grade from the purposive sampling using pre-determined criteria, in which the student had an Indonesian father and a Filipino mother, English as the main language in the home, and in school, the language used was *Bahasa Indonesia*. To obtain comprehensive and credible information, supporting data were collected from the student's English teacher, classroom learning activities, and relevant academic documents. Specifically, semi-structured interviews started with the student and the English teacher, each was conducted over 2 sessions lasting about 45 minutes, and no interview was conducted with the Indonesian teacher because she played a direct role as the researcher in this study. In addition, 12 classroom observations were conducted, corresponding to 8 classroom observations in Indonesian classes (twice a week) and 4 classroom observations in English classes (once a week). For triangulation and incorporation of additional perspectives, systematic document analysis was conducted on the student's academic work. The collected data were analysed through the interactive qualitative analysis process, which involved data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Methodological triangulation was used across all instruments and anecdotal records to achieve consistency, trustworthiness, and credibility of the final research results.

Results and Discussions

1. The Student's Language Attitudes Toward English and Indonesian

This section examines the participants' attitudes toward English and Indonesian. Through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and anecdotal notes indicate that the student's attitudes toward both languages are very positive from a cognitive perspective. The student showed a good understanding of the significance of English as an international language for future opportunities and understanding of Indonesian as a medium of daily communication in school. According to Rafael Noah Bentley Rorong as Student explained that English is very important for his future, because it's an International Language, while *Bahasa Indonesia* is also important for his academic activities at school and daily life (Interview, 27th August 2025). The finding is similar to Handayani and Utomo (2026) which is describing language attitude has cognitive components, meaning components of the belief of language learners.

Furthermore, this aligns with Gardner's (1985) idea that a positive attitude toward language learning can be developed by understanding the intrinsic value of the language. However, a difference arises in the affective dimension of the student's language attitude. The student's self-confidence and comfort using English improved considerably as his main language in the home environment. According to Rafael Noah Bentley Rorong as a student, he explained that he feels more comfortable using English because he is more accustomed to using it at home.

However, he also experienced performance anxiety, shyness, and self-doubt when interacting in the school environment, where Indonesian is the primary language of instruction. He further explained that he sometimes felt comfortable but also experienced nervousness, particularly when required to speak in front of the class. He stated that the main challenges occurred when he had to use formal Indonesian expressions or communicate orally during classroom activities (Interview, 27th August 2025). The findings of the affective this study were in line with the explanation by Sunaryana et al., (2026) which stated that personal experiences and input of language have a significant influence on language attitudes.

These findings are also consistent with Assidiq et al., (2026) who suggest that in multilingual environments, attitudes toward more than one language develop through sustained language experiences. Regarding the student's actual language behavior outside of structured activities, prominent situational patterns were successfully captured through field notes and trends reported by the student. According to Rafael Noah Bentley Rorong as a student explained that his selection of languages was dependent on the context, at home he uses English and in school mostly uses *Bahasa Indonesia* (Interview, 27th August 2025).

This statement is relevant to the results of observations on 4th August 2025 which found that the student successfully used Indonesian for basic functional expressions, for example when students want to take a class break. Based on classroom and social observations on 18th August 2025, the student demonstrated limited verbal engagement during peer interactions. The observation data showed that the student frequently responded using short verbal expressions, nonverbal cues, or remained silent during conversations.

For instance, when a peer invited him to play by saying *ayo main*, the student responded only with the word *iya* and did not continue the interaction. In group activities, the student was observed using brief responses such as *ini*, avoiding eye contact. During formal classroom learning conducted in Indonesian, the student was observed to rarely participate voluntarily when the teacher asked questions to the group. He tended to remain seated, look at his desk, and avoid raising his hand to respond. Furthermore, when peers attempted to extend conversations, the student sometimes responded only with a smile or remained silent without continuing the interaction.

From an analytical perspective, the concrete actions analyze the behavioral aspect of language attitudes defined by Handayani and Utomo (2026) that suggests that language attitudes are significantly influenced by internal affective sides. The frequent use of silence, smiling and short answers are barriers to communication and are more to do with low self-confidence in communicating, rather than a lack of understanding. This is in line with the results of Handayani & Utomo (2026) which found that students could keep their positive attitude toward the Indonesian language despite having a considerable problem in their performance and social interaction. It is also aligned with the student aspiration that want to be fluent in both, especially *Bahasa Indonesia*, so they can be more confident at school.

