

Language maintenance in the family to maintain family harmony: A case study of mixed marriages between Sundanese women and French men

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ABSTRACT: This research aims to scrutinize the use of language in intermarried families between Sundanese women and French men living in France. Using ethnographic research with a qualitative and descriptive methodology, the data in this study were gathered via observations, interviews with informants, and written sources in the form of notes from the French embassy in Indonesia. The purpose was to collect information regarding languages used in their families. The results of this study reveal that the families of Sundanese-French couples living in France practice multilingual interactions in their family. They use French, English, Indonesian, and Sundanese languages as a medium for family communication. The use of each language varies according to its functions. In these families, the children understand Indonesian and a little bit of Sundanese, but they prefer to speak French or English. After growing up, their inner attachment to their mothers led them to look for their cousins in Indonesia.

KEYWORDS: language maintenance; family harmony; mixed marriages; bilingual; Sundanese-French couples

1. Introduction

In the last four decades, there has been an increase in the number of experts from France in various fields in West Java, Indonesia. Several factors contribute to such a phenomenon, including the implementation of an integrated curriculum within the Conceiving—Designing—Implementing—Operating (CDIO) education framework by technical higher education institutions (Rouvrais et al., 2020). The curriculum is applied in Grande Ecole and private multisite engineering closely related to the professional branch and national qualification framework. In addition, the bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and France has developed new partnerships and mechanisms that create new paradigms of cooperation (Waskito et al., 2023). Another influencing factor includes the personal motivation of French experts to work abroad to increase their income. Such increasing arrival of French experts impacts a lot of mixed marriages between Sundanese women and French men. In such Sundanese-French marriages, the couples have different cultural, racial, or religious backgrounds. Mixed marriage can be said to be an amalgamation of perceived differences and existing social orders and norms. Studies on intermarriage look at how socially constructed contact differences (e.g., in personal life) affect social relationships and alter social reality (Collet, 2012). ‘Mixed’ or ‘cross-cultural’ marriages here mean “marriages between

two people from different linguistic, religious, or ethnic groups or nations” (Breger & Hill, 2020; Keel & Drew, 2004).

After the marriages were consummated, the French husbands returned home because the employment contracts had been completed. They took their wives with them. They started a new life in a new land with their wives. The lives of these wives then changed drastically. Nasution et al. (2023) wrote that they face sociocultural, sociodemographic, and linguistic factors in a new country. From a sociological point of view, intermarriage needs to be understood as an amalgamation of perceived differences and existing social orders and norms. The study of intermarriage looks at how differences in social contact affect social relationships and change social reality. Mixed couples experience certain social constraints due to the migratory situation of at least one of the partners. Therefore, these couples need time to learn to manage cultural and social differences in their relationship (Collet, 2012). Differences between couples due to their cultural and social affiliation can sometimes cause conflicts and misunderstandings in their relationships. Couples need open communication and an understanding of each other’s backgrounds to navigate these differences and build a solid and healthy relationship. Thus, respect for each other’s beliefs and values is crucial to maintaining a harmonious partnership—differences between couples due to their cultural and social affiliations.

Differences in many respects do not make either partner superior. For instance, although husbands are more educated in fields like engineering or business, most wives have a bachelor’s degree in French or English. However, these differences should not be used to determine superiority or inferiority in a relationship. Each partner brings their unique strengths and skills. Therefore, it is essential to recognize and appreciate these differences to build a strong and healthy partnership. Furthermore, because the French language skills of the wives are typically inadequate, the husbands train them to speak French. In conclusion, whereas couples may have different levels of education and language ability, these differences do not determine supremacy. Instead, they can collaborate to support and assist each other in areas where they may be lacking. Couples must identify and appreciate each other’s talents and limitations to achieve a balanced and equal partnership. By doing so, they can establish a solid and healthy relationship.

