

## Determinants of English as language choice among Unaccompanied Migrant Children (UMC) in Makassar, Indonesia

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### Abstract

The essence of language is human activity. Communication with language is carried out through two basic human activities; speaking and listening during the interaction in a group of people. Immigrants in Makassar city communicate with immigrant communities and Makassar people. They used English and Indonesia to communicate with others. The aims of this article were to find out determinant factors of English as language choice among Unaccompanied Migrant Children (UMC) in Makassar and why they used English as their language choice to communicate with other people out of them. The data were taken from UMC in the shelter under the auspices of Makassar's Social Office and in the public area of Makassar. This research was a qualitative approach; it was from a sociolinguistic perspective and focuses its analysis with the language choice among UMC. This research showed that most immigrants chose English as their language choice since they were in Makassar because they have acquired better than other international language and it has been mastered naturally by doing social interaction among themselves and people outside their community. UMC had more difficulties to socialize with Indonesian than the adult of Immigrants. Other than their lack of language mastery, they also have the anxiety to adapt to other immigrants and Makassar people. English was used by UMC to show their status as a foreigner who lived in a multicultural situation. Language becomes a power for a human being and it becomes a social identity for language user in one community. During the interaction of UMC in Makassar city, the role of English as an International language is shown.

### Keywords:

Unaccompanied Migrant Children; Language Choice; multilingualism; bilingualism.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English fulfills the role that Latin had in the Middle Ages; it is a world language or lingua franca and the primary medium in intercultural communication. It is unlikely that this position will be jeopardized in 40-50 years by other abundant languages in the world such as Chinese, Spanish, Hindi, Portuguese, Russian, and Japanese, which are becoming extraordinary. However, the English status is changing as the world changes along with multicultural people's life. Some studies strive to give an overview of these changes and trends, such as House (2003), Crystal (2003), and Papp (2009). Language has great importance in daily human life in term of interaction in the international arena or a multicultural situation. English is an international language that forces international people to use it in their daily communication. English becomes like the first language choice in doing social interaction of foreigners who live in multicultural contexts. This situation occurs among migrants in Makassar city.

Makassar is the capital of the province of South Sulawesi, a Metropolitan City and one of the largest cities in Eastern Indonesia. Makassar City with the native people of Makassar, use the language of Makassar or *Mangkasara* as a daily language and use Indonesian as the official language. Along with the development of time from year to year, this city became one of the destination cities for some people. The objectives are various, including; study objectives, tourist destinations, business goals, and even destinations will remain permanent. With these conditions, the city of Makassar certainly has the potential to be a multicultural area and has an impact on the community of language users to be bilingual or multilingual. As in the case of immigrants who live temporarily in the city of Makassar, with the aim of Australia and America. With the presence of immigrants, of course in communicating, the people of Makassar city use English as an official international language. The immigrants came from several different countries, so the language used was English. According to the mayor of Makassar, there are 27 shelters prepared for refugees (illegal and legal). They come from Asian countries such as those from Afghanistan (1,129 people), Myanmar (243 people), Iran (192 people), Somalia (213 people) Sudan (83 people), Iraq (39 people), Sri Lanka (34 people) and other countries (73 people) (Yunus, 2016).

Some factors drive immigration, such as economic improvement, job opportunities, educational opportunities, family reunion, political persecution, natural disaster, and war. According to Missbach, Adiputera, and Prabandari (2018), at the end of 2016, there were close to 3.5 million refugees, 2.7 million internally displaced people, and more than 1.5 million stateless people in the Asia-Pacific region. In 2016, Southeast Asia hosted a total of 2.8 million persons of concern, including over 483,000 refugees, 68,000 asylum seekers, 462,000 internally displaced people (IDPs). Indonesia hosted less than 14,000 asylum seekers and refugee in mid-2018. Nearly 2,000 foreign immigrants staying in Makassar, based on immigration records at South Sulawesi's Regional Office of Justice and Human Rights Ministry of Makassar, there are 1,999 illegal immigrants currently staying there (Hariyadi, 2017). He added that the immigrants are placed in 28 community houses and an immigration detention home. There are also immigrants located in Makassar immigration office. One hundred of them are underage or categorized as unaccompanied migrant children (UMC). They did not have adult family or parents who should accompany them.