However, the empirical findings of this case study differ from Gardner's (1985) view that a positive attitude toward a language naturally and automatically encourages active language use. Although the student cognitively recognizes the value of the Indonesian language, the affective discomfort and anxiety he experiences hinder him from initiating or maintaining spontaneous conversations. This also contrasts with the study of Saragih et al., (2021) who found that positive language attitudes are universally represented in the utilization of the language.

In this study, a positive cognitive attitude does not lead to active oral participation because it is heavily suppressed by situational anxiety, as reported by Rafael Noah Bentley Rorong as student that if he could master both languages well, he believed that he would become more confident, participate more actively in class, and feel less afraid when answering questions (Interview, 27th August 2025). Besides, the outcomes of this research do not align with the findings of Pradipta and Artini (2020) in which they found that elementary school students have not demonstrated high enthusiasm and high disinterest in learning English.

The findings indicate that although the student exhibited positive cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes toward both languages, these attitudes were significantly stronger toward English than toward Indonesian due to greater domestic exposure. Thus, a positive cognitive attitude toward a language was not seen as enough for successful or active language use, which was dominated by affective factors such as language anxiety and self-confidence.

2. The Factors Influencing the Student's Attitude Towards Each Language

Observations on 11th August 2025 found that student's language attitudes are shaped by five main factors, namely language exposure, affective factors, linguistic competence, the learning environment, and instructional factors. Language exposure plays a role in shaping student's language attitudes. This finding was consistent with Rafael Noah Bentley Rorong's explanation that English is the primary language he uses in his daily life and that frequent exposure to English at home has helped him become more comfortable using the language.

He further explained that he feels more comfortable communicating in English because he uses it more frequently at home and has become more accustomed to it. (Interview, 27th August 2025). Observation conducted on 18th August 2025 found that during Indonesian language classes, the student demonstrated passive body language when required to speak or participate orally. The student tended to remain seated, avoid raising his hand to ask or answer questions, and remain silent when the teacher invited responses during classroom discussions.

This behavior indicated an initial reluctance and affective barriers that limited his willingness to use Indonesian as the primary language of communication during learning activities. Furthermore, during classroom activities, the student was observed to experience difficulties in expressing his ideas verbally when asked to explain the moral message of a story. His speech was frequently interrupted by long pauses, incomplete sentences, and hesitation before eventually switching to English as a compensatory communication strategy. This phenomenon reinforces the argument by Assidiq et al., (2026) that language attitudes are shaped by accumulated experiences and the extent to which a person has the opportunity to actively use the language.

This is also consistent with Szelei et al., (2024) view on how differences in life domains, such as home and school, shape how a language is perceived and used. On the other hand, affective factors such as anxiety, shyness, and a lack of self-confidence act as barriers for the student. These things have emerged in both language classes. According

to Rafael Noah Bentley Rorong as a student explained that he sometimes felt comfortable but also experienced nervousness, particularly when required to speak in front of the class. He further stated that he often felt nervous and shy when communicating in Indonesian (Interview, 27th August 2025).

The student explanation were supported by classroom observations on 11th August 2025 that showed the student rarely initiated questions, provided only brief and factual responses when directly asked by the teacher, spoke in a relatively low voice, and frequently avoided eye contact during classroom interactions. These observable behaviors indicated difficulties in expressing ideas confidently when communicating in Indonesian. The pattern of limited verbal participation and avoidance behavior suggested that the student experienced reduced confidence and emotional barriers in Indonesian communication.

This situation was also confirmed by the English teacher, who observed similar patterns in the student's classroom communication behavior. According to Desita Ahadia Winarti as a teacher in SD Widiatmika explained that the student's difficulty in speaking was not related to his intelligence or language competence, but rather to his attitude and level of confidence. The teacher noted that although the student demonstrated clear English pronunciation and accurate grammar, his reluctance to speak was primarily caused by low self-confidence rather than difficulties with language ability (Interview, 28th August 2025).

This pattern confirmed Gardner's (1985) theory that anxiety is the primary challenge that stifles students' motivation to interact, while also supporting Sunaryana et al., (2026) that language attitudes are the result of psychological conditioning based on a person's past experiences. Language skills also have an effect on student's adaptation of attitudes in different situations. According to Rafael Noah Bentley Rorong as a student explained that he considered English to be very important for his future because it is an international language.

Looking at his learning environment, the student was supported by a conducive setting. He further explained that his parents actively encouraged him to learn Indonesian at home, although English remained the dominant language used in their daily communication (Interview, 27th August 2025). The student's explanation was relevant with the observation on 18th August 2025 that showed the student was observed to demonstrate strong English language competence. He was able to understand the past tense material effectively and read texts with clear and accurate pronunciation.