One of the essential elements of culture is language. Language is an interesting phenomenon because it is one of the most frequently mentioned challenges in international marriages. Yet, it is also an aspect that parents strongly want to pass on to their mixed children (Lopez, 2017). How people communicate depends on their culture, language, rules, and norms. Understanding each other’s culture is essential for maintaining healthy communication and interaction between couples. Differences in their respective cultures can cause communication difficulties between the individuals. Even worse, differences in cultural expectations can lead to fatal risks, including misunderstanding (Sirait et al., 2020). In intermarried families, misconceptions about intercultural communication can involve all family members. It can be agreed on which culture and language will be used in the family, or both languages and cultures will be used. The languages used can be bilingual or even multilingual. In the family, at least some family members speak more than one language. There will be two types of options considered: global and local. In a global type, language choices are made intentionally by parents for daily contact with their children. Meanwhile, in a local type, language choices are made consciously or spontaneously for specific speech acts. Code-switching that differs from the base language of the conversation will receive special consideration (Pavlenko, 2004).

The occurrence of cultural encounters in Sundanese-French intermarriage thus cannot be separated from intercultural communication. Therefore, this study utilizes the theory of intracultural communication as one of the theories. It is motivated by the fact that the interaction that occurs in mixed

marriages is also the interaction of intercultural communication. This study will discuss the interaction of language communication in intermarried families of Sundanese women and French men living in France. The research questions addressed in this study are: (1) what language do these families use at home? (2) what are the challenges and strategies of Sundanese women in French-language communication? and (3) what are the challenges and strategies for preserving Indonesian and Sundanese language and culture in a French-speaking environment?

2. Literature review

2.1. Sundanese people and Sundanese culture

A person is said to be Sundanese if his parents, either from the father's or mother's side or both, are Sundanese, regardless of where they live or grow up. The second criterion is based on social culture. A person is said to be Sundanese if raised in a sociocultural environment and applies Sundanese cultural norms and values. In this second criterion, what is considered necessary is the place of residence, sociocultural life, and attitude of the person (Ekadjati, 2014).

Sundanese culture is known as a culture that upholds good manners. In general, Sundanese culture has a friendly character. Sundanese people smile easily. They are polite, gentle, and very respectful to their parents. In Sundanese culture, it is taught how to speak softly to elders. From the results of our research, the things mentioned above follow the characters that exist in Sundanese women. In general, most of the Sundanese people adhere to Islam. Apart from Islam are Catholics, Christians, Hindus, and Buddhists.

The Sundanese recognize that various ceremonies and celebrations, such as marriages, births, circumcision, and several other traditions, mark a person's life stages. From the aspect of the kinship system, the Sundanese people are bilateral, namely the lineage that considers kinship through the father and mother lines. Sundanese people hold that life must be of quality and able to balance physical and spiritual needs. In other words, Sundanese people must have the following characteristics: *cageur* [healthy], *bageur* [good-natured], *bener* [correct], *pinter* [smart], *jujur* [honest], *akur* [solid], and *singer* [agile] (Muhsin et al., 2011).

2.2. Indonesian community in France

The Indonesian community in France comprises three thousand seven hundred people. It is the number of Indonesians living in France reporting to the Indonesian embassy in Paris. This number cannot be known by ethnicity (information from the Indonesian Embassy in Paris via telephone on May 27, 2023). However, during interviews with informants, they informed me in passing that there are Batak communities, Javanese, and Sundanese in France. Sundanese women in Paris have an IKFI (Ikatan Keluarga Français-Indonésie) association. This association does not only consist of Sundanese women but also other Indonesian women. Every month, they gather and sometimes take social actions to help the Indonesian people. For instance, when there was a tsunami in Aceh, they raised money and went directly to the location to help their brothers in Aceh. This association aims to strengthen women who marry French, introduce Indonesian culture, and help each other if difficulties are found during their stay in France.

