

PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND BELIEFS TOWARDS BILINGUAL EDUCATION AT MADANIA PRESCHOOL IN MAKASSAR

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to find out: (1) parents' perceptions toward bilingual education in preschool and (2) parents' beliefs about bilingual education able to improve their children's writing skill. The researcher adopted a descriptive qualitative research method. To gain the data, the researcher employed interview with the parents and teachers. Then, the data were analyzed into three steps, namely data reduction, data display, and drawing a conclusion. The results of this study showed that there were two points of parents' perceptions toward bilingual education at Madania school. First, the quality of the school was better than public school. The quality of the school involved the school's facility, the close bond between the teacher and the students, and the supportive environment. Second, the bilingual education helps the students to improve their writing skill. Based on the results of this study, the researcher suggested to the parents to choose their children's school carefully in order to make the students comfortable in learning. Furthermore, the cooperation between teacher and parents' were needed to support the students education environment.

Keywords: *bilingual education, parents' perceptions, parents' beliefs,*

INTRODUCTION

Bilingualism is the common word of the education aspect in Indonesia social context. According to Hamers and Blanc (2000), stated that bilingual is used two languages in fluently like the native speaker to communicate each other.. Furthermore, the target language of the bilingual school in Indonesia is English. The concept of teaching and learning process of bilingual education in young learners in Indonesia has been increasing year by year, particularly in a formal school, such as in elementary, kindergarten and preschool.

The people who can communicate to others by using two languages are called bilingualism. Lam (2001) states that bilingualism is the way for communication in society by using two languages. Thus, the use of bilingualism in society is to communicate with each other and the use of bilingualism in education is to teach the students by using two languages. Tabors (1997) states that the students who in learning process used two languages. Teaching the second language to the preschool student is not easy because the preschool students are the beginner level of English learner. However, Gower (2002) states that bilingual education remains a fantasy for Indonesian schools. Fantasy here can be defined as the target for

every school to reach the highest standard of education but it is not being a success if there is no support from their parents. Thus, the parents have the biggest role in choosing and supporting their children education.

By exploring and understanding of the parents' perceptions and beliefs toward bilingual education in preschool, other parents were expected to be aware towards the importance of choosing and believe on bilingual preschool education is the best school for their children.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Griva (2012) conducted about developing plurilingual children: parents' beliefs and attitudes towards English language learning and multilingual learning at Macedonia. This study was conducted with an aim to provide an account of parents' beliefs on issues related to their children' English Foreign Language and multilingual learning in the Greek education context. It should be noted that although the parents acknowledged the influential role and dominance of English as lingua franca, they highlighted the need for the students to acquire multilingual competence in a variety of foreign languages.

Delorenzo (2013) conducted about parents' beliefs and attitudes on enrollment in a dual language program at an elementary school at Florida. The purpose of this research was to identify parental attitudes toward immersion programs and define the reasons that parents enroll their children in Dual Language Education. All parents conclusively believe the dual immersion program has been a success for their children.

Indrawati (2013) explored parents' involvements in their bilingual kindergarten children' English learning at home. This research used interview and observations to collect the data. The result indicated in general mothers played the roles of the teacher's use at the school as children's first teacher, motivator, facilitator, and partner but in a different place. However, the first mother played her role as the first teacher and motivator more actively than the mother in the second family did. It is very important to remind that mother as the best first teacher for their children to increase her childhood education.

Lin (2016) conducted parental perceptions of early childhood English education in Taiwan. The research aims to explore general parental perceptions of early childhood English education in kindergartens and to probe the significant differences parental perceptions of English learning between public and bilingual kindergartens. Most parents agreed that infancy was an important period for English learning and development for getting a better job in the future.

METHOD

In order to explore and to know the parents' perceptions and beliefs toward bilingual education in preschool, this study adopted a qualitative descriptive research method which deals with the data collection, analysis, and interpretation of comprehensive, narrative, and visual data in order to gain insight into a particular phenomenon of interest (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). The participants of this research were four parents and two teachers. The characteristics of the parents that chosen were; First, the parents who have children about three years old were chosen in this research and willing to be interviewed. Second, the parents who have children which have been learning around two months in that school. Meanwhile, the characteristic of the teacher were; Homeroom teacher and the teacher who help the homeroom teacher. In an attempt to collect the data, three kinds of instruments were used namely audio recorder, documentation, and interview.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The descriptions of the data in this research are divided into two points. First, what were the parents' perceptions toward bilingual Education at Madania preschool in Makassar and second, the parents' believe toward bilingual education at Madania preschool in Makassar.

