

## **SUNDANESE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN CHILDREN WITH INDONESIAN MOTHER LANGUAGE**

**Triyanto**  
triyanto@stkipm-bogor.ac.id

STKIP MUHAMMADIYAH BOGOR

### **ABSTRACT**

Since childhood, humans acquire language acquisition. Language acquisition by a child is obtained from the immediate environment, namely the family environment and social environment. The language that a child acquires through acquisition is called the mother tongue. However, the mother tongue that a child gets is sometimes not in a single way, but it goes along with other languages because of differences in language in the family environment and language in the social environment, making a child a bilingual speaker. Based on this description, this study aims to examine the acquisition of Sundanese ( $L_2$ ) in a child who speaks an Indonesian mother tongue ( $L_1$ ). The method used is qualitative. Data collection was carried out by listening to the conversation between the MKI (research object) with the family and with other parties in their social environment. Other data collection conducted by interviewing the MKI. The collected data were analyzed using psycholinguistic, syntactic, and phonological theories and then described using a descriptive approach. The results showed that MKI has a performance in Sundanese both receptive performance and productive performance. Productive performance in the form of lexicon, phoneme pronunciation, and sentences.

*Keywords:* language acquisition, bilingual, receptive performance, productive performance

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Language is a tool as well as a system that exists in human being so that it allows humans to be able to interact and socialize among others. As a system, there is a language complexity that is only owned by humans. Shortly, it automatically distinguishes it from other creatures.

The complexity of language as a system is both a gift and a privilege that is owned by humans. This is indicated by the presence of a language device in the brain. This device enables humans to have competence in language, both receptively and productively, as a provision for communicating among themselves.

When humans use language to communicate, there is an attempt to listen to the speaker's exposure. This process then becomes the basis to understand the interlocutor's utterance to be stored in short-term memory. In psycholinguistic studies, this process is known as receptive performance. The speaker's speech that has been understood is then followed up with speech in response. This is known as productive performance.

Receptive and productive performance is the basic human ability in language. This ability was born and developed along with human birth and development. In other words, when humans were born, the language devices in the brain were formed simultaneously and

developed along with the physical development of humans and got the influence of their social environment.

Both types of performance can be obtained through acquiring language, which is a way of 'learning' language through natural processes experienced from childhood. When children acquire language, without realizing it, there are a number of aspects of the language that are accepted, from the simplest things such as lexical and phonological items to complex ones such as grammatical item. In this unconsciousness, the language devices in the brain have recorded various aspects of the acquired language.

The acquisition of language experienced by a child is obtained through the immediate environment, namely the family environment and the social environment. However, the family environment is the strongest. This is what is called as the first language that a child gets through the acquisition process or in linguistic terms it is called as the mother tongue. Acquiring the mother tongue is a process that takes place naturally (Supriatna, 2017).

In general, a child will have a single mother tongue, which is only one language. This is because the language used by his family is the same as the language used in his social environment. However, it is common for language differences to exist in the family and social circles. This affects a child acquiring two languages at once and automatically converting them to become a bilingual speaker. In cases like this, one language ( $L_1$ ) is more dominant than other languages ( $L_2$ ). A child as a bilingual speaker will have a tendency to mix codes and switch code in his language activities (Marwan, 2016).

This is like the case with MKI which is the object of this research. MKI has a father who speaks Javanese and a mother who speaks Sundanese. In their daily lives, MKI's parents communicate in Bahasa Indonesia. Bahasa Indonesia is the dominant language controlled by MKI through the process of acquiring the language.

However, MKI's grandmother who lives next door always communicates using Sundanese both with MKI and MKI's mother. Therefore, apart from acquiring Indonesian, MKI also acquired Sundanese in the process of acquiring the language. Based on this description, this study focuses on acquiring Sundanese language in MKI who speaks Bahasa Indonesia as a mother language.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Language Acquisition**

Language acquisition is one of the sub-disciplines studied in the field of psycholinguistics. In the process of acquiring language, it is explained that a child perceives the phenomenon of language from his immediate environment. Saville-Troike (2006) states that language acquisition occurs when a child who is still far before school age listens to various conversations both from his parents and from people around their environment. All of these are obtained by children by acquiring sounds of the language they listen to. A child will be able to distinguish the sounds in X language they get from the sounds in Y that they don't get.