However, despite his good linguistic ability, the student showed limited verbal participation during classroom interactions. He tended to provide responses only when directly prompted by the teacher through questions and rarely initiated communication independently. According to Desita Ahadia Winarti as a teacher in SD Widiatmika reported that the student receives consistent encouragement at school, and that his peers also actively support his involvement by providing opportunities for him to practice speaking during classroom interactions (Interview, 28th August 2025).

A sociocultural perspective that focuses on the role of social interaction in language development, a supportive environment also looks ideal at the beginning (Yusof, 2021). A passive attitude in such an inclusive environment indicates that, no matter how effective the environment, he will not automatically transform student's behavior into active participation as long as the challenges within him remain unresolved. Observations on 11th August 2025 showed that the student's willingness to communicate was dynamic and influenced by the structure and demands of the learning task. During spontaneous oral discussions, the student tended to demonstrate limited participation and withdraw from verbal interactions. However, when engaged in structured individual

tasks, such as completing functional forms or writing activities with guidance, the student was observed to become more focused, independent, and able to complete the tasks successfully.

These observations indicate that the student's communication performance varied depending on the level of structure, support, and confidence provided within the learning activity. This finding was supported by Desita Ahadia Winarti as a teacher in SD Widiatmika reported that the student's motivation and engagement increased when he received clear instructions, positive feedback, and structured tasks that provided appropriate support during the learning process (Interview, 28th August 2025).

The concept reinforces the idea of scaffolding of young learners suggested by Anisah (2024), which indicates that the instructional design can be considered temporary support when the self-confidence of a student is at its lowest. The code mixing often found is not an expression of rejection of another language, but it is an adaptation strategy in use. The behavior aligns with the idea of translanguaging that is supported by Szelei et al., (2024) that students who speak more than one language use their entire language activating system naturally in order to achieve communicative efficiency.

3. Student's Language Performance in the Classroom

The student language seen from observation in the classroom, analysis of student's assignments, and systematic analysis of students' academic records, were triangulated comprehensively to see how the students could perform in reading and speaking the language in Indonesian and English learning. To maintain methodological integrity and transparency, the raw assessment records of both subjects are displayed in a chronological manner and anonymously in table 1 and table 2 as below.

Table 1. Description of Indonesian Assessment Scores of the subject.

Date	Skill area	Task description	Score	Assessment aspect	Performance Level
04 th August 2025	of Reading	Identifying intrinsic elements and understanding a narrative text entitled " <i>Suatu Siang di Dalam Bus Primajasa</i> "	20/100	Comprehension, Vocabulary	Very Poor
12 th August	of Reading	Understanding the content of a narrative text entitled " <i>Niki</i> "	65/100	Comprehension	Fair
18 th August 2025	of Speaking	Conducting questions and interviewing the school staff	65/100	Fluency, Confidence	Fair
26 th August 2025	of Reading	Filling out a registration form	80/100	Comprehension, Accuracy	Good
2 nd September 2025	of Reading	Understanding formal and informal letters	30/100	Comprehension, Vocabulary	Poor

Table 2. Description of English Assessment Scores of the subject.

Date	Skill area	Task description	Score	Assessment aspect	Performance Level
11 th August 2025	of Reading	Identifying the use of “was” and “were” in sentences	100/100	Grammar (Past Tense: Was/Were)	Excellent
18 th August 2025	of Reading	Identifying regular and irregular verbs in past tense	100/100	Grammar (Past Tense Verbs)	Excellent
1 st September 2025	of Speaking	Telling a past experience text entitled “Visited Bali Safari Zoo”	95/100	Fluency, Pronunciation, Grammar, Confidence	Excellent

Source: Research Data in, 2025

Table 3. Range Score

Score	Performance Level
90-100	Excellent
75-89	Good
60-74	Fair
30-59	Poor
0-29	Very Poor

Based on the empirical findings detailed in the tables, the student's language performance was structurally superior and highly optimized in English compared to Indonesian. In the English domain, the student achieved flawless scores (100/100) in baseline structural assessments and maintained an Excellent performance level (95/100) even in open-ended speaking activities, demonstrating strong fluency, clear pronunciation, and high communication confidence when recounting a personal narrative text (Visited Bali Safari Zoo).