1. The Parents' Perceptions toward Bilingual Education

This section, the researcher explored the parents' perceptions related to enroll their children in bilingual education at Madania preschool in Makassar which generated into four main viewpoints such as parents' perceptions about parents' education background, social economic status, facilities and type of the school.

A. Parents' education background

Parents' education background is an important part of choosing the school. Parents may demand their children assume their profession, a family business, or go for a particular location based on what they think the family needs. Even in the report presented by the Ministry of Education (2004) it is stated that children with highly educated parents do fairly well in schools than those with less educated parents. In this case, the researcher found that there were three out of four parents said that the parents' education background was influenced them in choosing this school. One parent perceived there was no influenced of parents' education background for enrolling their children in this school because the parent did not force their children in bilingual or monolingual school.

The researcher concluded that most parents who have a high education background tend to prefer in sending their children to the school that is better than the parents. Educated parents certainly consider

education for their children to prepare for a better future career than their selves. Thus, educated parents have a positive impact on their children in particularly children achievement.

B. Socioeconomic Status

The socioeconomic status is the social standing of the parents in society with respect to the parents' level of income, type of occupation, and general quality of life. The socioeconomic status of the children' parents was also the factor that might contribute to choose their children school. That was particularly because the rich household chose the expensive school for their children regardless of the children' comfortable in learning

The researcher concluded that the parents who enroll their children at Madania preschool were high of level income because learning at Madania preschool spent much money than the other schools. Thus, the parents did not care about how expensive that school as long as their children got the best education. Generally, the parents who have a high level of social economic status gave full responsibility to the school and the teacher in increasing their children' ability, even though the parents also have an important role in improving their children ability. The parents thought that they have spent much money so, the school has to give the best education for their children. Actually, the parents and the teacher have a big role in increasing the children' ability. Thus, the parents and the teacher should collaborate in helping the children improve their ability.

C. Facilities

The school facilities are the facilities provided to the students so that they can use every opportunity to develop the full ability. The school facilities include buildings, fixtures, and equipment necessary for the effective and efficient operation of the program of bilingual preschool, classrooms, libraries, rooms and space for physical education, space for fine arts, restrooms, playing room. The children in preschool usually need more playing room to make them more enjoyable in learning. However, school facilities do not include swimming pools even though the children have swimming activities.

The result of the interview's sessions shows three out of four parents have positive perceptions toward the school facility. The parents stated that bilingual school has adequate facilities than the other schools. Thus, they enroll their children in that school. Meanwhile, one parent perceived that the school has a lack of facility because the school is only the branch of the school. Meanwhile, it is headquarters which located in Bogor has an adequate facility. Moreover, the parent suggested that the school needed more outdoor playing facility to make her child comfortable in learning

The researcher can conclude that all the parents perceived that bilingual school, in particularly, Madania school in Makassar has equipped learning and playing facility. That equipped learning and

playing facilities were used for making the children feel comfort in learning because the children were able to play and to learn at the same times. Therefore, all parents choose Madanis preschool for their children' education.

D. Type of School

There are two types of school commonly used in the around school society such as public school and private school. In this case, the researcher focused on private school in particularly bilingual school. The results of the interview's sessions show that all of the parents have positive perceptions both in quality of the bilingual school and the environment. The bilingual school provides the positive or the supportive environment to their children in learning such as the close bond between the teacher and the children in a positive way, and the friendly teachers which make the children comfortable in the process of learning.

The result of the interview's sessions shows that most of parents chose were the bilingual school because of parents' background education, the facilities, and the type of that school. Thus, all of the parents did not care about their socioeconomic status, and all the parents chose Madania preschool for their children because the parents wanted their children learned in the school which have a good quality, enjoy, and safety in learning. it can be seen the discussion below:

a. Parents' education background

The parents perceived that their education background has an impact for choosing the bilingual school. In this case, the mother's educational background is more important than father's education background since the mother shares the closest bond with her children. Eccles (2005) Parental education has an influence on the academic success of their children. Educated parents can teach their children basic knowledge at home. Alexander (1994) stated that the children who comes from higher level of education' families are expected to get a much better education than their parents

The general overview of the parents and the children dynamic is that the parental education levels influence their children' academic achievement. Goording (2001) The people who have a higher level of education are certainly more selective in choosing education for their children to prepare for a better future than themselves. Thus, the role of the parents is really huge not only on educating their children but also growing them to be a better human being.

