

## ORAL NARRATIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE PROFICIENCY IN BILINGUAL CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY OF JAVANESE-INDONESIAN CHILDREN

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### Abstract

*This qualitative preliminary study focuses on the linguistic proficiency of Javanese-Indonesian bilingual elementary school children in a village in Gunung Kidul, 65 km south of Yogyakarta in the island of Java, Indonesia, in producing oral narrative and descriptive stories in Javanese and Indonesian. Two kinds of instruments were used to elicit data in this study: a six-minute silent movie and a picture about some activities to commemorate the Indonesian Independence Day. The elicited data from the movie instrument shows that both the lower-grade and higher-grade students were more at ease with Javanese than with Indonesian. From the picture-triggered speech, the result is that the higher-grade students superseded the lower-grade students in their fluency in Indonesian as well as in their ability to construct longer utterances in the language. This study demonstrates that the children's proficiency in Javanese – their first language – remains at the basic level and it does not develop even though the children are in the higher grade. However, all children are more comfortable with Javanese when they have to do retelling. When the children were given a task that is related to academic requirements, such as describing something that is based on a picture, the higher-grade children perform better in Indonesian rather than in Javanese.*

Keywords: narrative, descriptive, bilingual

### Abstrak

*Penelitian kualitatif ini mengkaji kemahiran berdwibahasa anak-anak Sekolah Dasar di sebuah desa di daerah Gunung Kidul, 65 km selatan Yogyakarta, dalam menarasikan dan mendeskripsikan cerita dalam dua bahasa: bahasa Jawa dan bahasa Indonesia. Ada dua jenis instrumen yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini, yaitu film tanpa suara yang berdurasi enam menit dan sebuah gambar yang mendeskripsikan sejumlah kegiatan untuk memperingati hari kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia. Data yang diperoleh dari instrumen film menunjukkan bahwa semua siswa dari kelas yang paling rendah hingga yang paling tinggi lebih nyaman berbicara dalam bahasa Jawa dari pada bahasa Indonesia. Sebaliknya, data yang diperoleh dari gambar menunjukkan bahwa siswa yang duduk di kelas yang lebih tinggi lebih lancar dalam berbahasa Indonesia. Anak-anak ini mampu menuturkan kalimat-kalimat panjang dalam bahasa Indonesia. Penelitian ini membuktikan bahwa kemahiran anak-anak ini dalam bahasa ibunya, yaitu bahasa Jawa, tetap berada di tingkat dasar, dan tidak menunjukkan perkembangan meskipun duduk di kelas yang lebih tinggi. Akan tetapi, semua anak merasa nyaman dengan bahasa Jawa apabila mereka harus menarasikan cerita. Ketika anak-anak ini diminta untuk mendeskripsikan cerita yang terkait dengan tuntutan akademik, seperti menuturkan sejumlah kejadian berdasarkan gambar yang*

*mereka lihat, anak-anak yang duduk di kelas yang lebih tinggi menunjukkan tingkat kemahiran berbahasa Indonesia yang lebih tinggi dari pada bahasa Jawa.*

Kata kunci: *naratif, deskriptif, dwibahasa*

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the most multilingual countries in the world, inhabited by speakers of more than 700 local languages. The official language of the country is Indonesian (*bahasa Indonesia*), and many people are bilingual at an early age. For many Indonesians, especially those who do not live in the central parts of the regions, Indonesian is a language they learn at school. Their first language is the local language, such as Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, Ambonese, Acehnese, to name just a few.

There is a tendency that the number of bilingual speakers in Indonesia – those who can speak both the local and the national language equally fluently – decreases from time to time. A number of studies have demonstrated that due to the massive use of Indonesian in both communicative interactions as well as institutional practices such as the mass media and education, nowadays many Indonesians – especially the younger generation – prefer to speak in Indonesian rather than in the language of their parents (Gunarwan 2006, Sobarna 2007, Darwis 2011, Kaswanti Purwo 2012).