On the contrary, his performance records in Indonesian reveal severe limitations that are dependent on task type and vocabulary load. A significant disparity was observed between structured tasks and open-ended or literacy tasks. The student reached a Good performance level (80/100) when executing a highly structured, contextual, and formulaic written task, such as filling out a registration form. However, his performance drastically buckled when dealing with abstract narrative texts or intricate socio-linguistic structures. He scored an extremely deficient 20/100 (Very Poor) when tasked with identifying intrinsic plot elements and main ideas in the text *Suatu Siang di Dalam Bus Primajasa*, and similarly slumped to a 30/100 (Poor) when asked to analyze and differentiate formal and informal letter structures. In oral production tasks within the Indonesian domain, such as conducting an interview with school staff, the student managed a passing mark of 65/100 (Fair), though the assessor noted visible hesitation during execution.

These document analysis results strongly support Farhan (2025) foundational distinction between language competence and language performance. While the student's interview revealed that he consciously possessed underlying receptive knowledge of Indonesian, he was completely unable to deploy this knowledge consistently during real-time classroom interactions. This structural gap is consistent with the view of Zhang and Lawrence (2022) who argue that situational language performance is never merely a reflection of pure linguistic competence.

Rather, such performance functions as a construct that is heavily influenced by the cognitive processing load. The student's challenges with reading details, combined with hesitation during group work, provide clear analytical evidence that affective factors, specifically communication anxiety and shyness, consistently disrupted his ability to showcase his linguistic capacity. Furthermore, the data align with Aysu (2025) who stated that young learners typically exhibit advanced receptive skills relative to their active productive language capacities.

However, this study adds a critical nuance regarding task design, as outlined by Zhang and Lawrance (2022) that the student performed substantially better in structured, heavily scaffolded tasks because they dramatically reduce cognitive and lexical mapping loads. This framework perfectly explains why the student excelled at form completion (80/100) and explicit grammar identification (100/100), but severely floundered (scoring 20/100 and 30/100) in open-ended assessments requiring high inferential reading and deep vocabulary mastery.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, Salma and Prastikawati (2021) points out that classroom performance is the real-world manifestation of how a learner applies knowledge under specific situational constraints. As established by Cahapay (2020); and Sukamto et al., (2021), frequent home language exposure is the primary engine driving academic language performance. According to Rafael Noah Bentley Rorong as a student, he explained that his intensive daily use of English at home had contributed to his strong ability in English grammar and narrative speaking tasks. He further explained that limited exposure to Indonesian outside the school environment had affected his academic vocabulary development, which created challenges in understanding texts and reduced his confidence when speaking in public. (Interview, 27th August 2025). However, the empirical evidence from this study also reveals fundamental theoretical differences from traditional paradigms in the field of language acquisition. Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model posits that positive learner attitudes are a reliable predictor of successful language acquisition and high performance.

According to Rafael Noah Bentley Rorong as a student, he explained that although he had a positive attitude toward the Indonesian language, he wanted to become more fluent in Indonesian because greater proficiency would help him feel more confident when communicating (Interview, 27th August 2025). His actual performance scores in Indonesian remained heavily suppressed. Similarly, the data challenge strict Yusof's (2021) sociocultural frameworks, which assume that language proficiency develops naturally through exposure to social interaction. When provided with an immersion environment and peer collaboration during interview-prep group tasks, the student remained structurally passive, choosing silent observation over verbal engagement.

This proves that simply offering interaction opportunities or supportive institutional settings is fundamentally insufficient when a learner faces severe internal communication anxiety and domain-specific vocabulary gaps. This section demonstrates that a student's classroom language performance cannot be analyzed as a single, static reflection of linguistic competence. Rather, it is a dynamic, highly volatile construct shaped by the intense interplay of internal affective barriers, household language exposure backgrounds, and the specific structural and cognitive characteristics of the pedagogical tasks performed in the classroom.

4. Challenges Faced by the Student in Learning English and *Bahasa Indonesia*

There are four major challenges that faced by students in Learning English and *Bahasa Indonesia*, namely: affective, linguistic, communicative, and limitations in spontaneous communication that trigger a strong need for scaffolding. The first, based on the observation on 11th August 2025, the student's affective challenges were reflected in

behavioral data where the student appeared to be continuously speaking with a very quiet voice, lacking eye contact, and nodding off to the teacher's correction or repeating answers in a silent way, smiling awkwardly, or refusing to repeat the answers orally.

