



The Role of Applied Linguistics in Language Attrition at Bilingual School

I Nengah Laba¹, Ni Putu Nia Krisna Dewi², Raisya Syahma Aqila³

Corresponding email: laba@undhirabali.ac.id

^{1, 2, 3} English Literature Study Program, Dhyana Pura University

Abstract

This study investigates how applied linguistics of language attrition plays a part in bilingual education. It investigates the area of applied linguistics and focusing on the function of language attrition in bilingual learning contexts. The theoretical underpinnings of applied linguistics and language attrition are covered in this study. This article aims to identify language attrition in bilingual students, evaluate the influence of applied linguistics on language attrition, and explore the nuances and patterns of language attrition. Examining the linguistic domains affected helps identify specific attrition areas. The data analysis method is qualitative descriptive. The result of this study shows that applied linguistics has an important role to solving the problems caused by language attrition. The significance of applied linguistics in addressing language attrition. The study's conclusion demonstrates the significance of applied linguistics in addressing issues brought on by language attrition.

Keywords: applied linguistics, attrition, bilingual

1. INTRODUCTION

Applied Linguistics is a dynamic and multidisciplinary field that bridges the gap between theoretical linguistics and practical language use in real-world contexts. At its core, it revolves around the application of linguistic theories and methodologies to address practical issues related to language. This interdisciplinary approach allows applied linguistics to encompass a wide range of areas, including language teaching, language learning, and discourse analysis, translation, and language policy.

The primary goal of applied linguistics is to utilize insights gained from the study of language, its acquisition, and its use to solve everyday problems encountered by individuals and communities. It goes beyond theoretical abstraction, focusing on the tangible ways in which language influences communication, education, culture, and various aspects of human interaction.

Applied linguistics, asserting that it involves applying our knowledge of (a) language, (b) its acquisition, and (c) its practical usage to address specific purposes or solve real-world problems (Schmitt & Celce-Murcia, 2002: 1). Traditionally, the field has predominantly focused on second language acquisition theory, second language



pedagogy, and the intersection between the two. This perspective aligns closely with Grabe's definition, who emphasizes that applied linguistics is centered on resolving language-based challenges encountered by various individuals in real-world contexts. These individuals include learners, teachers, supervisors, academics, legal professionals, service providers, those in need of social services, test-takers, policy developers, dictionary makers, translators, and a diverse range of business clients (Grabe, 2002: 9). Thus, Applied Linguistics encompasses a broad spectrum of language-related concerns with the ultimate goal of practical problem-solving and application in real-world situations. Applied linguistics has a significant role to play in understanding, preventing and overcoming the phenomenon of language attrition.

Language attrition refers to the gradual decline in the language proficiency that an individual had previously acquired (Park, 2018). Bilingualism can contribute to this phenomenon as individuals may experience a diminishing proficiency in one language due to the predominant use of another. This decline is not attributed to a specific ailment but rather to the reduced exposure and practice of a particular language. The neglect of the first language can occur when there is limited usage, often stemming from the absence of communication partners fluent in that language.

Communication requires interaction with others, and without individuals who share the same language, there is a likelihood that the language will fall into disuse. As the language becomes less utilized over time, attrition sets in. This process involves grammatical errors, the substitution of certain vocabulary, and the constrained use of phonetic features (Schmid & Keijzer, 2007). The occurrence of language attrition is intricately linked to the linguistic contact given to a specific language, rather than being a result of a particular medical condition.

Previous studies focusing on the language attrition in applied linguistics have been carried out. The first study was conducted by Emanuel Bylund and Kenneth Hyttenstam in 2010 entitled "The Role of Language Aptitude in First Language Attrition: The Case of Prepubescent Attriters" focus to examine how language aptitude relates to L1 proficiency in speakers who had a break with their L1 environment before puberty. The study's findings showed a favorable relationship between language aptitude and Grammaticality Judgement Test GJT performance. More specifically, compared to those with below-average aptitude, bilinguals with above-average aptitude were more likely to score in the native range on the GJT.