UMC lived in the shelter, not in a community house (CH) or immigration detention home. It means that they also had interaction with other UMC from another country. Also others such as social worker, tutor, even Makassar people since immigrants lived in Makassar; they communicate with Makassar people and others who live in Makassar such as social worker, immigration officers, tutor, and IOM officers. Adult immigrants and UMC have difficulties in communicating

with other people out of their communities. They are unable to speak Makassar and Indonesian fluently. Especially for UMC, they have limited access to the study, or other activities such as sport, shop, and travel in out of regular schedules from social workers or IOM officers. Hence, they had a unique way when they tried to talk with Makassar or Indonesian people, mainly because adults do not accompany them. Sometimes they mixed Makassar, Indonesia, English, and their native language (ex. Afghanistan; Persia Afghani or Pashtu). It seems complicated for UMC in doing such interaction with the society in Makassar, they lack in language mastery and already experience cultural shock. Therefore, in another way, Makassar people also have difficulties in understanding UMC language.

The languages are used by UMC mostly influenced by some factors like education, culture, environment, social status, sex, and psychological problems. In communication problems, their interaction and their speech act are very complex. Linguists called it a speech community, language complexity, and Euphemism. A speech community is one of sociolinguistic concept; it describes the community of people who use a unique language and how they receive each other. The terms of language complexity will provide opportunities for bilingualism and multilingualism, code switching and code mixing, misunderstanding, and misinterpretation among the speakers. As guests who live for a view year, UMC as immigrant involve the language complexity, they come down and also force them to use English as an International language, and perhaps ease some Makassar people to understand them.

UMC in Makassar city socialize with others using their first language, and international language as Yule (2010; 182) stated that some children grow up in a social environment where more than one language is used and can acquire a second language in the circumstances similar to those of first language acquisition. It means that the social environment will dominate the language acquisition of immigrants who live in Makassar. According to Dustmann & Soest (2002), an immigrant in Europe context should have the ability to communicate with another member of communities around them to survive where English becomes the first alternative language used by immigrants. It was the same case in Makassar, Indonesia context that most immigrants try to learn English well to enable them to speak with Makassar people as their interlocutor.

There are several studies that have conducted by researchers about English as language choices in multicultural situation such as Kristin & Douglas (1997), House (2003), Crystal (2003), Kirkpatrick (2008) Batibo (2009), Papp (2009), Willoughby (2009), Canagarajah & Ben Said (2010), Tanghe (2014), and Al-Saadi (2015), Rijal (2016), Thi & Nguyen (2016), Mcalinden & Mcalinden (2018), and Sardegna (2018). English is the official communication tool for the international community in improving accessibility and mobility; both in terms of access to education, information, and business. English is still a superior choice for the world community. Immigrants are as an international community in Makassar who handle communication problems, while they are urged to use English as their preferred language as an alternative language. Like the citizens of Afghanistan who participated in CH and Shelter using mother tongue but in formal communication using English. Holmes (2013; 19) called this situation as Language choice in multilingual communities where the speakers use English as lingua franca.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 The Study of Language and Sociolinguistics

Language as a system means that it is formed by a hole of components regularly. Systematically, language is formed based on the specific; it is not randomly. A sociolinguistic concept that language is not only a tool to express the thought, but it's related to who speaks what language to whom, when and to what end (Fishman). One of language function is communication so that there are three components of communication such as someone who talks, sender, and receiver of information which communicated. Language and sociolinguistics study emphasizes the use of language its self by social groups. Every act of communication can be interpreted as behavior, and culture in one community. It is communicative if it is done in an aware situation, and there is a receiver in that communication.

Language and society have a close relation, language as a tool of communication and interaction between one group and others. In the early of the twentieth century, De Saussure (1916) has defined that language is the organization in the society; it is the same of other organization in the society, like marriage and customs. Sociolinguistics study focused on language variation used by society. On the other hand, the sociolinguistics can observe the social phenomena through human language (*langage*), speech community cases (*langue*), and language use of community (*parole*) as explained by Saussure in Susanto (93, 2012). Sociolinguistics can observe the diversity of community, communication frame, interaction between speaker and interlocutor. Sociolinguistics can be used in bilingual or multilingual Wardhaugh (2006), Usborne (2009), Chaer (2010), Yule (2010), and Holmes (2013).

