

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 The Background of the Study**

Bilingualism is a common human condition which makes possible for an individual to function in more than one language. The individuals who can function in more than one language is also known as bilinguals. Recent studies have indicated that the majority of the world's population today is now bilingual. It is estimated that between half and two-thirds of the world's population is bilingual (Macrory, 2006, p.160). Bilinguals have ability to speak two languages, both L1 and L2 which can be balanced and unbalanced. The balanced bilingual individuals can easily switch from one language to other language, and they readily distinguish the contexts in which they should use each one. This means bilinguals know that they are using two different languages and they are able to separate the vocabulary of each language (Macrory, 2006). Bilinguals can arise in various ways, such as family/home environment from a very young age (since birth) and later age (when children say their first word) until they aged 11 (when they are getting used to their mother tongue)). The earlier the bilinguals arise, the more they are exposed to the languages. Edward (2003) stated that early childhood to acquire second language (L2) is better than anything later. This is because child's brain is more plastic and flexible so that children can process the knowledge of language. The more they are exposed to the languages, the easier it will be to acquire and develop both languages equally.

Language development is defined as a complex process that is foundational to the linguistic ability, communication skills, and achievement. Children's language development is known as a process of developing children's linguistic skills which essential to helps them to be able to share meaning with others through the process of communicating in making social relations with others. Bates, Bruner & Locke, (2001) assert that language development in the context of social relations has roots in the early interactions of children and parents. Children are particularly sensitive to and aware of the linguistic patterns of their interlocutors (Hamers & Blanc, 1989, Volterra & Taeschner, 1978). They are very sensitive to the language use of those around them as well as being influenced by language when it is addressed directly to them (Harisson & Piette, 1980). Parents who are seen as children's first teacher should understand this situation and find the way to help their children more engage to the language equally. They have responsibility to make decisions related to how will they raise their children, what roles they are going to play and what kind of strategy they are going to apply to help their children's language development.

Developing language of children needs some efforts both from parents and the children itself, especially in bilingual context. Parents may have expectations of what kind of language they want their children are able at, and children also may have expectations of how do their parents take roles in helping their language development. Both parents and children have to understand their expectations and their needs toward each other. Parents need to set some strategies which they can do to play their roles in children's bilingual development, for example by

providing linguistic input. Children whose parents are involved in their language used in some way and provide them with linguistic input show impress behavior while advising them, get more chance to develop their language.

According to Language Development and Bookkeeping Agency of Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture in Indonesia (2019) the diversity of languages is influenced by the number of different ethnic groups and regional backgrounds and has their respective characteristic. Indonesia, which is known as a multilingual and multicultural country with many ethnic groups, has many bilingual children from different language background. Especially those who speaks the local languages along with Indonesian itself. Bilinguals in Indonesia at least can speak their local language as their first language (L1) and Indonesian as their second language (L2), or even in some area there are some multilinguals who speaks two local languages and Indonesian as their national language. These phenomena happen due to the needs to communicate which makes many ethnics learn to understand each other's languages. They are mixing two different languages in their environment when communicating. One of the areas in Indonesia where the phenomenon happened is Selesai, Langkat, North Sumatera.

Selesai is one of subdistrict in Langkat. It has pluralistic society in terms of culture and language, which can be seen from the ethnic groups in the area such as Malay, Karonese, and Javanese. These ethnics are well known as the three major ethnics in Langkat. Malay is the biggest ethnic in Selesai, mostly live in Pekan Selesai. Karonese, is the ethnic which migrated from Kabanjahe, Tanah Karo to Langkat, this ethnic mostly lives in Tanjung Merahe and Namibiki.

Javanese ethnic in Langkat is the people who moved as the effect of migration from Java- they moved as workers who have been brought by the Netherland government in the era of colonialism, Javanese in Langkat mostly lives in Padang Brahrang and Stabat.

Due to many different ethnics in Langkat, it is expected that the children from one ethnic can speak her/his local language as their mother tongue or the language of other ethnic in their environment since the community where they lived are mix with other ethnics, but it was found that the child who was born from Karonese parents in Tanjung Merahe and living in mixed community of Karonese and other ethnics, do not speak either Karonese or other ethnic languages. They prefer to speak Bahasa Indonesia. Even though Tanjung Merahe which is known as the place where Karonese is the majority ethnic and Javanese is the minority ethnic, does not make the children there speak Karonese or Javanese in their daily basis. This phenomenon makes the researcher do her research to find out are there any bilingual children in Selesai who can speak both Karonese and other ethnic languages there and what roles do parents play in their children bilingual development. The phenomenon in Tanjung Merahe as the area where Karonese ethnic is the majority does not exactly make the children there speak Karonese. Then the researcher will do her research in other area, where Karonese is the minority ethnic and other ethnics are the majority, and in the area which Karonese and other ethnics are equals, are there any bilingual children who can speak both languages (Karonese, the mother tongue as the L1 and other ethnic

languages, the community languages spoken there as L2) or at least speak one of ethnic languages there.

In this research, the researcher aims to find out the role parents play and the factors which support they play their roles in the bilingual language development of the children in the Karonese and other ethnics (Malay and Javanese) communities in Langkat. Taking a depth analysis related what languages do the children in mixed ethnics community used where Karonese as the L1 and other ethnics (Malay or Javanese) as the L2 are equals ethnic, Karonese as the minority and other ethnics as the majority ethnic, and Karonese as the majority and other ethnics as the minority.

## **1.2 The Problems of the Study**

The aim of this study is to discuss the way parents play their roles and the factors cause the parents do to support children's language development in bilingual context in Karonese-Javanese family. In so doing, the author hopes to contribute to an enriched theoretical understanding of the relationship between these concepts, as well as to offer potential applications for language development and parental roles toward it in further field. Throughout this study, the following research questions will be explored:

1. How do parents play their roles in their children's bilingual development?
2. What factors cause parents to play the roles the way they do?

### **1.3 The Objectives of the Study**

In accordance with the problems of the study, the objectives of this research are:

1. To elaborate the way parents play their role in children's language development
2. To describe the factors cause parents do to support children's language development.

### **1.4 The Scope of the Study**

This study is in the scope of Bilingualism study. Bilingualism viewed from the speakers' ability to use two languages, can be divided into balanced and unbalanced bilingualism. This study is limited to the study of bilingualism. Bilingualism can be studied from different perspectives, such as psychological and linguistic perspectives, and also the combination of both perspectives, psycholinguistic perspective. This study is limited to the study of the role of the parents in their children bilingual development.

### **1.5 The Significance of the Study**

Findings of this study are expected theoretically and practically to give much contribution in the field of language development, especially in the bilingual context.

Theoretically, this study provides information about language development and it is expected that the findings of the study can give in sight to applied linguistics particularly in the parents' roles toward children's language

development which can be used as a reference for the similar studies with different focus or objects in the future, the findings can add up more horizons to linguistics theories.

Practically, it is expected that the findings will give more information about the parental role in language development in bilingual context, and it is also expected to make the Karonese children who have bilingual parents will aware towards *Cakap Karo* as their identity.