Furthermore, among participants with below-average aptitude, GJT scores were found to be associated with daily L1 use. These findings suggest that language aptitude plays a compensatory role in language attrition, assisting individuals in maintaining a high level of L1 proficiency despite reduced contact with their L1. The second study was conducted by Dini Candra Purnama Sari in 2021 entitled "English Language Attrition among Bilingual Children Returning from English Speaking Country" focus



to shed light on the English proficiency level that underwent attrition, the causes of the attrition, and the responsibility of parents to preserve their kids' English. The results of this study show that there are three different forms of English language attrition: lexical attrition in vocabulary, grammar attrition, and active skills attrition in writing and speaking. The higher degree of mastery attained in the second language and its dominance have an impact on these attrition patterns. In order to help their children keep up their English proficiency, parents are essential. Parental strategies include formal English language instruction, scheduling private classes, and speaking English at home on a regular basis. This study concludes by gently cautioning about the possible repercussions of losing first-language English proficiency, especially when relocating to a non-English-speaking nation. The data shows how important it is to take preventative steps to mitigate the effects of language attrition, like keeping your home a strong English-speaking environment and offering extra language instruction. These insights can be used by parents, educators, and policymakers to create practical plans that help kids continue to speak English fluently even in situations where language environments change.

The third study was conducted by Ulrike Jessner, Kathrin Oberhofer, and Manon Megens in 2021 entitled "The attrition of school-learned foreign languages: A multilingual perspective" focuses on foreign language attrition that examines lexical diversity and (dis)fluency in the oral productions of 114 multilingual young adults, first language German speakers who learned English as their first foreign language (FL1) and French or Italian as their second foreign language (FL2), roughly 16 months after graduating from upper secondary school. The results show that, although it has a negligible effect on FL1, the degree of post-graduation foreign language use has a significant impact on the measured change in output quality in FL2. The reason for this disparity is that participants' initial FL1 proficiency was significantly higher. It's interesting to note that there is no discernible relationship between FL1 usage and FL2 attrition or maintenance in the latter case.

Umam, Sugiharto, and Manara (2023) frame their study on remote teaching and learning interaction under the notion of translingual practice for reasons that both English as a Foreign Language (henceforth EFL) students and teachers who participated in multilingual speakers who are able to shuttle different linguistic resources and that the integration of technology and communication enables the participants to align themselves with socio-material beings beyond their language competence.

All of these reasons align with the tenets of translingual practice, which evokes the idea of language as transcending individual language and embodying not only verbal but also multimodal resources (Canagarajah, 2021). From a translingual perspective, multilingual students are seen as competent to shuttle between multiple languages, communicate in hybrid languages, and foster multilingual competence. Teaching



language has a significant impact on the students' learning interests. Some students may find the subject the most difficult, and the worst-case scenario is that they simply stop learning the language. Non-native speakers of English like bilingual students, when conveying the meaning of expressions by oral skill, they may face some obstacles. One of the obstacles they get is a lack of pronunciation, language change, and code switching (cf. Bernal and Ferrer, 2023; Hermawan and Haryanto, 2022)

The purpose of applied linguistics within the sphere of language attrition in bilingual schools is to offer practical solutions and strategies for the preservation and enhancement of language proficiency in diverse educational environments. Its goal is to connect theoretical linguistic knowledge with the practical challenges experienced by individuals and communities in the realm of bilingual education. The field delves into various strategies and concrete solutions applicable in multilingual educational settings to both sustain and elevate language proficiency. This encompasses the development of programs, innovative teaching methodologies, and approaches for intervention.

The objectives of this article are: 1) Identify bilingual students' language attrition: seeks to give a thorough grasp of bilingual students' language attrition. This involves investigating into the nuances, patterns, and contributing factors of attrition in addition to determining whether it is happening. Examining the linguistic domains affected can help identify specific attrition areas. More investigation into potential variations based on demographic factors contributes to a deeper understanding. 2) Examine how applied linguistics contributes to language attrition: this section focuses on determining how applied linguistics affects language attrition. By applying applied linguistics theories to the analysis of language attrition, it is possible to understand how strategic decisions can impact language maintenance or decline. gaining practical understanding. Deriving useful insights for interventions based on applied linguistics principles is another goal of the mission.

Building on the previous studies and covering the study's gap, this study focuses on analyzing the role of applied linguistics in language attrition that occurs in the bilingual school students. According to the explanation above, the focus of this study would be guided by the following general question; 1) what language attrition is found from the bilingual students? ; and 2) what are the roles of applied linguistics in language attrition?

2. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

A theory of language attrition proposed by Pieter Muysken (2000) is applied in this library research. Pieter Muysken's theory of language attrition makes an important contribution to understanding of how languages can decline or erode over time, particularly in bilingual or multilingual individuals. In his research on language attrition, Pieter Muysken has concentrated on the elements that lead to a language's

deterioration or extinction within a person or a community. These variables may include a decrease in the language's everyday use, a dearth of opportunities for language practice, and a rise in the popularity of a different tongue.

According to Muysken's research, language attrition can happen in a variety of settings, including bilingual people or communities where a minority language is progressively replaced by a dominant language. Language attrition is a complicated process that can lead to changes in one's vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and general level of language ability. The relevance of applied linguistics to ELT lies in its ability to bridge the gap between linguistic theory and language teaching practice. By incorporating principles and research from applied linguistics, language educators can make informed decisions, implement effective teaching strategies, and create meaningful learning experiences for language learners. This is one of the aims of applied linguistics, the academic discipline concerned with the relation of knowledge about language to decision making to the real world. Applied linguistics encompasses the study of language learning, language teaching, language use in social contexts, language policy, and more. Applied Linguistics is a field of study that focuses on the practical application of linguistic theories to real-life situations. Language discourse analysis brings additional depth to ELT (Cook, 2003; Laba and Dewi, 2023).

Theoretical framework of this research include: 1) Applied Linguistics, an interdisciplinary that integrates theories and methods from linguistics, education, and other pertinent fields to address real-world language-related problems. 2) Language Attrition, is the process of losing proficiency in one or more languages, and it is a complicated phenomenon that is influenced by a number of sociocultural, linguistic, and cognitive factors. The Matrix Language Frame (MLF) Hypothesis examine how the MLF hypothesis, in the context of applied linguistics, can offer a theoretical framework for comprehending how the dominant and non-dominant languages interact in bilingual educational settings, affecting the dynamics of language attrition. 3) Sociolinguistic Perspective, examine how peer interactions, language attitudes, and societal expectations contribute to language attrition in bilingual school settings, and how applied linguistics perspectives on sociolinguistics can clarify these issues.

3. METHODS

Given the absence of tests and questionnaires in the data collection process, the chosen approach is a descriptive qualitative method. In line with Creswell's (2008) perspective, qualitative research shares similarities with interpretive research by emphasizing the participants' experiences. This methodology elucidates real-life situations within their natural context. Therefore, qualitative methods are employed to scrutinize the issue, drawing on data sourced from interviews and observations.

According to Litoselliti (2010), observation is the technique where the informants' behavior in natural settings are observed. The study employed an



observational method to scrutinize and record the day-to-day endeavors of students within a bilingual school. The emphasis during observation centered on the interactions among students utilizing both their primary and foreign languages. Put differently, this research observed how students engaged in everyday tasks while communicating proficiently in both their native and foreign languages. These observations aim to yield a comprehensive data of how students adeptly navigate and utilize both languages in the course of their daily activities within the bilingual school setting. The data gathered through these observations will subsequently serve as the foundation for the study's analysis.

Following the observation of daily activities among students in a bilingual school, information was gathered by employing note-taking techniques. This encompassed documenting students' interactions using both languages, instances of language attrition, and noteworthy elements. The recorded information served as the foundation for subsequent analysis, involving the recognition of language usage patterns, attrition tendencies, and influential factors. The process of note-taking constitutes the initial phase in comprehending the bilingual context within the research.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The term of language attrition generally describes the slow deterioration or loss of language proficiency brought on by a reduction in exposure or usage. Although Muysken is best known for his research on bilingualism and code-switching, he has also spoken about language attrition, especially in relation to his Matrix Language Frame (MLF) theory. The Matrix Language Frame hypothesis was put forth by Muysken to explain how bilingual people process different languages when they switch between codes. The MLF hypothesis is primarily concerned with code-switching, but it can also be used to comprehend language attrition. Muysken claims that a bilingual person has a matrix language in their minds that acts as a frame or structure for the insertion of elements from the other language. The matrix language typically remains more stable and dominant, providing the overall grammatical and syntactic framework, while elements from the other language are integrated.