3. Research methodology

Employing an ethnographic study (see Scott, 1997) with a qualitative and descriptive methodology, this study gathered the data primarily from the Sundanese ethnic group and French informants. Due to the nature of ethnography to explore human culture and society (Spradley, 2016), in this ethnographic

research, the best way to understand the family culture was to immerse ourselves in it and learn about it from within. Therefore, the researchers became participant observers, spending time with the family being studied in their natural environment, observing their behavior, listening to their stories, and participating in their activities. Our aim was to gain a deep and nuanced understanding of the family's culture, beliefs, values, and practices.

To delve into the language maintenance of the Sundanese-French families, this study involved 13 Sundanese women as the informants. The ethnographic data were collected primarily using participant observations, in-depth interviews, focus groups, and the study of artifacts and written materials. The collected data were then analyzed through content and thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes in the group's cultural experiences and practices. In this study, the criteria for informants were Sundanese women who married French men and French men who married Sundanese women who had been married or lived together for at least five years. The couple should have been married for five years because five years was sufficient time to get to know each other's culture well. To determine the informants, we used the concept of Spradley (2016), requiring them to have an understanding of their culture.

We allowed the interviewed informants to invite friends with a French male partner to get more informants. Thus, the researchers did not determine the selected informants, but the previous informants recommended them. Through the recommendation, the researchers immediately contacted the next informant. We selected informants based on the results of the interviews that we conducted in the field. Through this process, it was determined that the recommended informants were needed because they were considered potential. Their information was required to reveal further information since the nature of each informant was different. Some informants were interviewed only once or twice, considering that the required data were already sufficient. Some informants were interviewed several times, but the information provided was inadequate. For such informants, interviews were conducted several times to obtain adequate information. Sometimes, the researchers had to stay at the informant's house for a few days to get accurate and in-depth information.

The informant's data were displayed in the form of a number. For instance, Informant One was labeled Informant 1, and Informant Two to Thirteen was labeled Informant 2 until Informant 13. Interviews were conducted in Bandung for the June 2021 period, in Paris for the September–December 2021 period, and in Bali for the August–September 2022 period. The interviews were carried out according to the schedule determined by the informants. The data analysis was carried out in several stages. The data from the interviews, questionnaires, and literature reviews were collected and classified based on the similarity of their characteristics. To address the research questions posed, the data were interpreted, analyzed, and then described in the form of the analysis results. The qualitative investigation of the socialization process through language helps understand and interpret linguistic phenomena regarding the meanings brought to intercultural relationships (Stepkowska, 2021).

4. Results and discussion

Contacts between people of different cultures are not a new phenomenon. Throughout history, human beings have traveled the world for various reasons, including seeking better living, escaping persecution or disaster, trading, conquering, exploring, adventuring, seeking pleasure, and intermarriage. Such activities have resulted in the meeting of people from various backgrounds. This process has led to changes in the people's original patterns of life and culture and the formation of new societies. The encounter between cultures and their results is collectively known as acculturation. Of course, it is not just cultural groups that experience change after contact. Individuals also experience changes in

their behavior. This change is known as psychological acculturation. This research examines the phenomenon of cultural and individual acculturation (Berry & Sam, 2016). Having different cultural backgrounds in one family must be challenging, which may lead to unsuccessful acculturation. Acculturation is worth investigating issues from the type of intercultural marriage the family chooses and how children adapt to their parents' different backgrounds and languages (Jayantini et al., 2022).

4.1. Languages used in intermarriage families

The marriage difference may reflect couples' linguistic choices when communicating with their spouses at home. It is essential to consider the impact of language and communication on relationships, as they can affect the dynamics and understanding between partners. How to explore linguistic choices and communication styles vary among different cultures and how they influence marital satisfaction. Communicating in a language entails understanding and comprehending the in-depth social and cultural standards, values, lifestyles, signs, symbols, and directions associated with a specific culture to display a distinct cultural identity. Similarly, culture as a social system fosters language growth and mainly frames human narrative expressions in their family and community. People with different languages and cultural identities are pleased to promote their linguistic and cultural solidarity because language establishes the system of cultural representation and transmission across generations (Parajuli, 2021). In mixed-married families, there are various choices of language use. In this research, the language choices found in intermarried families of Sundanese women with French men living in France based on the data obtained were four languages, namely French, English, Indonesian, and Sundanese.