The term of sociolinguistics is used commonly for the study on language and society relationship. This is a broad study domain that developed through the interaction of linguistics with several other disciplines. It has robust acquaintances with anthropology over and done with language and cultural studies. It also has a strong relationship to the sociology through the study of the role language in the social groups and institutions. In addition, it is tied to social psychology, for the most part, within concern on how to express the attitudes and perceptions and how to identify in-group and out-group behaviors. People use all these connections when people try to analyze language from a social perspective.

Sociolinguistics is a sub-discipline of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and society. The field of sociolinguistic research is an interdisciplinary field of research developed through linguistic interactions and outside of linguistics such as the field of sociology. This field of science also has a close relationship with cultural studies through language studies, sociology and the study of the role of language in the formation of groups of speakers and social institutions of the community of language users. Sociolinguistics includes the language used by the speaker in one community and the factors that influence it. Several sociolinguistic concepts have been proposed by experts such as Erik,

Teacher, and Iss (2003), Wardhaugh (2006), Clark and Yallop (2006), and Holmes (2013). Sociolinguistics is the study that explores and investigates the characteristics of language varieties, the aspects of their functions, and the trademarks of their speakers as these three regularly interact, change and change one another within a speech community. Sociolinguistics also defined as the study of language operation, its purposes of investigating how the convention of the language uses relate to other aspects of social behavior. Thus, those sociolinguistics concepts develop the subfield of linguistics, which takes speech variation as its focus, viewing variety, or its social context. It correlates between social factors and linguistic variation. Therefore, sociolinguistics is closely related to real language use, like the description of language use pattern or the dialect in particular conversation.

Some children grow up in a community where more than one language is used and can acquire a second language in similar circumstances to the first language acquisition. Those fortunate individuals are bilingual. However, most of the people are not exposed to a second language until much later and, like David Sedaris, our ability to use a second language, even after years of study, rarely matches proficiency in our first language. There is something of an enigma in this since there is no other system of "knowledge" that people can learn better at two or three years of age than at thirteen or thirty.

## **2.2 The Potential of Bilingualism or Multilingualism in Multicultural Situation**

Multilingualism benefits to people wanting to participate in globalization and cultural openness. The ease of access to information through the Internet enables the increase of individuals' exposure to multiple languages. Multilingual speakers acquire and maintain no less than two languages during the childhood period. The speaker has the first language (L1) sometimes also referred to as the mother tongue, is acquired without formal education. Children experience two languages acquisition from these early years are called simultaneous bilinguals; however, one language is usually dominant. People who can speak in more than one languages have been more proficient to language learning compared to monolinguals.

Bilingualism is the situation when the speakers in one community use two languages, and they have acquired and maintained during the communication occur each other. According to Lado (1964:214) and Mackey (1956:155) that bilingualism is the speaker's competences in two languages with the same quality. Beside that bilingualism, as the use of language, it means that the language mastery of someone acquired well. It means that the speaker in one community has mastered two languages well and she/he can use them well in the same situation. While multilingualism refers to the situation of speakers used varied language, multilingualism phenomena can be found in the UMC/immigrants situation who live in Makassar. They used varied language in doing communication among immigrants and also out of them, such as Makassar people, IOM staff, and social worker. Sometimes they used English, Arabic, Indonesia, Makassar, Persia.

## **2.3 Immigrant Issues**

Immigration is the people moving from the native country into a destination one, which they do not possess citizenship to settle. The movement is commonly in the form of permanent residents or naturalized citizens. The people are also moving for taking up employment as a migrant worker or temporarily as a foreign worker (Dixon & Wu, 2014). The migration of people from one country (nation-state) to another country, they are a citizen. Immigration refers to the movement of some people become a permanent resident, and tourist and newcomers to stay for a while. United Nations estimated that there were around 190 million people as an international immigrant since 2005, approximately 3% of the population of the world society. The rest of them, they live in their own country.