A preliminary study on the children's literacy of pre-school, kindergarten, and elementary school children of Sundanese families in Kumpay village (20 km north of Bandung, West Java) indicated that pre-school (3-4 years old) and kindergarten (5-6 years old) children have shifted from Sundanese to Indonesian (Kaswanti Purwo 2012). However, elementary children aged 7-8 years prefer to use Sundanese rather than Indonesian. This, according to Kaswanti Purwo (2012), was because pre-school and kindergarten children in that area had already been exposed to Indonesian since they entered their early education. Parents, who wanted to support their children to be successful in education, shifted from Sundanese to Indonesian in their daily communication with the children. These children were the first batch of generation in the village that started to have the government PAUD (*Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 'early age education') program. The teachers of this program are government certified and – as they were not local teachers – they do not speak Sundanese. Unlike these children, the older children (the elementary school children) use Sundanese both in the kindergarten and at home. Thus, as the younger children were less exposed to Sundanese and started to use Indonesian in the pre-elementary school, they tend to use Indonesian rather than Sundanese in their day-to-day communication.

This study is an attempt to explore the oral narrative and descriptive proficiency of Javanese children in three elementary schools in Gunung Kidul area, 65 km south of Yogyakarta in Indonesia. All the students speak Javanese as their first language, a language they use in daily communication, at home as well as at school. Indonesian – a language they officially started to learn in elementary school – is the national language and the language used as a medium of instruction throughout their education years. However, it is very likely that these children hear Indonesian spoken in daily communication around them since they were very young, although they may be exposed to Indonesian television programs.

This study specifically focuses on comparing the children's oral competence in both Javanese and Indonesian when narrating as well as describing events. Two instruments were

used to gather the data: a film and a picture. The film is speechless, depicting a series of sequential events, and the picture portrays a number of different activities of the people when celebrating the national independence day. The study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do the children retell in both Javanese and Indonesian the sequential events narrated in the film?
2. How do the children describe in both Javanese and Indonesian the various activities sketched in the picture?

## LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN BILINGUAL CHILDREN

Recent studies about language development in bilingual children indicate some benefits in learning more than one language. Mattock *et al.* (2010), for example, claim that in comparison to monolingual children, there are cognitive advantages in bilingual children, which can be observed in their metalinguistic awareness. These children, according to Mattock *et al.* (2010:213), can better understand “abstract linguistic representations than their monolingual peers.” Or, as set forth in Bialystok *et al.* (2014), bilingual children are more accurate in judging grammatical violations in comparison to monolinguals.

Bilingual children also supersede monolinguals in the ability to code switch in different situations – an evidence of their pragmatic competence. For example, a longitudinal case study by Arias and Lakshmanan (2005) on a Spanish girl (Isabella) demonstrated that she was able to code-switch at a young age. At the age of 2.5, Isabella migrated to the United States with her parents and was first exposed to English in the child-care center. Although she spoke in Spanish at home, later she also used English in communicating with her parents. Later this family was used to speaking two languages at home: Spanish and English. Isabella’s linguistic development showed that her English turned to be more dominant than her Spanish, but she still code-switched at the age of 3.8. Additionally, Cantone (2005) observed the way bilingual Italian-German children interact. He reported further that these children did a lot of code switching and this practice does not make their utterances ungrammatical. These children managed to set apart and choose which expressions are appropriate for which type of interlocutor in their interaction with others.

A phenomenal report about bilingual children’s language development is reported by Cummins (1981, 2001, 2008), who argues that bilingualism has positive effects on children’s linguistic and educational development. In his threshold hypothesis, Cummins (1981) states that in order to gain second language proficiency, a learner must have passed a certain appropriate level of competence in his or her first language. According to Cummins (2001), children who have strong L1 proficiency tend to be good in their L2 literacy because L2 is the language that is used at school. For Cummins (2008), the linguistic development of bilingual children can be seen from two types of skills: the *Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills* (BICS) dan the *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency* (CALP). BICS are language skills that are needed for social interaction. CALP, on the other hand, refers to academic formal learning that is essential for students to succeed in school. While BICS are contextually driven, CALP involves language tasks that are cognitively demanding.