4.1.1. French

The language used in Sundanese-French intermarried families is French. This language is used because the wives can speak French. These wives use French with their husbands, their children, and their husbands' families. They are graduates of French literature in Indonesia. Of the 13 informants interviewed, this language is used in the families of informants 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, and 13. In line with Meyer's opinion, in these families, communication needs to involve the two cultures of origin plus the new host culture to create a unique family environment that supports cultural differences but is also adaptive in new contexts. In this research, we find concern and compromise, pragmatism and understanding, adaptability, and rigidity in the context of assimilative and integrative social forces. They offer insight into the complexities of lived 'everyday multiculturalism,' creating encounters of diversity. As subjectively assessed by Sundanese women, language competence is related to the quality of communication in cross-language and cross-cultural couples. We found that to account for the apparent changes in language repertoire, appreciation for formal language learning, and a particular hierarchy of priorities in personal communication. Language attitudes influence communication and ethnic feelings among mixed couples (Meyer & Fozdar, 2022).

4.1.2. English

In Informant 5's family, English is generally used as the language of communication within the family. Informant 5 himself did not understand why their children spoke English to their siblings and their mother. The mother thinks it's because they always went to international schools where the language was English and continued at home. But that's not the case when they talk to their father. They speak French. Informant 5 himself regretted why he had not gotten used to speaking Indonesian with his children since they were small. When they were little, the language used was French, so Indonesian was not the main language at home. As a result, they are not used to Indonesian. Indonesian is a foreign language for them, even though they gradually understand it. They had never heard Sundanese. When

they go to Cirebon, they only hear Indonesian. Informant 5's husband also never used Indonesian with his wife. They spoke English (after several years of living in France, the wife spoke French with her husband). Her husband had never heard Sundanese words. He forgot Sundanese because his environment always spoke English during his two years living in Cirebon.

4.1.3. Sundanese

From the interviews we conducted with Informant 2, Informant 2 revealed that although their family lives in France, the language used at home is Sundanese. This was due to Informant 2's lack of French language skills when he came to France. Informant 2 himself admitted that his French was very minimal. He learned French from his children when they were small. Sundanese is their mother tongue. The husband understands Sundanese and Indonesian. Sundanese is used to communicate with husbands or children because their mothers do not have a high education and have never studied French in Indonesia. At that time (in the 80s), a wife who joined her husband and settled in France was not required to obtain an A1 French language certificate, as is the case today. Informant 2 went to France without being able to speak good French. This does not disturb the life of her small family because her husband, who has worked and lived in Jakarta for several years, can master Sundanese and Indonesian fluently. In Step & Sahabudin's opinion, educational background or social strata spice up their conversations with linguistic interference. Different perspectives on marriage may reflect couples' language choices when communicating with their partners at home (Stepa & Sahabudin, 2016).

4.2. Challenges and strategies of Sundanese women in French-language communication

The challenges of Sundanese-French intermarried families in France include family type, socioeconomic status, parents' educational level, personality, and experience, linguistic and cultural identity, and the education and careers of their children (Karpava, 2021). In addition, intermarried couples should also face the dynamics of the marriage, the couple's motivation and reasons for choosing a partner, their environmental reactions, and the problems of children in mixed-ethnic families. Mixed families bring new cultural features, home life, and traditions, differentiating the new lifestyle of the same ethnic family where the couple was raised. Meanwhile, linguistic communication within the family can increase bilingualism and strengthen new kin ties (Dorzhu, 2019).