Since a hundred years ago, human migration has been going on. In the modern concept of migration, especially in the 19th century with the growth of the country and the criteria of the status of immigration, passport, visa, and also the policy of immigrants the citizenship of the country give good protection, while for immigrants have special regulation include the law of immigration in one country. Nowadays, immigration issues become hot international politic issues; it is also related to race, ethnic, culture. Then, immigrants have a different race, ethnic, and culture, it means that there are social tension, xenophobia, and national identity conflict, especially for an advanced country.

Hoogheet al. (2008) reported that immigrants in Western Europe increase from 1960 until early 1970. Various countries legalized immigration in Europe. South Sulawesi, of Indonesia, has been flooded with illegal immigrants since 2015. Nearly 2,000 foreign immigrants are staying in the province. South Sulawesi's Regional Office of Justice and Human Rights Ministry recorded that there are 1,999 illegal immigrants are staying. According to South Sulawesi's immigration office chief, the immigrants are placed in 28 community houses and an immigration detention home. South Sulawesi comprises the province, which accommodates the most significant number of immigrants in Indonesia; nevertheless, the immigrants make Indonesia as the transit country Australia or any other third world countries as the destination country.

## **3 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world; it consisted of a set of interpretive, material practice that makes the world visible. Qualitative research is a descriptive study, and it used inductive approach analysis. At this point, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. There were some ways in this research design like presenting the data by using the perspective of the researcher as the main instrument and the researched, the nature of research design, data generation, data analysis, and presenting the analysis result.

The concept of sociolinguistics study is correlation concept; where the researcher correlated the language and social aspect, including the use of foreign language by the Immigrant in Makassar city. The first step was collecting the data of Immigrants in immigration office Class IIA Makassar, then the data of UMC in Social Department Office of Makassar. The second step was observation participative. This observation was in Community house, Shelter, and the public area of

Makassar. The next was interviewing with immigrant, both adult and immigrants who are categorized as UMC. The interview was conducted to know how immigrants use and master English and Indonesia as an international language.

English was used by a speaker from a different culture who lives at Makassar. The speakers met each other and used English; some of them switch or mix two languages. It means that code switching and code were mixing when the conversation occurs. There were some misinterpretation and miscommunication both speakers and hearers; it can be found in a formal and non-formal situation. In formal situation like classroom when Immigrants make the conversation with UNHCR, Immigration officer, Social worker, and IOM staff and also when they join classes (Music, Paint, English, Indonesia, Sport, and Math) and non-formal situation can occur in the market, on the road, store, sport activity, and in the public transportation. The way they communicate was unique, and it is a fascinating phenomenon to be observed further.

### **3.2 The Source of the Data**

The source data in this research are primary data and secondary data. The primary data are the English usage of unaccompanied migrant children in Makassar, and the secondary data is the interview result from the UMC and other informants. Besides that, the data were taken from some literary studies which closely related to the issues of the education. Data collection was used as the main part of this stud, and the researcher was as the main instrument. The primary location of this study was the shelter of Unaccompanied Migrant Children (UMC) under the coordination of the Social Department of Makassar, South Sulawesi province. Other locations were Immigration office, Immigrant detention center, community house and public service area in Makassar.

### **3.3 The Technique of Collecting the Data**

The data collection technique was participative observation, recording, and in-depth interview. The data can be taken from the conversation by observation, recording, and an interview. In order to know the effect of the interaction of immigrant among Makassar people, it had been observed through participative observation and interview. The interview was conducted by some informants such as a social worker who lives with UMC in the shelter of Immigrants, Tutor, immigrant officers, a group of sellers, and social services. The data analysis was done after collecting the data by using qualitative approaches of Sugiyono (2005) and Creswell & Creswell (2017).

### **3.4 The technique of Analyzing Data**

In this research, the collected data is analyzed from a sociolinguistic perspective, to find out how UMC choose and use the English language in communicating with Indonesian People in Makassar. As it is explained before, sociolinguistic deals with society and language, in short, language use in society. UMC as part of immigrants society, specifically who are minors or under eighteen as a foreigner in Makassar, Indonesia, perform a unique way of communicating with Indonesian people in their environment. The researcher thinks that sociolinguistic is the most proper theory to analyze the data and phenomenon in this research, and use code-mixing and code-switching.