Language acquisition is not only experienced by children in the first language ( $L_1$ ), but also occurs in the second language ( $L_2$ ) and so on. This acquisition is called a second language

acquisition (SLA). Almost the same as first language acquisition, SLA as a second language acquisition takes place in an informal situation with a natural process that does not involve standard classes and learning arrangements. SLA takes place when a child enters an environment that uses a language other than his native language (first language) and captures various language phenomena in that environment (Saville-Troike, 2006).

## **2. Receptive and Productive Performance**

In 1957, Noam Chomsky introduced the concept of competence and performance as two basic events that humans will experience in the process of acquiring language (Harras & Bachari, 2009). Competence is a set of grammatical knowledge that a child gets in obtaining his mother tongue or first language. It can be said that competence is limited to the knowledge that a child has about the language he / she gets. Meanwhile, performance is the ability of a child to use the language in the context of its use.

Performance can be divided into two, namely receptive performance and productive performance. Receptive performance is the ability of a child to decode the acquired language. In other words, a child who listens to language phenomena then captures the language code then translates and stores it in memory. Meanwhile, productive performance is the ability of a child to encode language, namely in the form of speaking the language in a systematic description known as language production.

## **3. Bilingualism**

The meaning of bilingualism is always developing and has non-standard boundaries. In general, there is an agreement that bilingualism is a description of two languages which are spoken by one person. However, it needs to be emphasized that bilingualism is not a system but a symptom of speech that is not characterized by a code. Bilingual has characteristics that are limited to disclosure and is part of individual characteristics so that it does not represent groups. The fundamental thing from the bilingual phenomenon is a person's ability to master L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> even though their L<sub>2</sub> is minimal (Rokhman, 2013).

Although there is no typical code in the bilingual phenomenon, there is a distinctive characteristic of the speaker's expression, namely bilingualism has the potential to switch code and mix code in the speech process. Code switching is an event of switching the language code by someone when speaking the language. It happens when someone is speaking using L<sub>1</sub> then moving to L<sub>2</sub>. Meanwhile, mixing code is a language event characterized by the insertion of L<sub>2</sub> elements and variations into the L<sub>1</sub> being spoken or vice versa. This insertion process does not change the pattern and is unified so that what appears dominant is still L<sub>1</sub> or the main language that is being spoken in that context.

## **C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In a study, methodology has a very crucial role because it determines the flow of the research from planning to evaluation. Research methodology concerns not only about the method, but also about the validity and process of a study. Kumar (2011) describes methodology as an academic discipline that includes various fields of science in purpose to conduct research with the right approach. Thus, the research methodology will organize the appropriate

operational steps as part of the research process such as determining the choice between quantitative or qualitative methods.

This study uses a qualitative method. In the generally accepted paradigm, qualitative is distinguished by the use of words compared to quantitative which uses numbers. However, Creswell (2009) provides a more specific statement that qualitative research method is an approach to studying the data related to human social problems. The research process involved questions and procedures that emerged flexibly on a case basis. Data collection was carried out based on typical respondents or research objects. The interesting point in qualitative research is that data analysis is built inductively from specific things to general ones and the researcher proposes an interpretation of the meaning of the data.

The object of this research is MKI, a 6 year old child who speaks in Bahasa Indonesia as his mother language (L<sub>1</sub>) but he simultaneously acquires Sundanese language (L<sub>2</sub>). The acquisition of Sundanese language is especially obtained when MKI communicates with J, her grandmother.

Data collection was carried out with a qualitative approach to MKI as the research object. There were two main techniques in data collection. The first technique was by listening to MKI's conversation with J and the researcher was not involved in the conversation. The second technique was conducted by giving an open (unstructured) interview to the MKI.

The collected data from the two techniques above were then analyzed by using linguistic theories with a qualitative approach. The basic theory used is psycholinguistic theory which is then deepened by using phonology, syntax, and sociolinguistics. The results of the analysis are described in a descriptive approach.

#### **D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This study examines the phenomenon of acquiring Sundanese language, which is used a second language (L<sub>2</sub>) in children who speak Indonesian mother language (L<sub>1</sub>). The respondent or object in this study is MKI, a 6 years old child. MKI lives with both parents who have different mother tongues. His mother speaks in Sundanese language and his father speaks in Javanese. In their daily lives, both MKI's parents communicate using Bahasa Indonesia so that it becomes the mother tongue for MKI. Likewise when communicating with MKI, MKI's father and mother use Bahasa Indonesia as a means of communication. However, MKI's grandmother (J) who lives next door always invites MKI to communicate in Sundanese Language. In line with it, people in the neighborhood where MKI lives communicate using Sundanese language with Bogor dialect.