Consistent with the observation findings, Rafael Noah Bentley Rorong, as a student, explained that he experienced mixed feelings when using Indonesian during classroom activities. He stated that he sometimes felt comfortable, but in certain situations, he also felt nervous, particularly when he was required to speak in front of the class (Interview, 27th August 2025). These are interpreted by the researcher as affective barriers such as low confidence, anxiety, and shyness rather than inadequate comprehension.

Even during English lessons where the student's structural accuracy was high, he remained passive, avoided spontaneous speaking, and only spoke when directly prompted by the teacher. The researcher found that affective challenges directly hinder the spontaneous use of the target language, regardless of the student's actual level of proficiency. The second, empirical data reveal specific language problems. Based on the observations on 4th August 2025, during the *Bahasa Indonesia* classes, the student often stopped in the middle of a sentence, made grammatically incorrect sentences or had difficulty describing abstract ideas such as the moral of a story or formal phrases such as "*kop surat*" and "*penutup surat*".

They did not speak when he met unknown words and waited for teacher's explanation without guessing the meaning from the context. In contrast, his technical reading accuracy and pronunciation in both languages were observed to be smooth and accurate at all. The difference is interpreted by researchers based on Salma and Prastikawati (2021) finding which states that the students have strong language competence in the receptive and technical aspects, but the students face another weakness, which is language competence in the expressive aspect caused by the lack of exposure to vocabulary.

This interpretation is consistent with Assidiq et al., (2026) finding on language exposure as English is the predominant language spoken in the student's home. Third, communicative challenges, based on observations conducted on 12th August 2025 that the student's highly restricted social and academic interactions. Classroom observations showed that during peer discussions, the student stayed silent, did not respond to his classmates' opinions, and relied on a friend's initiation by merely replying with single words like "*Iya*" or "*Ini*".

The observations outside the classroom also revealed that he primarily initiated brief, functional communication with the teacher (asking for permission to go downstairs or asking about dismissal time) rather than extending conversations with peers. The researcher interprets these empirical behaviors as a manifestation of a semi-negative communicative attitude characterized by avoidance strategies. While the classroom provided a rich interactive environment, a crucial element for language development according to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory the researcher notes that the student failed to utilize this social mediation due to overriding communicative anxiety (Yusof, 2021).

Fourth, the student's behavioral patterns reflect clear limitations in spontaneous communication and a pronounced need for structural scaffolding. Based on the observation on 12th August 2025 showed that the student demonstrated higher engagement, independent focus, and accurate performance during predictable, structured tasks, such as filling out registration forms, writing guided stories, or completing written worksheets. This preference was confirmed by Rafael Noah Bentley Rorong, as a student that explained that he enjoyed reading stories and writing activities because these tasks allowed him to think carefully before providing answers (Interview, 27th August 2025).

In contrast, during spontaneous oral tasks, his speech fluency dropped significantly, marked by frequent hesitations and a reliance on code-switching to short English phrases like I don't know or for break. This challenge not as a deficiency in learning strategies, but as a functional dependence on external structures. This behavior is strongly validated by Anisah (2024), emphasizing the importance of scaffolding, proving that systematic instructional scaffolds are vital to bridge the student's transition from secure, structured exercises to anxious, spontaneous communication.

The challenges that faced by students are in line with Sukamto et al., (2021) who found that multilingual learners can maintain a positive attitude toward their languages while simultaneously facing linguistic and communicative challenges. However, the findings differ from Gardner's (1985) theory, which suggests that positive attitudes generally guarantee successful language performance. Despite valuing both languages, the student's affective barriers directly restricted his active language use.

Conclusion

The students from mixed Indonesian-Filipino marriages maintain positive attitudes toward both English and Indonesian, although these attitudes are manifested differently in classroom participation due to situational influences. The student's language interactions and performance are shaped by the interplay of language exposure, affective factors, linguistic competence, learning environment, and instructional support, with home language exposure and internal affective challenges emerging as the most dominant factors. Therefore, student's English proficiency is consistently higher than his Indonesian, due to his high self-confidence and comfort level, while his Indonesian usage is hindered by anxiety about communicating, low self-confidence, and a limited vocabulary that restricts his ability to speak spontaneously, despite his strong reading skills. In order to effectively support multilingual learners who face similar language-related challenges, educators must address psychological and affective challenges while enhancing linguistic competence by providing highly structured and predictable tasks, which can reduce cognitive load and anxiety in communication, enabling students to transform receptive knowledge into spontaneous speech. Despite the fact that these context-specific findings cannot be generalized to all bilingual children, the findings emphasize the need for further research that explores a broader range of demographic groups with mixed backgrounds in order to better understand the diverse paths of multicultural language development.

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