Despite the fact that many children in Indonesia grow in a bilingual environment, not much has been done to investigate the bilingual experience and development of these bilingual

Indonesian children. In many places in the country, children speak in a local language that is commonly used in family as well as informal domains. In a more formal domain such as schools and other academic settings, they have to use Indonesian. To what extent these bilingual children are different in narrating and describing a series of events – in using each of these two languages: in Indonesian or in Javanese – is what the present paper intends to explore.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Participants

This study focuses on the oral narrative and descriptive proficiency of bilingual elementary school children in a small village in Gunung Kidul, about 65 km south of Yogyakarta in Central Java. All the children, whose parents are mostly farmers, speak Javanese at home and use Indonesian at school. The participants of the study were 83 students, from Grade 1 to 6, aged between 6 to 12 years old, from three elementary schools in the village.

**Table 1. Participants**

Grade	Name of school		
	SD Pudak	SD Bintaos	SD Widoro
Grade 1	8	2	-
Grade 2	12	3	-
Grade 3	8	3	7
Grade 4	10	3	3
Grade 5	9	2	4
Grade 6	6	3	-
Total	53	16	14

SD = *Sekolah Dasar* 'Elementary School'

### Research Instruments

Two types of instruments were used in this study: a six-minute silent movie and a picture, each of which portraying a number of activities.

#### *The silent movie*

The silent movie – known as *The Pear Story* film – was made at the University of California, Berkeley in 1975 (<http://pearstories.org>). This film was designed by Wallace Chafe (1985) – an American linguist – and his team to elicit narrative stories from speakers of different languages around the world. The story starts with a farmer harvesting pears, going up and down the tree sorting out the pears and putting them into the baskets. Meanwhile a man leading a goat passed by. Then came a boy on a bike who stopped by. As he intended to steal a basket of pears, he looked up the tree to make sure the farmer was not aware of his presence. After putting the basket on the front part of his bike, he got on his bike and continued the journey. From the other direction there came a girl riding a bike. When the boy looked at the girl, his bike hit a rock and he fell off his bike. The pears scattered all around. When the boy was picking up the fruits, three boys passed by and helped the boy to gather the scattered pears. The boy in return picked up three pears for the helpers, who then continued to walk and passed by the pear tree. The final scene reintroduced the farmer (who has been off-screen for most of the film) who was confused

to discover that one of his baskets was missing. Right then he saw three boys walking toward him, each was eating a pear.

#### *The picture*

The picture depicts a number of activities by students in a school celebrating the Indonesian Independence Day (see Appendix A). The choice of this particular theme of the picture is due to the fact that for the people in Gunung Kidul, the Independence Day is a big event that they annually celebrate. In the picture, everyone is involved in doing activities such as cleaning the schoolyard, decorating the village with flags, and painting the wall. As the events are familiar for the students, the picture will make it easier for them to come up with a description.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The data was obtained in two recording stages, first collecting the data of the students' oral retelling of the silent movie and then the data of the students' oral description of the picture.

#### *Stage 1 – The silent movie*

In the first stage, all the students from SD Pudak and SD Bintaos (69 students) were asked to watch *the Pear Story* film. They were all very excited and asked the researchers to play it one more time. Each student was asked then to retell what they saw in the movie in two languages: first in Javanese and then in Indonesian. The narrations were all recorded and then transcribed. The data in these two schools were obtained on 29-30 November 2013.

#### *Stage 2 – The picture*

In the second stage, 16 students from SD Pudak and 14 students from SD Widoro participated in the study. Those from SD Pudak had participated earlier in the first stage. This time each of the 30 students was asked to describe the activities of the people in the picture, also in two languages, first in Javanese and then in Indonesian. The descriptions were also recorded and then transcribed. The picture-triggered data in these two schools were obtained on 30 December 2013 and 7 June 2014.

**Table 2. Instruments and Participants**

<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Schools &amp; Number of Participants</b>
Film	SD Pudak & SD Bintaos 69 students
Picture	SD Bintaos & SD Widoro 30 students

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

After transcribing the recordings from both instruments in Javanese and Indonesian, the transcribed data obtained from each student, the Javanese and the Indonesian, were compared and instances of similarities and differences were coded. Table 3 describes the procedures.

**Table 3. Data Analysis Procedures**

Instruments	Source of Data	Analysis Procedures
Film & Picture	Transcription: Javanese and Indonesian	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Comparing transcribed data of each student (Javanese vs. Indonesian)</li> <li>2. Finding similarities and differences in both languages</li> </ol>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section attempts to present a qualitative analysis to each of the two research questions, followed by a discussion of the findings.