Language attrition found from the bilingual students was shown below.

Table 1. Data 1 of Language Attrition

L1	L2
“Aku mau makan lunch .”	“I want to lunch”

From the data 1, it can be concluded that the sentence "*Aku mau makan lunch*" provides an overview of the dynamics of language attrition in bilingual individuals. Language attrition, which is characterized by the declining use of



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the native language (L1), often occurs when a person continuously interacts with another, more dominant language (L2). In this example, if the term "lunch", which is the attrition of the term "lunch" in L1, switches to another language (L2), then this can be taken as an indication that the primary language (L1) is experiencing a decline in dominance. Language shift is often influenced by factors such as the lack of use of the mother tongue (L1) in daily interactions or the dominant use of the second language (L2). By understanding changes in sentence structure like this, we can investigate how bilingual individuals experience changes in language use in everyday communication contexts, by observing the dominance of L2, as indicated by the use of "lunch" in the sentence.

Table 2. Data 2 of Language Attrition

L1	L2
“Aku hungry”	“I am hungry”

From the data 2, in the context of the data "*Aku hungry*," the connection to language attrition can be contemplated, depicting a reduction in the utilization of the native language (L1) due to prolonged interaction with a foreign language (L2). Within this framework, it can be inferred that the term "hungry" is more likely derived from L2, as it generally does not fall under the category of common words in the native language. This shift can be construed as an indication of the diminishing dominance of L1, the mother tongue. Influencing factors such as the limited use of L1 in daily activities or the prevalence of L2 usage may contribute to the occurrence of language attrition.

By comprehending alterations in sentence structure like this, we can explore how bilingual individuals undergo modifications in language usage, particularly in everyday communication. The potential derivation of the word "hungry" from L2 highlights the manifestation of language attrition in the dynamics of bilingual language.

Table 3. Data 3 of Language Attrition

L1	L2
“Aku mau pee”	“I want to pee”

From the data 3, in the sentence "*Aku mau pee*," we can relate it to the idea of language attrition, which refers to the decline in the use of the native language (L1) that often occurs when individuals continuously interact with a foreign language (L2). In this situation, it can be inferred that the word "pee" is

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more likely to come from the L2, as it is not commonly used in the native language. Changes like this can be interpreted as a sign that the use of L1 has decreased in dominance. Factors such as the lack of L1 use in daily activities or the dominance of L2 use can influence the phenomenon of language attrition. By understanding this kind of sentence structure change, we can explore how bilingual individuals experience changes in language use, especially in the context of daily communication. With the word "pee" possibly originating from the L2, we can see that language attrition is reflected in the language dynamics of bilinguals.

Table 4. Data 4 of Language Attrition

L1	L2
“Stop main”	“Stop playing”

From the data 4, in the context of "stop main," we can connect it to the idea of language attrition, which signifies the diminishing use of the native language (L1), typically resulting from ongoing engagement with a foreign language (L2). It's important to note that the term "play" may often be linked more closely with L1 (mother tongue) if it is a part of everyday activities or the surroundings in which the individual grew up. Should a transition occur, where the term "play" shifts to become associated with L2, it can be interpreted as a sign of reduced dominance in the use of L1. Elements like the infrequent use of L1 in daily routines or the prevalence of L2 utilization can contribute to the occurrence of language attrition.

By grasping such alterations, we can investigate how bilingual individuals navigate changes in language usage, particularly within the realm of daily communication. Shifts from L1 to L2, as observed with the term "playing," mirror the dynamics of language attrition on the level of everyday words and concepts.

Table 5. Data 5 of Language Attrition

L1	L2
“Smile lagi”	“Smile again”

From the data 5, In the data "smile again," we can relate it to the concept of language attrition, which refers to the decline in the use of the mother tongue (L1) due to continuous interaction with the foreign language (L2). In this context, the word "smile" may be more related to the L1 if it is part of an everyday expression or action in the mother tongue community. If a shift occurs,



where the word "smile" switches to being part of the L2, it can be taken as an indication that the use of L1 has decreased in dominance. Factors such as the lack of L1 use in daily activities or the dominance of L2 use can contribute to the phenomenon of language attrition.