By seeing all the parents' perceptions, the researcher concluded that mostly the parents perceived that parents' education background has a big impact in choosing the school for their children. The education parents perceived that good background education for their children would be useful in a future career. additionaly, the parents also focused on their children comfortable feeling in learning. Although the school has good quality but the children did like the school environment that can make the children

hard and difficult to communicate with each other. Thus, the children did not care about the learning process and made them lazy to communicate and learn.

b. Quality of the School

Based on the data, all parents perceived that Madania preschool has good quality. In other words, this school has a good teacher, good concept, complete facility, and, a good curriculum. It is in line with Garder (2000) who said that there are four factors that can influence in learning process such as, school system, quality of the language program, material, and the curriculum. So, those are important parts in choosing a school. It can be said that this school has a higher standard of education than the other schools.

All the parents perceived that bilingual school has good quality. In other words, Madania bilingual school has a good quality than the other school in particularly public school. The parents were aware that the school which has a good quality made their children easy to understand the subject but the parents have to know that, the high level of the school was an influence of the students' payment because the bilingual school was a little expensive than the public school.

c. School environment

The parents perceived that bilingual education in Madania has a good environment. Environment refers to the school's climate. School climate is directly related to the interpersonal relations between bond of children and children or children and teacher. Crosnoe et al. (2004) said that school environment is one of the important part in learning process. The good school has a good climate. It can be seen from close bond between the children and children or children and teacher, increased if the school encourages teamwork.

The close bond between teacher and children help the children increase their involvement in the classroom activity without afraid of being judged, such as this study found that the student is taught to respect each other. In this context, the children will not afraid and doubt to be involved in the classroom activity because they will feel safe without being judged by their teacher and their peers. In this in line with Byongg-suk (2012) who stated that students need to feel comfort, safety, and health environment in learning process.

Learning takes place effectively if positive and comfortable environment are provided for students to study. It means that the environment very helpful in terms of shape and grow their children characters. It supported by Eric (2005) who stated that the role of the supportive school environment in promoting academic success when students find their school environment to be supportive they are more likely growing positive attitude towards themselves and behaviors towards others during the school day. Furthermore, the supportive school environment such as the close relationship between teacher and student could build the trust between them. Trust between teacher and student is important in children language learning. Moon (2002) who stated that the students were able to collaborate with the teacher to

create a safe and enjoy learning environment. The children who feels comfortable in learning could help support the bilingual children' to improve their ability.

The researcher concluded that the school environment played a significant role in determining students' level of academic achievement and enhancing their holistic growth. For students, the classroom was not just an intellectual space, but also a social, emotional an physical environment. By the classroom was being such an important place in the growth and development of a student. The students in preschool needed the safety, enjoy, and cleaning room for making them comfortable while learning process. The teachers and the parents should help the children to get the school environment like that. Thus, the parents and the teacher have to collaborate with each other.

2. The parents' belief toward Madania Preschool to improve their children's English skills' in particularly writing skill.

The results of the interview's sessions show that three parents believed that bilingual education can improve their children' English skills. When the researcher asked about in what way their children English ability improved, the parents responded that all the teachers used the English language in communicating, during the teaching and learning process. This is supported by Krashen (2006) who said that English language development was a primary goal of bilingual education in learning foreign language. This school tried to develop their students' skills specifically in writing.

The parents who enroll their children in Madania preschool believed that there is an improvement in their children social and cognitive. Parkes (2008) stated that since bilingual education was widespread has a positive impact particularly in field of social and education. It has successfully made the parents feel attracted to it. In line with Lee (2004) who stated that most parents believe that sending their children to bilingual education are able to develop their children in communicating each other it can be concluded that the parents sent their children in bilingual education to develop communication skills especially in using English skills.

The researcher found through parents' interview that there was one student used Indonesia in communicating with their friends. However, the teachers of Madania School found a solution to this matter. The teachers always used English in daily activities. The teacher also repeatedly the English words to make their children study and be familiar with hearing. Moreover, the researcher can be concluded that the three out of four parents believed that Madania bilingual preschool was able to improve their children skills in particularly writing and pronouncing skills. In other words, Madania bilingual preschool was a good place for children' preschool because the children' ability was an improvement.

CONCLUSION

This research has led us to conclude that all of the parents perceived that there were three of the reasons for enrolling their children in bilingual preschool particularly Madania preschool such as parents' education background, quality of the school, and school environment. However, children' education is the absolute responsibility of parents and teachers. Hence, the cooperation between parents and teachers is very needed in supporting the students' education improvement. The parents should not solely depend on school but the parents should manage their own authority to their children too.

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