### *Oral narrative proficiency based on the silent movie*

The data obtained from the silent-movie approach were utterances, the production of which reflected the students' ability in recalling not only each of the activities in the film but also the chronological order of the story. Although the movie was played twice, almost all of the students were unable to retell all the activities in the film and – as for the sequencing of the activities – some of them did not follow the chronological order as in the movie.

The movie data suggested some interesting findings. In the Javanese oral narration, the children were able to produce longer utterances and they were also more creative in developing the story. When they narrated in Indonesian, however, they used quite a number of Javanese words, and they often hesitated and then made self-repair. Another thing that occurs in the Indonesian data is the use of L1 transfer. The examples are described below.

In general, the students' oral proficiency in Javanese in both SD Pudak and SD Bintaos was better than that in Indonesian. They could produce longer utterances in Javanese, as demonstrated in examples 1 and 2 below.

#### (1) Ani (Indonesian)

*Nama saya Anireski Regita, saya mau menceritakan filem. Filem tadi menceritakan tentang filem... pak tani sedang memetik... memetik pir.* [My name is Anireski Regita, I want to tell about a film. The film is about a film... a farmer was picking... picking pears.]

#### (2) Ani (Javanese)

*Jenengku Anireski Regita, aku arep menceritaké filem. Filem mau pak tani lagi... lagi ngepèk pir. Pir iku mau sing sitok ilang di... dijipuk.. dijipuk Rendi. Pak tani iku mau medun sing sitok ora ènèk pak tani bingung. Bocah iku mau sing nyolong pir nibo. Pir iku mau kutah kabèh. Ènèk sing nolongi wong telu. Wong telu iku mau njikuk pir sitok sitok.* [My name is Anireski Regita, I want to tell about a film. In that film a farmer was... was picking up pears. One (basket of) pear was lost. It was taken by Rendi. The farmer went down (from the tree) and (found that) one (basket) was missing. The farmer got confused. The boy who stole the pears fell down. All the pears spilled out. There were three persons who helped (the boy). The three persons took each of the three pears.]

There is also a tendency that the students were more creative in the Javanese narration, as shown in (3) and (4).

(3) Ani (Javanese)

*Film mau pak tani lagi lagi ngepèk pir, pir iku mau sing sitok ilang di.. dijipuk.. dijipuk Rendi.* [In that film a farmer was... was picking up pears. One (basket of) pear was lost. It was... taken by Rendi.]

(4) Cindi (Javanese)

*Bareng kuwi cah lanang wong telu kuwi ngomongé podo topimu kèri gèk langsung ngomongé nyetop bemo, bareng ngono kuwi anu iki to bemo yo wis iki imbalané nggo kowé, turnuwun ya. Gèk kuwi wong sing nyolong jambu kuwi langsung mlaku bareng sing nduwé jambu kuwi kéné jambuku kari loro lah bareng kuwi wong telu kuwi léwat nèng ngarepé bareng kuwi opo kaé sing sing ènèng sing anu nyolong anu jambuné yo wis dèh nèk umpamané kaé sing nyolong ra popo.* [After that the three boys said 'You left your hat.' Then immediately (they) stopped the three-wheeled car, after that 'This is the three-wheeled car. Okay, these (pears) are for you as a return. Thank you.' Then the person who stole the jambu walked away. The owner of the jambus thought, 'There are only two (baskets) of jambu left.' Then the three boys passed by in front of (him) and (he said) 'Did they steal my jambus? It's okay. If they stole (the jambus) it's okay.']

In (3), Ani named the boy as *Rendi*, and in (4) Cindi was framing a story, that is to tell a story within a story (Sandelowski 1991). As seen in (4), Cindi first played the character of the boys who found the hat, and after that she played the role of the farmer who lost the pears. Interestingly, she developed the story by describing something that was not in the film: *nyetop bemo* 'stop the three-wheeled car.'

The students' vocabulary competence in Indonesian was somewhat lower than that in Javanese. When narrating in Indonesian, some students found difficulties in finding an appropriate word in Indonesian, and they used Javanese words instead, as in the following:

(5) Via (Indonesian)

*Orang itu langsung membawa kranjangnya ke depan lip... orang itu mengulir pitnya.* [That person immediately took the basket in front of ... That person pedaled the bike.]