We interviewed thirteen informants. They are Sundanese wives living in France. Nine informants were French language graduates. One was an Economics graduate, one was an elementary school graduate, and two were high school graduates. Of these informants, only nine people can be said to speak French. These nine informants have varying abilities in French. A detailed description of the challenges and strategies of Sundanese women in French-language communication can be seen in **Table 1** below.

Table 1. Challenges and strategies of Sundanese women in French-language communication.

Informants	Education Background	Challenges and strategies
Informant 1	Bachelor's degree in French Literature	She still had problems communicating with French people, especially with her husband's family. Therefore, with complete understanding and patience, her husband taught her to speak French daily at the beginning of their stay in France. Even though her husband could speak Indonesian, he wanted to train his wife to be able to speak French well and be independent. She was easy to get along with and adapted to the environment. Therefore, she had many friends. Her husband did not have any close friends. So, all of his wife's friends became his friends, too. Her husband was very proud of his wife.

Table 1. (Continued).

Informants	Education Background	Challenges and strategies
Informant 2	Elementary school education	When she came to France, she could not speak French. She admitted that her French was very minimal. She learned French from her children when they were small. At that time (in the 80s), a wife who joined her husband and settled in France was not required to obtain an A1 French language certificate, as is the case today. She went to France without being able to speak good French. However, it did not disturb the life of her small family because her husband, who had worked and lived in Jakarta for several years, could master Sundanese and Indonesian fluently.
Informant 3	Bachelor's degree in French Literature	She had good French and English skills. She had no problems at the start of living in France. Communication ran smoothly and without obstacles. With the ability to master two languages, it was not difficult for her to socialize and blend into new environments. Apart from that, she had a painting hobby. Because of her French and English skills, she could sell her paintings to hotels in Paris.
Informant 4	Bachelor's degree in French Literature	She had standard French language skills. She practiced her French with her husband at home and with his family. It didn't take long for her to get along with French people with good language skills. She did not experience many language and cultural adaptation obstacles because her husband helped her. Her husband freed her to hang out with her friends on condition that all the children's and husband's needs were met.
Informant 5	Bachelor's degree in French Literature	She did not have any significant obstacles in terms of language. With the basic French language from Indonesia, she simply practiced French with her husband at home. She was confident in getting along with her French neighbors. She had a hobby as a writer, and several of her works had been published by Gramedia. She was a person easy to get along with. Therefore, she was chosen as Head of the French-Indonesian Family. One of the duties was to introduce Indonesia to French citizens.
Informant 6	Bachelor's degree in Economics	She studied French before leaving for France. With her minimal ability to speak French, she diligently studied French at home with her husband and took courses when she arrived in France. In a short time, she could communicate well with French people. She experienced almost no obstacles in her new environment because her husband was at home, and her husband's family was very supportive and supportive of her.
Informant 7	Bachelor's degree in French Literature	It did not take much time for her to improve her French so she could socialize with the local environment. The environment where she lived accepted his presence at every meeting because she was a happy and friendly person and spoke fluent French. It was no surprise that her presence was always eagerly awaited by her surroundings. She did not experience any obstacles in terms of language and cultural adaptation. With fluent French skills, she worked as a manager in a Japanese restaurant in Paris.
Informant 8	High school education	When she came to France, she had a language barrier and minimal mastery of French. By diligently studying French for two years, little by little, her ability increased thanks to his husband's and extended family's support. Informant 8 was able to master French well so that communication obstacles could be overcome.
Informant 9	Bachelor's degree in French Literature	She was educated in French literature. The language was not her significant obstacle. She only needed to adjust in a few months. She also needed to practice French with their husbands at home. After that, she could get along with French people with good language skills. In addition, she was so accepted into her husband's family that she felt comfortable in the French family environment, not like a stranger.
Informant 10	High school education	When she first met her future husband, she used minimal English, but the two understood each other. Over time, her husband learned Indonesian and started communicating in Indonesian. At the same time, her husband could speak Indonesian. He began learning French just before they left for France and settled in France. Their lives were not as smooth as those of other informants. The strength of their love was what perpetuated their marriage. The obstacle faced, besides the language barrier, was cultural adaptation. She studied French diligently until finally mastered the language and was able to get along with French people. It took five years for her to master the French language.
Informant 11	Bachelor's degree in French Literature	At the beginning of her stay in France, she did not have a language barrier because she had more or less mastered French. By socializing and practicing French at home and outside, her mastery of the language could increase. Relations with her husband's family were also good.