By understanding this kind of change, we can explore how bilingual individuals experience changes in language use, especially in the context of daily communication. Shifts from L1 to L2, such as the word "smile," reflect the dynamics of language attrition at the level of everyday words and actions.

Role of Applied Linguistics in Language Attrition

The relationship between applied linguistics and language attrition is integral and multidimensional. The field of applied linguistics provides valuable theoretical frameworks, research methodologies, and pragmatic approaches to comprehend, manage, and possibly alleviate the consequences of language attrition. Applied linguists investigate the linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural elements underlying language loss, offering important new perspectives on the evolution of language competency. Applied linguistics actively engages with the complexities of language attrition by developing tools for language assessment, educational interventions, and community-based projects. These tools provide practical solutions to preserve linguistic diversity, support endangered languages, and address the difficulties faced by bilingual people and communities going through language shifts.

The field of applied linguistics is essential to comprehending, treating, and minimizing language attrition. The following are a few aspects of applied linguistics' function in relation to language attrition:

- 1) **Determining Language Attrition Patterns:** Research is done by applied linguists to find patterns in language attrition. This entails researching the linguistic, cognitive, social, and environmental elements that lead to language loss or deterioration.
- 2) **Formulating Techniques for Language Revitalization and Maintenance:** The goal of applied linguists is to create plans for preserving and reviving endangered languages. To encourage language use and proficiency, this may entail developing educational materials, language programs, and community outreach projects.
- 3) **Interventions in Education:** Educational interventions aimed at countering language attrition are informed by applied linguistics. This could entail creating bilingual education plans, immersion programs, or language classes intended especially for attrition-affected people or communities.
- 4) **Recognizing the Effect of Cross-Linguistic Influence:** Applied linguists investigate how language attrition in one domain can affect language acquisition



and usage in another. This aids in comprehending the mechanics of language use as well as the possible effects of attrition on a person's total language proficiency.

- 5) Technology in Language Instruction: The study of applied linguistics examines how technology affects language acquisition and retention. For people or communities experiencing language attrition, digital tools, online resources, and language learning applications can be used to offer interesting and easily accessible materials.

The study of applied linguistics is critical for understanding and correcting language attrition. It entails recognizing patterns in language loss and comprehending linguistic, cognitive, social, and environmental influences. This understanding is the foundation for interventions. Applied linguistics focuses on language revitalization and maintenance, the preservation of endangered languages, and the development of comprehensive plans to promote language usage and proficiency. It also influences educational initiatives like bilingual education strategies and immersion programs. Applied linguistics also studies how cross-linguistic influences affect language acquisition and usage, which helps us better understand language use mechanics. In the context of technology, applied linguistics investigates how technology effects language learning and retention, providing engaging resources for communities experiencing language attrition.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has shed important light on the complex dynamics of language attrition in bilingual educational environments via the lens of applied linguistics. It is identified that language attrition, which is characterized by the declining use of the native language (L1), often occurs when a person continuously interacts with another, more dominant language (L2). In this example, if the term "lunch", which is the attrition of the term "lunch" in L1, switches to another language (L2). This can be taken as an indication that the primary language (L1) is experiencing a decline in dominance. Language shift is often influenced by factors such as the lack of use of the mother tongue (L1) in daily interactions or the dominant use of the second language (L2). By understanding changes in sentence structure like this, we can investigate how bilingual individuals experience changes in language use in everyday communication contexts. By observing the dominance of L2, as indicated by the use of "lunch" in the sentence. A thorough understanding of the mechanisms underlying language attrition has been made possible by the theoretical frameworks of applied linguistics.

It is also identified how how bilingual students navigate and use their native and foreign languages in everyday activities has been made an integral part of language attrition. Phrases like "*Aku mau makan lunch*" serve as examples of the detected cases



of language attrition, which show how language dominance and proficiency gradually change as a result of a variety of factors like decreased exposure or the prevalence of a foreign language.

The role of applied linguistics in such cases provides crucial tools for language assessment, educational interventions, and community-based projects by comprehending the factors influencing language loss. By illuminating the practical ramifications of language attrition in bilingual education and providing pathways for the creation of successful interventions to maintain linguistic diversity and promote language vitality in educational settings. this research advances the field of applied linguistics in language attrition.

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