(6) Amalia (Indonesian)

[...] *dan ikut me... me... ikut mewadhahi buah ke kranjang.* [... and (they) followed... followed to place the fruit into the basket.]

(7) Desti (Indonesian)

[...] *terus orang itu ... ada orang tiga yang menolongnya dan dan dan dan sudah diwadhahi éh sudah di... apa.* [... then the person... there were three persons who helped him and and and and and (it was) already put in a container hmm... already was... what]

In (5), Via was not able to find the Indonesian word for 'pedaling his bike.' She used the Javanese *ngulir* 'pedal' with the Indonesian prefix *me-* and also the Javanese *pit* 'bike'. In (6) and (7), Amalia and Desti were struggling to find the word 'to place' in Indonesian and finally they mixed the Indonesian prefix *me-* and *di-* respectively and the Javanese *wadhah* 'container.' In (7), Desti realized that *diwadhahi* was not an appropriate word in Indonesian, and therefore she was trying to make a self-repair *di... apa* 'being... what' but she failed.

The tendency of showing more fluency in Javanese was also shown in some cases of self-repair in the Indonesian data. In (8), we can see that Amalia first uttered the Javanese prefix *nge-* before she finally realized that she had to do the narration in Indonesian.

(8) Amalia (Indonesian)

[...] lalu orang tiga itu *nge..* memberikan topi yang ketinggalan. [...] then the three people (Jav. *nge-*) gave the hat which was left]

Another instance of the students' lower proficiency in Indonesian was demonstrated in the use of L1 transfer. As seen in (8) above, *orang tiga itu* 'the three people' [literally 'person-three-that'] is grammatically incorrect in Indonesian. In Indonesian, numbers have to precede nouns, so the correct noun phrase is *tiga orang itu* [literally 'three-person-that']. The production of the phrase was an impact of transfer from the Javanese *wong telu kuwi* 'the three people' [literally 'person-three-that'].

*Oral descriptive proficiency based on the picture*

The elicited utterances from the picture instrument demonstrated a different type of performance. When describing the events in the picture, the students looked at the picture and they were able to describe all activities depicted in the picture in both Javanese and Indonesian. However, the data showed that the lower-grade students could only produce simple and short utterances in both languages. As seen in the utterances of Rizki [(9a) and (9b)] and Kiki [(10a) and (10b)], the grammatical patterns in both languages are very simple and basic. There is also a tendency that they tend to be repetitive, such as using the word *anak-anak* 'Ind-children' or *bocah-bocah* 'Jav-children' in each utterance.

(9a) Rizki (Grade 1, Indonesian)

*Nama saya Rizki. SD Puduk Negri. Anak-anak masang gendéra. Anak-anak masang hiasan. Anak-anak masang... Anak-anak nyapu. Anak-anak ngelungna hiasan.* [My name is Rizki. Puduk State elementary school. The children put the flags. The children put the decoration. The children put ... The children swept. The children gave the decoration.]

(9b) Rizki (Grade 1, Javanese)

*Bocah-bocah masang gendéra. Bocah-bocah masang hiasan. Bocah-bocah ngelungna hiasan. Bocah-bocah ngecèt. Bocah-bocah nyapu.....Tempat sampah.* [The children put the flags. The children put the decoration. The children swept... Basket bin.]

(10a) Kiki (Grade 2, Indonesian)

*Orang itu lagi menyapu. Orang itu lagi menyapu, memasang bendera. Orang itu menyunduki bendera. Orang itu mengecèt tembok. Orang itu mengaduk cèt.* [That person is sweeping. That person is sweeping, putting the flag. That person is piercing the flag. That person is painting the wall. That person is mixing the paint].

(10b) Kiki (Grade 2, Javanese)

*Orang iki lagi nyapu. Orang iki lagi masang gendéra. Orang iki lagi nunjuki gendéra. Ngecèt témbok. Ngaduk cat. Wis Pak.* [This person is sweeping. This person is putting the flag. This person is pointing at the flag. (He) mixed the paint. That's all, sir.]