## **4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Immigrants and UMC in Makassar City**

There were around two thousand of immigrants come to Makassar illegally from 2015 until 2018. According to Ramli HS in Hariyadi (2017a, and 2017b) as the head of Immigration division of South Sulawesi province said that Immigrants from Afghanistan dominated them, they were 1.274 people. Immigrants from Myanmar was 217 people, Somalia was 170 people, Iran was 81 people, Sudan was 76 people, Iraq was 37 people, Srilanka was 30 people, Ethiopia was 33 people, Pakistan was 46 people, Palestine was 12 people, Nepal 5 was people, each Eritrea, Yamane, Syria, and Mesir were 1 person.

Rachmah and Pestalozzi (2016) and Hariyadi, (2017a) have observed the destiny of Refugee of Rohingya in Indonesia. One of their objects was an immigrant living Makassar. They found that there were 959 refugees in Makassar, and in May 2015 there were 1791 refugees. All of immigrant or refugees lived in the immigrant detention center (Rudenim), community house (CH) and also in Shelter for Immigrants. Beside that there were a lot of immigrants also come in Makassar illegally, the total number of them is around 3.259 people. Some of them have a residence permit, limited license permit, permanence residence, and also as refugees.

UMC or Unaccompanied Migrant Children, UAC or UCM was children Immigrants underage eighteen, migrate, or refugee without adult accompanied them. Since 23rd September 2015, the Mayor of Makassar allowed the immigrants in Makassar by signing the memorandum of understanding between the Makassar government and International Organization of Migrant (IOM). There were 15 % from 2041 of immigrants categorized as UMC and 8 % as UMC who were under coordinated intensively by Social Department of Makassar, IOM, and UNHCR. Nowadays, there were 264 people from the total of immigrants who live in Makassar that have been sent to the destination country. Five percent of them were from UMC and became adults since they were in Makassar.

### **4.2 English as Language Choice among UMC in Makassar**

Makassar as multicultural communities allows and is very welcome to all of the people who come and pass include immigrant and refugees. They speak what they have (if they are in Immigrant communities) and they speak whoever (if they are out of Immigrant communities) by applying English. Based on the concepts of sociolinguistics familiarized by Holmes (2013) someone will use language as lingua franca in the multicultural or multilingual situation like UMC as Immigrant who live in Makassar use English as their most familiar language to interact to each other. English as the International language was mainly used by a thousand foreigners who live or tour in Makassar, and also for refugees and immigrants. English dominates among other international languages in Makassar of Indonesia as part of Asian countries

such as Indonesian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Arabic. English mostly used by UMC to interact and to socialize with other people out of them as an immigrant. English has been mastered well since they were in their origin country.

UMC came to Makassar as Immigrant or illegally. UMC has some reason to become an immigrant, one of them because of the international conflict in their country. They are coming to Makassar, Indonesia, to go to their target country, but some of them illegal and the most crucial problem is they are underage. It is different between some refugees come to Makassar, Indonesia officially organized well by UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). It means that all the refugees have selected well to go to the destination country, and one of the official languages that they use is English. Hence, they have to master English well before they apply formally. This situation is different between immigrants and also UMC.

The data of questionnaire and interview section in CH and Public Area is related to the international language choice as the main language use. Most of UMC choose English as their first language to use, followed by Indonesia and Arabic. There were 85 % of the total number of UMC who used English; they said that they had mastered English well before becoming an immigrant. They acquire English from formal education, course, internet or social media, and community. There were 25 % of UMC who are non-active speakers; it means that they lack English Language speaking capability. They were passive learners from their origin country and in CH of Makassar. These data were also supported from some informants such as social workers who, tutors, officers, and a team of IOM who work for UMC in Makassar.

UMC choose English because of some factors; firstly, English as an international language, English as tools for communication, and also commonly used by a thousand of international people around the world. It means that English has become a social status and symbol toward the immigrant as international people who were in Makassar, Indonesia. English as the language becomes vocal symbols in the social group of community. If UMC is as the first speaker, UMC tries to speak English to other people, despite whether their interlocutor understands or not. Sometimes they switch in Bahasa and mix it, and sometimes also they try to re-explain, and or they sign it by using body language (for the technical term). This situation can be found if they interact with Makassar people who are categorized as the sellers, the social servant who understand English only for a technical term. Some of Makassar people also lack English proficiency such as a driver, technician, and the security of CH.

Secondly, English is a language choice among UMC used to accommodate their interlocutor who speaks English also. It means that their interlocutor knows UMC that they are an English speaker. This situation occurs when they are in a formal situation like in the course, private class, regular meeting, health check-up, and planned conversation. Thirdly, English mostly used as UMC first language choice to show their identity as an immigrant through social media, such as in Facebook, Instagram, and email. English is also as an official language both of in social media and also for international communication.

Language has great importance in daily human life. English has an international language force; international people used it in their daily communication. English becomes the first choice in doing social interaction of foreigners who live in multicultural contexts. This situation occurs among migrants in Makassar city. Mostly UMC used English around the community house (CH) of Makassar. UMC interact with each other; both UMC and other immigrant and also UMC and Makassar people.

The context of communication of UMC during the interaction both of UMC and others, and also UMC and out of theirs, they mostly use English as their official language if they spoke to the officers, Social worker, and tutors, and if they were out of CH. Bilingualism sometime occurs from Indonesian native to bring UMC to understand some terminologies in Indonesia such as the name of the food, language style, and Indonesian culture. Bilingualism means that if both speakers understand and master two kinds of language at the same level. Around 30 % of UMC have understood Bahasa Indonesia also because they have learned it from 2016 to 2018 through the course and natural conversation. It means that a non-native speaker can acquire a language if they live together with the native speaker (NS) long enough. In out of CH, UMC sometime used Bahasa Indonesia by switch English if some Indonesian NS cannot understand well from the interlocutor, UMC has a regular schedule to come out to the public area of Makassar, and they must accompanied by a social worker who is Indonesia NS.

## 5 CONCLUSION

After conducting this research, the researcher found out that the majority of UMC in Makassar use English in their interaction with Makassar people. UMC showed the unique way of performing communication by using the English language with Makassar people. They tend to mix the English language with another word in another language during the interaction. As for the factors of English as the chosen language they use with Makassar people, there are some factors. Firstly, English, as it is known, is an international language that is globally used and more or less is understandable for any native speaker including UMC, which came from various nationality, and Indonesian people, specifically Makassar. English became the proper language to use in this multicultural environment because it is understandable for both UMC and Makassar people. In other words, it becomes a vocal symbol in the community. Secondly, English can accommodate Makassar citizen in communicating with the interlocutor who speaks English in the formal situation. Thirdly, UMC uses English to show and express their identity as an immigrant; they expressed it through social media.

In the process of their interaction, the UMC did not use full English with Makassar people; they mix it with their native language (Persia, Urdu, and Arabic), Bahasa Indonesia, or even Makassar. Perhaps, it is one of their ways, in adapting to the new environment, they are immigrant children who move to Makassar due to various reasons and unaccompanied by their parents, admittedly, it is difficult for them to cope with the culture shock that they experienced, hence, they became reverse, careful, and shy. They also lack language mastery, considering how young they are.

Therefore, to fulfill the success of communication, which is the achievement of understanding between the speaker and listener, in this case, UMC and Makassar people, the UMC chose to mix English with other languages.

English regularly perceived to be the worldwide language, which is used for cross-cultural communication by people from around the world. Especially in Makassar, English becomes the first language choice among immigrant and also UMC to socialize with other people around them, among immigrants, also for immigrants and others. English as a tool of communication become international trends, English has exerted a presence in the cultures, languages, and interactional patterns of the peoples of Makassar, Indonesia, as an Asian country. The output and further action of this research are expected to contribute to Sociolinguistic study and Language study. Furthermore, it is expected to be an academic reference from the related institutions such as; IOM, UNHCR, immigration, or Social Service of Makassar City. Especially for an institution that gives a contribution to Bahasa Indonesia teaching for Foreign Speaker (BIPA), ESP teaching, also for the reference to a researcher who wants to conduct sociolinguistic related research.

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