Language acquisition, as explained by experts, is a process that takes place naturally. The process is not tied to a learning room or a formal situation and is not linked to standard aspects of language such as rules and so on. Language acquisition is actually acquired by a child at birth because of the language device in the child's brain that is active since he was born (Tussolekha, 2015).

Since his birth, MKI has acquired Bahasa Indonesia from both of his parents. This has been happening to him till now. The language acquisition received by the MKI is the same as the acquisition that is generally accepted. However, since MKI could communicate in a simple manner, around age 2–3 years, J as MKI's grandmother had started to invite MKI to

communicate simultaneously with their daily activities. This act then became the foundation of the MKI to acquire Sundanese language which has continued until now. In addition, MKI also received Sundanese language acquisition from his environment in the city of Bogor, which is a native Sundanese speaking community in the Bogor dialect.

This situation has made MKI automatically to become a bilingual speaker. Huri (2015) states that Indonesians are generally bilingual speakers because they master regional languages such as Sundanese and master Bahasa Indonesia. The results of Huri's research showed that the bilingual children he studied had L<sub>1</sub> in Sundanese language because they were obtained from their families. On the other hand, they also get Indonesian as L<sub>2</sub>. The results of the Huri test revealed that the bilingual children were more proficient in Sundanese language than in Bahasa Indonesia.

In the case study of MKI, the opposite phenomenon applied. Based on the researcher's study, MKI was more proficient in Bahasa Indonesia than in Sundanese language. This is common because Bahasa Indonesia is L<sub>1</sub> for MKI and Sundanese language is L<sub>2</sub>.

In the acquisition of language by children, there are two aspects that are obtained simultaneously in the process, namely aspects of competence and performance. These two aspects were introduced by Noam Chomsky in 1957. The terms competence and performance refer to the ability to know, understand, and express. Then the performance is also divided into receptive and productive performance.

In the case of MKI, based on the research results, he shows competence and performance based on his acquisition in Sundanese language. Receptive performance is indicated by active involvement in Sundanese language conversation. Meanwhile, productive performance is indicated by expressions in the form of whole sentences, lexical, and phonological expressions.

### **1. Competence**

From the results of Syaprizal's (2019) study of language acquisition in children in the 0–6 year range, the competence of a child is an ability that they have subconsciously. According to him, language competence is the ability of a child to have a system of knowledge about a certain language as a result of the acquisition he gets.

In obtaining L<sub>2</sub>, MKI has subconscious competence which is a set of knowledge about the Sundanese language that has been acquired by him. This competence is marked by the MKI's knowledge of Sundanese language. MKI can distinguish Sundanese language from Javanese language or other languages by marking various aspects of the language, especially the phonological and lexicon aspects.

### **2. Performance**

Previous part discussed the competence of MKI in using languages he acquired based on his experiences in communicating with his surrounding. Competence contains matters relating to the general knowledge of the language obtained. With competence as an ability that a child has about a language, he will know the distinction between one language and another.

In other words, competence is a child's material for language activities. Like someone making cake dough, there must be cake ingredients prepared. Likewise for a child who will speak in L<sub>2</sub>, there must be a basic knowledge of L<sub>2</sub>. With the grammatical knowledge about L<sub>2</sub>, it is possible for a child to have a role in the ongoing communication, whether he plays an active role or plays a passive role.

As already mentioned previously, apart from getting competence as a basic ability, a child has performance abilities. Performance is a logical consequence of acquiring language by a child. By having the performance about the language he gets, a child has the basic ability to decode and encode the language he gets.

When competence is likened to an ingredient in making a cake dough, performance is the tool used to make the cake. With performance, a child can perform various language products from the simplest level to the most complex level. A child can listen to conversations carried out by other people, listen to statements from speech partners, make words, arrange words into a sentence, and produce sounds according to the phonological characteristics of the language he acquires.

This description provides clear boundaries that competence is a system of knowledge that is stored unconsciously in a child's memory. Meanwhile, performance is an ability that a child has as a tool used in communication. Performance is not only knowledge of language, but also the ability to use a language.