As evidenced in the movie-triggered data, in this picture-triggered data the younger children's vocabulary in Indonesian is also very limited. As demonstrated in the examples above, Javanese words that were used in the Indonesian descriptive speech were *gendera* 'flag', *ngelungna* 'hand in', *menyunduki* 'pierce', and *ngecèt* 'paint'. On the other hand, Indonesian words were also used in the Javanese speech, such as the word *orang* 'person' in (10b) instead of the Javanese *wong* 'person'.

The higher-grade students, on the other hand, were able to produce longer utterances in Indonesian. The grammatical patterns were also more complex, as demonstrated below.

(11a) Yahya (Grade 5, Indonesian)

*Nama saya Yahya dan saya bersekolah di SDN Pudak. Saya kelas lima. Pada suatu hari ada tujuh anak yang sedang meng....mengerjakan tugas dari Bu guru dan Pak Guru. Tugas itu adalah menghias sekolah sebaik mungkin. Ada anak-anak yang mengecet tembok, ada yang memasang bendera, ada yang menyapu, ada yang membawa cet. Mereka bekerja dengan baik sekali. Mereka saling membantu dan pekerjaan itu pun semakin lama semakin selesai. Pekerjaan itu pun sudah selesai. Sekolah itu terlihat bagus dan indah.*

[My name is Yahya and I go to Pudak elementary school. I am in the fifth grade. One day there are seven kids who are doing their tasks from the teachers. The task is to decorate the school as beautifully as possible. Some children are painting the wall, some are putting the flags, one is sweeping, one is having some paint. They work very well. They help each other, and the work is getting all done. Now the work is done. The school looks beautiful and pretty.]

(11b) Yahya (Grade 5, Javanese)

*Jenengku Yahya. Aku sekolah ing SDN Pudak. Aku kelas lima. Ing dina iku ana bocah-bocah pitu sing lagi ngerjakaké tugas. Bocah-bocah iku mau padha nggias sekolah iku. Ana sing ngecèt, ana sing nggawa cèt, ana sing nyapu. Sekolah iku mau katon apik. Guru padha seneng. Sekolah iku mau apik lan indah.*

[My name is Yahya and I go to Pudak elementary school. I am in the fifth grade. One day there are seven kids who are doing their tasks. They are decorating the school. Some children are painting the wall, one is having some paint, one is sweeping. The school looks more beautiful The teachers are all happy. The school looks beautiful and pretty.]

As seen in (11a), the presence of *pada suatu hari* 'one day', *bagus dan indah* 'beautiful and pretty' indicates the speaker was more linguistically competent in Indonesian. The proficiency in Javanese, as we can see in (11b), is not as good as that in Indonesian, as indicated by the use of Indonesian verb and the Javanese suffix *ngerjakaké* 'do'. Another Indonesian word that is used in the Javanese narrative in (11b) is *indah* 'pretty'.

. The linguistic development of the lower-grade children seems to be in the BICS stage in both languages, as demonstrated in the following:

(12a) Toto (Grade 2, Javanese)

*Uwong iku agèk nyapu. Uwong iku agek ngecèt. Uwong iku agèk masang gen... gendéra. Uwong sing ènèk tangga masang gendéra.*

(12b) Toto (Grade 2, Indonesian)

*Orang itu lagi menyapu di... Orang itu lagi mengecat. Orang itu lagi memasang bendera. Orang yang ada di tangga lagi memasang bendera.*

On the other hand, children who are in the higher grades show that their CALP is higher in Indonesian rather than in Javanese. Observe that the Indonesian utterances produced by Mitha in example (13a) were longer and syntactically more complex than those in Javanese (example 13b).

(13a) Mitha (Grade 5, Indonesian)

Namaku Mitha. Saya bersekolah di SD Negeri Pudak. Saya kelas lima. *Saya ingin menceritakan kesiapan anak-anak menyongsong* hari Kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia. Pada tanggal 16 Agustus anak-anak mempersiapkan....mempersiapkan hari Kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia. *Mereka menghias halaman sekolah.* Ada yang mengecat pagar, ada juga yang ngecat gapura. *Ada juga yang memasang bendera di atas gapura. Ada juga yang menancapkan bendera di samping gapura.* Ada juga yang menyapu. Mereka membersihkan dengan senang hati. Mereka juga mempersiapkan dan juga membersihkan kelas-kelas. Setelah selesai mempersiapkan hari Kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia sekolah itu terlihat indah dan rapi.