Table 1. (Continued).

Informants	Education Background	Challenges and strategies
Informants 12 and 13	Bachelor's degree in French Literature	They had husbands who were very encouraging and helpful in language mastery. Their husbands trained them at home so they could speak fluent French. Both had no obstacles in language and cultural adaptation in the French environment.

In Step & Sahabudin's opinion, educational background or social strata spice up their conversations with linguistic interference. Different perspectives on marriage may reflect couples' language choices when communicating with their partners at home (Stepa & Sahabudin, 2016). Apart from practicing communicating in French, all informants carry out activities to improve their mastery of the language by listening to the radio, watching television, and reading to increase their vocabulary, getting used to hearing the words of different people both face-to-face and by watching and listening to the radio.

In the end, until now, these Sundanese-French families are still in the husband-wife relationship. Wives who previously had low proficient French language skills are now very fluent in French. What the informants did in mastering French aligns with what Onishchuk et al. (2020) found that language learning is habit formation. In addition, they master verbal communication and then writing. In this regard, language skills are learned more effectively if presented orally and then in written form. They learn the meaning of words in a linguistic-cultural context. The main provisions are the verbal basis of foreign language learning and the formation of language-based thinking (Onishchuk et al., 2020).

4.3. Challenges and strategies for preserving Indonesian and Sundanese language and culture in a French-speaking environment

Interracial marriages raise linguistic concerns due to the maintenance of the family language and language shift. It is often due to family language preferences. Maintaining language is more problematic for interracial families than for families from the same linguistic background (Kadir, 2021). It is difficult to maintain one's linguistic and cultural identity in a mixed marriage (Krasowska, 2020). This research found that the informants experienced many obstacles to teaching Indonesian or Sundanese to their children. It aligns with a study by Park (2019) that explained the challenges of teaching heritage language to mixed-heritage children. Generally, Indonesian or Sundanese as the language passed down to Sundanese-French children is often used in families (Ting and Berek, 2021). In this case, in the families of Informant 10, it was the husband who suggested that his wife speak Indonesian to her children. For Informant 4, Indonesian became the second language at home. Meanwhile, Informant 7 occasionally spoke Indonesian because the husband did not want to lose his Indonesian language skills. In contrast, for Informant 2, Sundanese languages became the mother's language of instruction to her children and husband due to the mother's limited ability to speak French.

In this case, marriage can be a major factor in maintaining language and culture. However, mixed marriages can lead to language shifts in the home because they can change language use patterns among minority language speakers and their children. The likelihood of preserving a minority language is greater in marriages between individuals who speak the same native language than in situations where partners speak different languages (Igboanusi and Wolf, 2009). It suggests that the future of minority languages will depend greatly on the role of the family and the value attached to ethnic minority identity by young people, especially those from mixed families (Igboanusi and Wolf, 2009). The family still plays the most important role in protecting minority languages (Indonesian and Sundanese) from external factors. In intermarried families, there are the benefits of being bilingual. On the other hand, how families plan for

their children to become bilingual correlates with motivational attitudes. The results of this study describe family patterns and minority language use at home (see also Ros, 2019).

Retaining Indonesian and Sundanese as heritage languages is often desired by migrants to continue cultural and social connections to family and identity. The effects of non-migrant partners' first languages and gender on heritage language pursuits can be seen in linguistically interspersed families as it impacts on continued linguistic diversity (Torsh, 2022). They maintain their ethnic language by using it exclusively at home with family members, grandparents, and relatives. They also maintain various aspects of their inherited culture, such as clothing, lifestyle, wedding and social traditions, and eating habits. Additionally, the results of a study have revealed several sociocultural factors that increase the protection of their language and culture, such as partial isolation from the larger host community, rejection of external marriages, and lack of education and media (Dweik and Abdelkhaleq, 2020).

Parents in intermarried families see bilingualism as an achievable outcome for their children. This ideology results in language practices of mostly only French, English, Indonesian, and Sundanese at home. Sundanese-French families cite various factors that motivate them to maintain Indonesian or Sundanese with their children, such as the cognitive, academic, and socioeconomic benefits they associate with bilingualism. Despite a very positive attitude towards language maintenance, the results showed that children, in all areas except one, were more proficient in French and English than in Indonesian or Sundanese. Their Indonesian and Sundanese literacy skills were less developed. This potentially indicates that parental efforts are not sufficient for the long-term maintenance of Indonesian or Sundanese (Noar, 2023).

In the families of the informants, there is still a sharp decline between generations in ability, use, attitudes, and awareness about identity and culture, increasing our understanding of the role of group identity in the maintenance and shift of language. It has important implications for the practice of protecting Indonesian and Sundanese, as cultural roots from the mother's side (see Qiu and Qiu, 2022). Other informants prefer that their children be taught primarily in French and English because these two languages can lead to a better future. It is in line with a study by Orusbaev et al. (2008) showing that a language preference is motivated by a desire to get better education, jobs, and economy.

The biggest obstacle to maintaining Indonesian and Sundanese language in Sundanese-French families living in France is the unsupportive surrounding environment. It is because people speak French. In addition, the children from these families did not want to learn more Indonesian or Sundanese because the languages were not interesting. But interestingly, as they grew older, they began to study Indonesian and Sundanese intensively and looked for the cultural roots of their mothers. They began to frequently come to Indonesia looking for their cousins in the city where their mother came from.

5. Conclusions

The Sundanese-French couples have preserved multilingual interactions in their family. Several languages are used for family communication including French, English, Indonesian, and Sundanese. They use French because the wives can speak French. English is used because the children attend international schools, and this language is used by the children when they speak with their mothers. Indonesian is used because husbands do not want to lose their ability to speak Indonesian as they always practice with their wives. Meanwhile, Sundanese is used in the family because the wives cannot speak French, while the husbands are fluent in Sundanese and Indonesian. In Sundanese-French families living in France, it is essential to master French. Sundanese wives and French husbands especially influence the

children's language use. In intermarried families, the most used language is the language used by the children. The language communication barrier can occur when the sender of the message and the recipient of the message use different languages or words not understood by the recipient of the message. Therefore, to eliminate communication barriers, informants who live in France choose French for their families and children. Passing on Sundanese language and culture in Sundanese-French families is not found in all Sundanese-French families. Only in Informant 2's family Sundanese and Indonesian languages are spoken. It is because the wife, a Sundanese woman, cannot speak French. In the families of other informants, Indonesian and Sundanese were only occasionally heard. However, after the children of these Sundanese-French families grew up, they looked for their cousins in the cities where their mothers came from. The love for the Indonesian language and culture grows as the children grow up. This article is useful for people who intend to build a family with a foreigner and those who have just married a foreigner, especially a French person. As a recommendation, other studies on language maintenance in different couples of ethnic groups warrant further investigation.

Author contributions

Conceptualization, NI, EWK, MZM; methodology, NI, EWK, and SM; validation, MZM, SM, and PA; formal analysis, NI, EWK, and PA; investigation, NI, SM, and PA; resources, MZM, SM, and PA; data curation, EWK, SM, and PA; writing—original draft preparation, NI, MZM, SM; writing—review and editing, NI and MZM; supervision, NI, EWK, and SM; project administration, EWK, MZM, PA; funding acquisition, NI and SM. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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