The L<sub>2</sub> acquisition obtained by MKI allowed him to have the ability to perform communication in Sundanese language. The performance that MKI has is the accumulation of results he gets for following adults around them who communicate using Sundanese language. In addition, J, who is MKI's grandmother, always invites MKI to communicate using Sundanese language, thereby it helped to increase the performance capital of MKI's Sundanese language. It can even be said that the main capital in the competence and performance of Sundanese language in MKI was obtained from J.

Referring to the theory that divides performance into two, MKI also has the ability to both types of performance, namely receptive performance and productive performance. The receptive performance that really owned by MKI is the receptive performance for general, namely various things about Sundanese language that are discussed by people everyday. This is logical because when the MKI communicated with J, the substance of the talks was not far from things that were encountered daily and was in the area of public knowledge.

Moreover, when MKI listened to the conversations of people around his closest social environment, such as when MKI played around the house or when MKI traveled to places that are still geographically using Sundanese language in the Bogor dialect. The conversations of the people he met using Sundanese language were not far from the aspects of life that are usually encountered in everyday life. These discussions could not be separated from the daily activities that MKI usually encounters.

To test the receptive performance of MKI, it was not enough to only carry out one technique to collect the data. What makes this research easier is MKI's high interest in narrative matters. One of them is listening to other people's stories. There are many stories that MKI really likes, such as about the world of animals, games, vacation trips, and so on.

Receptive performance testing is done by giving conversations in front of MKI by using Sundanese language in Bogor dialect. The conversation was conducted by SW, MKI's mother, and J, MKI's grandmother, about a vacation trip that had been planned and would be held in the near future. SW explained a lot about the plan. In this case, J was not only a passive listener, but also was actively involved in the conversation. J chimed in on the story of MKI's mother and occasionally gave a long response.

From the testing process, MKI has a receptive performance that was almost complete from the conversation process that took place between J and SW. The indicator was that MKI intermittently chimed in on the conversation that SW had with J. In addition, the researcher asked several questions to test the MKI's understanding of the conversation he had just listened to. The results showed that MKI was able to decode vacation destinations, vehicles to be used, estimated travel time, people who will participate, natural rides to be visited, community myths about natural rides and local wisdom, destinations for overnight stays, and long the whole trip until back home.

Based on these results, general receptive performance was owned by MKI as a whole because various discussed general aspects could not be separated from his understanding. However, from the whole conversation, his receptive performance was almost intact because there was a special receptive performance that he did not understand.

**Table 1.** The special phrases that MKI does not understand

No.	Ungkapan
1.	<i>Leuwi Lieuk</i>
2.	<i>samak palid</i>
3.	<i>ambon sorangan</i>

MKI was unable to decode *Leuwi Lieuk* in its entirety because it was a special expression he had just heard. *Leuwi Lieuk* is the name of a waterfall. MKI could only understand *leuwi* which means waterfall because they have visited the waterfall several times. Meanwhile, *Lieuk* which means 'take a look' had not been acquired by MKI.

*Samak palid* is a phrase that represents local wisdom. This expression describes the myth about the existence of ghosts in waterfalls or in rivers in general that can carry and drown people. MKI could not decode the *samak palid* phrase because this expression was not an aspect that was found in the daily activities of society in general.

Then the *ambon sorangan* phrase means someone who has feelings of his own and is not reciprocated. In the context of the conversation being tested, this relates to one of the natural rides that MKI's family would visit and has a myth about a daughter who has feelings of her own and is always waiting. MKI could not decode the *ambon sorangan* phrase because it was a special expression that could not be found everyday.

Apart from receptive performance, MKI also had the ability to perform productive. MKI's productive performance was only measured in three aspects, namely lexically, syntactically, and phonologically.

**Table 2.** Lexical productive performance

No.	Question	Answer
1.	<i>I emamna jeung naon?</i>	<i>Jeng endog ceplok</i>
2.	<i>Kamari ti imah D tas naon?</i>	<i>Ngepanan embe</i>
3.	<i>I resep teu lamon liburan jalan-jalan?</i>	<i>Nya atuh resep</i>

The table above is the result of the researcher interview with MKI. In the short interview, MKI showed productive performance at the lexical level, namely the expression of Sundanese lexicons. Researcher conducted interviews by administering short conversations to test productive performance along with receptive performance.

When the researcher asked the question *I emammna jeung naon* (what I eat with [side dishes]), MKI was able to decode it well because he really understood the context of the question. Then, he did the encoding by answering *jeng endog ceplok* (with fried egg).

After that, there was a question *kamari ti imah D tas naon* ( What did you do yesterday after visiting D). The context of this question was about MKI who had visited D, a friend who raised goats behind his house. MKI accompanied D to feed the goat. To this question, MKI gave an answer *ngepanan embe* (feeding the goats). On the question *I resep teu lamon liburan jalan-jalan* (Do you like to have a trip on holiday), the answer is by using *nya atuh resep* (yes I like it).

From the interview with MKI which has been represented in the three questions and answers above, MKI could decode the questions well. Then, MKI encoded it by revealing the productive performance in the form of lexicons in Sundanese. It indicated the ability of MKI to communicate using Sundanese.

MKI also had the ability in terms of productive performance at the syntactic level. Researcher had recorded conversations between MKI and J, his grandmother. The following are the sentences produced by MKI when he communicated with J. However, MKI had a special call to J, namely the initials A.

**Table 3.** Sentences produced by MKI

No.	Sentences
1.	<i>A kadie baturan I main robot.</i>
2.	<i>I arek sepedahan, A nungguan di belakang nya.</i>
3.	<i>A nyaho te bola I di mana?</i>

The table above contains the productive performance performed by MKI. There are three sentences as a representation taken from the conversation between MKI and J. Those three

sentences show MKI's ability to express mastery of the Sundanese language in the form of sentence exposure.

*A kadie baturan I main robot* (A come here accompany me to play robot) is MKI's invitation to J to accompany him to play robots. Then *I arek sepedahan, A nungguan di belakang* (I want to play a bike, please A waiting in the back) is an invitation as well as requests for MKI to be accompanied to play bicycles in the backyard. Then, *A nyaho te bola I di mana* (Does A know where my ball is?) is a question from MKI to J, perhaps J knows the ball he was looking for to play.

The forms of productive performance produced by MKI illustrated his acquired abilities in Sundanese language. Although Sundanese language is a L<sub>2</sub> that MKI acquired through the acquisition process he went through, his mastery is good enough because he can use this language to communicate with his speech partners.

However, among the abilities possessed by MKI, the most prominent weakness was the inability to carry out productive performance in the form of a long and constant conversation in using Sundanese language. In a long conversation with J, MKI still often interspersed sentences in Sundanese language with sentences in Bahasa Indonesia. Even in the Sundanese sentences he produced, MKI still often inserted Sundanese lexicons.

Competence and performance, both receptive and productive in MKI, could not be separated from the form of interaction with J. This has been done since MKI is 2–3 years old. Another triggering factor is that both parents let MKI communicate in Sundanese language which is an awareness that this phenomenon is a natural event that cannot be avoided. Interaction with the social environment is also another factor in his ability to speak Sundanese language.

The phenomenon experienced by MKI is in line with the structure theory of language. Chaer (2015) reveals the internal structure and outer structure as part of the language structure.

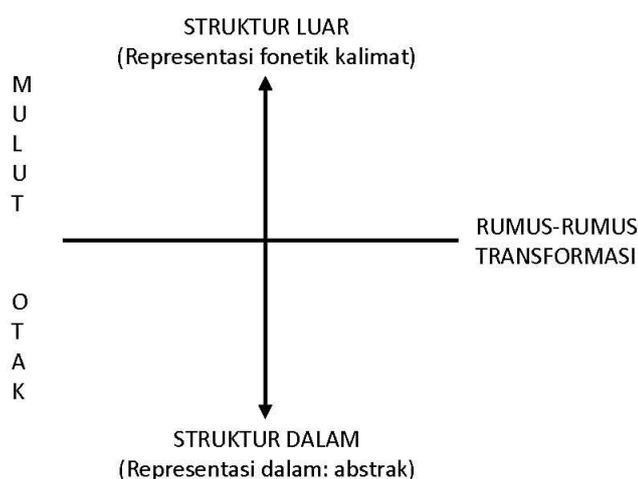


Figure 1. Language structure

According to Abdul (2003), there is a transformation in human language activities. This transformation connects the two main structures within humans, namely the outer structure and the internal structure. In the internal structure, language is still knowledgeable and has abstract shapes and patterns as a result of decoding. Then in the outer structure, encoding is carried out so as to produce various language productions in a number of levels and forms such as words, sentences, language sounds, intonation, to long speech forms and discourses.

In the acquisition of Sundanese language by MKI, the language structure, as expressed by Chaer, has represented the entire acquisition process that he experienced. With regards to the internal structure, MKI was able to have competence in Sundanese language which included all of his knowledge about spoken language rules as he got from his grandmother and his environment. MKI was able to distinguish Sundanese language from other languages because it has the characteristics of sound, pronunciation, lexicon, and other linguistic elements. Still on the internal structure, MKI has been able to decode the use of Sundanese language both from directly communicated with him and from the conversations of other people he listens to. This ability illustrated that MKI had receptive performance with a wide enough coverage to be able to decode long conversations in Sundanese language with Bogor dialect.

Then in the external structure, MKI had a fairly good productive performance. This was indicated by the MKI's ability to pronounce various Sundanese lexicons down to sentences. However, what had not yet acquired was the productive performance of making sentences in long conversations.

In the phenomenon of MKI's language, the acquisition of Sundanese language as L<sub>2</sub> automatically makes him a bilingual speaker of Bahasa Indonesia and Sundanese language. Therefore, during the data collection process, MKI frequently conducted code mixing and code switching. For example, when he answered the questions in the interview session, MKI mixed the code by answering in Sundanese language but the lexicons of Bahasa Indonesia were still inserted as well.

In addition, when MKI expressed sentences in Sundanese language, it was not fully expressed in Sundanese language as in a long conversation. Every time MKI spoke in one or two sentences by using Sundanese language, MKI would switch the code by automatically switching to Bahasa Indonesia.

The code mixing and code switching carried out by the MKI took place naturally without being aware of it. This was not as an inability of the MKI to encode, but because L<sub>1</sub> was more dominant than L<sub>2</sub> so that Bahasa Indonesia as the first language of MKI was still very dominant in the process of acquiring Sundanese language that he experienced. An example is when MKI expressed *I arek sepedahan, A nungguan di belakang nya*, the word */belakang/* suddenly was inserted in the sentence. Even though MKI knew that the Sundanese term in the Bogor dialect to represent the back is */tukang/*.

In obtaining phonological acquisition, the obvious obstacle experienced by MKI was the pronunciation of /eu/ [è] which is a typical diphthong in Sundanese language. For example, when he pronounced the word */jeung/*, MKI pronounces it */jeng/*. When he pronounced */kadiu/*, he also pronounced it with */kadie/*. Thus, the MKI difficulty in using Sundanese language was in pronouncing the phoneme /è/ which always became /e/.

Meanwhile, in the pronunciation of the other phonemes, MKI did not experience any significant difficulties. Phonemes that are often considered difficult, such as /é/, /e/, /ŋ/, and /p/ could be pronounced well in Sundanese pronunciation. This is because of the strong sound correspondence between Sundanese language and Bahasa Indonesia. These phonemes are used to be pronounced by MKI in Bahasa Indonesia so that MKI does not experience problems when they encounter them in Sundanese language again.

## E. CONCLUSION

Language acquisition is a natural phenomenon experienced by a child as part of his language development. However, language acquisition does not only occur in the mother tongue or first language (L<sub>1</sub>), but it can also occur in the second language (L<sub>2</sub>) and so on.

The acquisition of Sundanese language experienced by MKI is a second language acquisition. This is because MKI already has Bahasa Indonesia as his first language or as his mother language. By having Bahasa Indonesian as his first language, his acquisition of Sundanese language became unique. This is because L<sub>1</sub> was identified as dominating in the process of obtaining L<sub>2</sub>.

In the acquisition of Sundanese language by MKI, there are competence and performance, both in receptive and productive. In productive performance, MKI experienced problems in pronouncing the phoneme /è/ as a typical diphthong in Sundanese language. This phenomenon is indeed common among people who are not native speakers of Sundanese language since they will find it difficult to pronounce /è/.

Meanwhile, for other productive performances, phonologically, lexically, and syntactically, there are no significant obstacles for MKI. However, like bilingual speakers, MKI frequently switched and mixed codes in the process of acquiring Sundanese.

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