[My name is Mitha. I go to Pudak Elementary School. I am in my fifth grade. I would like to tell a story about the readiness of the children in commemorating the Indonesian independence day. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of August the children prepared the independence day of the Republic of Indonesia. They decorated the schoolyard. Someone was painting the fence; there was also one who was painting the gate. There was also one who was putting the flag on the gate. There was also one who was putting the flag next to the gate. There was also one who was sweeping. They cleaned happily. They also prepared and cleaned the classrooms. After finishing preparing the independence day of the Republic of Indonesia the school looked beautiful and neat.]

(13b) Mitha (Grade 5, Javanese)

*Jenengku Mitha. Aku sekolah neng SD Negeri Pudak. Aku kelas lima. Aku péngén nyritakaké persiapané anak-anak kanggo dina kemerdekaan negara Indonesia. Ing tanggal 16 Agustus anak-anak padha nyiapaké Kemerdekaan Indonesia. Ana sing ngecat pager, ngecat gapura lan masang gendéra. Ana sing nyapu. Para anak-anak iku mau ngriasi gapura lan halaman sekolah. Sakwisé ngriasi sekelilingé sekolah, sekolah iku mau katon resik lan endah.*

[My name is Mitha. I go to Pudak elementary school. I am in year five. I want to tell a story about the children's preparation for the Indonesian independence day. On August 16, the children started to make the preparation. They are painting the fence and the gateway, and they are installing the flags. There is someone who is sweeping (the yard). The children decorate the gateway and the school-yard. After decorating the school, the school looks beautiful and neat.]

Some phenomena about the fact that there was no significant linguistic development in the Javanese language of those from the higher grades were the following: (a) the use of lexical items in Indonesian, but affixes in Javanese as in examples (14) and (15); (b) the use of Indonesian lexical items by changing the final phoneme /a/ into /o/ to make it sound Javanese,

as seen in examples (16) and (17); and (c) the use of literal translation from Indonesian to Javanese, as exemplified in (18).

- (14) *Ning ndésa Sri Wedari ngadhakna kerja bakti kanggo HUT RI [...]*  
 ‘In Sri Wedari village (people) did collaborative work to commemorate the Indonesian independence day’
- (15) *[...] désa Sukamaju ngrayaké HUT RI sing artiné hari ulang tahun Republik Indonesia*  
 ‘[...] Sukamaju village commemorated the Indonesian independence day, which means the birthday of the Republic of Indonesia’
- (16) *Aku karo konco-koncoku seneng banget kareno dina sesuk dina kemerdekaan Indonesia.*  
 ‘I and my friends are very happy because tomorrow is the independence day of Indonesia’
- (17) *Mereko saling guyon... guyon sing seneng.*  
 ‘They all are joking... joking happily’
- (18) *Bar kuwi bapak panitia ngenèhi kabar tugasé dhéwé-dhéwé.*  
 ‘After that the committee informed their tasks’

Example (14) demonstrates that although Javanese has the lexical item *nganak(a)ké* or *nganakna* which is equivalent to the Indonesian *mengadakan* ‘hold, carry out’, some students coined a Javanese word *ngadhakna*, which is actually a mixture of the base form *ada* ‘exist’ (Indonesian) and the affixes *ng-* and *-na* (Javanese). In example (15), similarly, instead of using the Javanese *tegesé* which is equivalent to the Indonesian *artinya* ‘mean’, some students used the lexical item *artiné*, which is coined from the base form *arti* ‘mean’ (Indonesian) and the Javanese suffix *-né*.

The linguistic incompetence of the students in finding an appropriate Javanese word is shown in examples (16) and (17). In Javanese, the word for *karena* ‘because’ is *amarga*. We see that in (16), the final phoneme in Indonesian *karena* is changed from /a/ into /o/ to make it sound Javanese. Example (17) is interesting as in Javanese there is no equivalence for *mereka* ‘they’. However, there is an instance of *mereko*, which also indicates that the student’s acquisition in Javanese is not that high.

There are some instances of literal translation from Indonesian into Javanese, which does not sound appropriate in the ears of Javanese speakers. As demonstrated in example (18), *ngenèhi kabar* ‘let someone know’ is a literal translation of the Indonesian verbal phrase *memberi kabar*. This phrase is used instead of the Javanese *ngandhani* ‘inform’.

Despite the fact that some students showed their incompetence in Javanese, some students proved that their Javanese was quite good. As mentioned earlier, Javanese does not have the equivalence of *mereka* ‘they’, but examples (19), (20), and (21) demonstrate that the students were able to fill in the lexical gap with Javanese words such as *rakyat* ‘people’ *para warga* ‘members of the society’ and *kabèh* ‘all’. Here are the examples:

- (19) Ari (Ind): *Mereka saling membantu satu sama lain, tidak ada yang bermusuhan.*  
 [They are helping each other, they are not fighting.]  
 Ari (Jav): *Rakyat ngéwangi kancane lan ora ana sing musuhan.*  
 [People help others and no one is fighting]  
 mereka ‘they’ → rakyat ‘people’

- (20) Tati (Ind): *Mereka sangat senang karena hari kemerdekaan Indonesia.*  
 [They are happy because (it's) the independence day of Indonesia]  
 Tati (Jav): *Para warga pada seneng marga arep mèngeti dina kemerdekaan*  
 [People are happy because (they) are going to commemorate independence day]  
 mereka 'they' → *para warga* 'people'
- (21) Sapto (Ind): *Mereka bekerja bakti dan bergotong royong.*  
 [They work collaboratively without pay]  
 Sapto (Jav): *Kabèh kerja bakti lan gotong royong.*  
 [They all work collaboratively without pay]  
 mereka → *kabèh*

*Discussion: film-elicited narrative data vs. picture-elicited descriptive data*

Based on the findings mentioned in the previous sections, we can see that the oral narratives elicited from the film and the oral descriptive texts elicited from the picture in both languages show different characteristics. The underlying reason of the differences is that in producing the utterances, the children were triggered by two different types of stimuli: the first type is the six-minute silent movie, and the second one is the picture. The production of each, then, is a result of a cognitive processing that depends on the stimulus.

What is interesting in this study is that the second stimulus (picture) was able to lead the children to produce more organized and coherent utterances. Furthermore, the data produced through this stimulus also showed that the older children performed much better in Indonesian rather than in Javanese. As mentioned earlier, the children's picture-elicited data demonstrated that their *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency* (CALP) in Indonesian developed with age. This is not surprising since Indonesian is used as a medium of instruction at school.

The oral narratives from the film were actually expressed as a result of recalling the scenes in the film, and for that reason they were somewhat not coherently structured. The linguistic forms and structural patterns belong to the restricted code (Bernstein 2003): a type of spoken language that is relatively simple and disorganized. Of the 69 students who participated in this silent movie project, only two were able to produce coherently organized episodes in both Javanese and Indonesian.

On the other hand, the picture-elicited data were not based on the students' memory and thus demonstrated a more coherent construction. Unlike the film-triggered utterances, the utterances elicited from the picture are more coherent and elaborated and more information is uttered.

## CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to investigate to what extent there is a difference between bilingual Indonesian children in Gunung Kidul in their native language (Javanese) and the national language (Indonesian) spoken proficiency as reflected in their production of a narrative as well as descriptive account. A comparison between the narrative account (after watching sequential events in the speechless movie) and descriptive account (when describing various activities portrayed in the picture of people's celebrating Indonesian independence day) unveiled that the children's spoken proficiency when narrating events in Javanese – especially at the lower level of elementary school – supersede their oral skill in Indonesian. However, when describing

activities, the spoken proficiency revealed a striking difference between the lower level and higher level of pupils. While the Javanese proficiency of the higher grade school pupils stagnated, their competence in Indonesian excelled those of the lower grade children, as revealed in their better performance in doing a task that is related to academic performance, such as describing activities. The Javanese of these children remained at BICS level, to use Cummins' (2008) term, but – this is what the teaching of Indonesian and its use as the medium of instruction in school contributes – their proficiency in Indonesian is progressing towards the CALP level.

## NOTES

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## APPENDIX A

### INSTRUMENTS

(1) Film: [www.linguistics.ucsb.edu/faculty/chafe/pearfilm.htm](http://www.linguistics.ucsb.edu/faculty/chafe/pearfilm.htm)

(2) Picture:

