

ACCENT VARIATION IN THE UENO FAMILY YOUTUBE CHANNEL

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Abstract

Language variation, particularly in accent, reflects how cultural and linguistic backgrounds shape communication. This study aims to analyze accent variation used by the members of the Ueno Family in their YouTube channel as a reflection of bilingual interaction and identity. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the data were obtained from several vlog episodes through observation and transcription, focusing on pronunciation, intonation, and accent interference. The results show that the Japanese father demonstrates Japanese accent characteristics when speaking Indonesian, such as vowel length and /r/ articulation, while the Indonesian mother displays traces of Indonesian accent when speaking English. These findings indicate that accent variation in the Ueno Family vlog not only represents linguistic differences but also reveals how language functions as a marker of cultural identity in a multilingual and digital context.

Keywords: accent variation, sociolinguistics, bilingualism, identity, YouTube vlog

Abstrak

Variasi bahasa, khususnya aksen, mencerminkan bagaimana latar belakang budaya dan linguistik membentuk komunikasi. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis variasi aksen yang digunakan oleh anggota Keluarga Ueno di saluran YouTube mereka sebagai refleksi interaksi dan identitas bilingual. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, data diperoleh dari beberapa episode vlog melalui observasi dan transkripsi, dengan fokus pada pengucapan, intonasi, dan interferensi aksen. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa ayah Jepang menunjukkan karakteristik aksen Jepang ketika berbicara bahasa Indonesia, seperti panjang vokal dan artikulasi /r/, sedangkan ibu Indonesia menunjukkan jejak aksen Indonesia ketika berbicara bahasa Inggris. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa variasi aksen dalam vlog Keluarga Ueno tidak hanya mewakili perbedaan linguistik tetapi juga mengungkapkan bagaimana bahasa berfungsi sebagai penanda identitas budaya dalam konteks multibahasa dan digital.

Kata kunci: variasi aksen, sosiolinguistik, bilingualisme, identitas, vlog YouTube

1. INTRODUCTION

Language functions not only as a tool for communication but also as a mirror of social identity. According to Akhmedova (2024), people's language use and accent are influenced by several social factors such as class, gender, and ethnicity, which create natural variations in the way they speak. In recent times, YouTube has emerged as a vibrant platform for multilingual families to capture their everyday experiences, and this convergence of media and language offers rich opportunities for sociolinguistic research. An example of this is the Ueno Family Japan YouTube channel, showcasing kids from a mixed Indonesian–Japanese marriage. The children's language in the channel showcases their bilingual development and accent differences resulting from their distinct linguistic surroundings.

Accent variation differences in pronunciation, intonation, and phonological characteristics can provide profound insights into a speaker's language growth, their linguistic dominance, and the effects of their linguistic environment. Examining the Ueno Family's children's pronunciation of Indonesian and Japanese phonemes, as well as how these pronunciations evolve over time, could uncover patterns of phonological interference, code-mixing, and personal language tactics. Earlier studies concerning this family feature a phonological investigation by Maha, Hany Uswatun Nisa, and Prasetyo Yuli Kurniawan (2025), which explored the ways the Ueno children learn Indonesian vocabulary using video footage from their YouTube vlogs.

The children expressed a range of vowel and consonant sounds (e.g., [a], [i], [u], [o], [ə], and consonants such as [b], [d], [g], etc.), while also demonstrating consistent sound alterations like phoneme substitution, addition, or deletion. A pertinent study is conducted by Khasanah, Imas Juidah, Dadun Kohar, and Nana Triana Winata in *Jurnal Basataka* (year of publication) that examines code-mixing and code-switching in a Ueno Family video named "*Makan Malam di Restaurant India*". They demonstrate that the family's multilingual and multicultural background significantly affects how languages are alternated and combined in everyday conversations. The elements influencing these phenomena consist of the multilingual context, the communication scenario, the subject matter, and the involvement of various conversation partners.

Collectively, these studies indicate that the Ueno Family channel serves not only as a glimpse into bilingual language development but also as a small-scale model for investigating accent variation and the sociolinguistic interactions within a multilingual family. Drawing from these previous studies, the current article seeks to examine the manifestation of accent variations in the speech of Ueno children, the phonetic and

phonological changes that take place over time, and how these variations are connected to their bilingual surroundings

2. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive qualitative research method. According to Sugiyono (2018), this method aims to describe a phenomenon or event systematically, factually, and accurately according to the actual conditions. In this study, the phenomenon observed is the accent variations that appear in the Ueno family's YouTube channel videos. Descriptive qualitative research does not focus on testing hypotheses, but rather on gaining an in-depth understanding of naturally occurring phenomena. The research data were collected through observation and documentation of videos uploaded on the Ueno family's YouTube channel. Each selected video was analyzed to identify accent variations produced by each family member. The observation process was carried out repeatedly to ensure data accuracy, while documentation in the form of conversation transcripts was used as linguistic analysis material.

The next stage is descriptive data analysis. The analysis was done by carefully reading the transcripts, identifying pronunciation patterns, intonation, and the distinctive accent features of each family member. Each finding was recorded in detail to make it easier to observe differences and similarities in the accents. The descriptive approach allows the researcher to explain the phenomenon in depth without altering or manipulating the original data. In conducting the research, the researcher considered the social and linguistic context of the conversations in the videos. This is important because accents can be influenced by background, interactions among family members, and communication situations. By understanding the context, the researcher can provide a more accurate description of the accent variations occurring. The results of this analysis can later be used to understand everyday language patterns and the linguistic characteristics of the Ueno family.

The research findings are discussed descriptively by comparing them with theories on accent variation and sociolinguistics. This discussion not only explains the observed phenomena but also highlights the factors that influence accent variation, such as age, family roles, and social interaction. Through this approach, the study provides a clear picture of how accents develop and vary within the communication context of the Ueno family.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings of the study based on the analysis of selected videos from the Ueno Family Japan YouTube channel. The results focus on accent variations observed in the speech of the Ueno children, particularly in terms of pronunciation,

intonation, and phonological features influenced by their bilingual environment. The analysis revealed noticeable accent variations in the children's pronunciation of Indonesian and Japanese phonemes. When speaking Indonesian, the children generally produced basic vowel sounds such as [a], [i], [u], [o], and [ə], as well as consonant sounds like [b], [d], and [g]. However, some pronunciations showed influence from Japanese phonological patterns, such as simplified consonant clusters and slight vowel lengthening. In Japanese speech, the children demonstrated more consistent pronunciation patterns, particularly in mora-based timing and clear vowel articulation. Nevertheless, traces of Indonesian phonological influence were also observed, especially in the pronunciation of consonants that do not commonly occur in Japanese. These findings indicate varying degrees of phonological dominance depending on the language being used.

Differences in intonation and speech rhythm were also identified. Indonesian utterances produced by the children often showed flatter intonation patterns, while Japanese utterances tended to follow more structured pitch contours typical of Japanese speech. Code-mixed utterances sometimes exhibited hybrid intonation patterns, combining features from both languages. These intonational variations suggest that the children adjust their speech patterns according to the language context and the interlocutor, reflecting their developing pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence.

Several phonological processes were identified across the data, including phoneme substitution, addition, and deletion. For example, certain Indonesian consonants were substituted with phonetically similar Japanese sounds, while some final consonants were omitted. These processes occurred consistently across different videos, indicating stable accent features rather than random errors.

The presence of these phonological processes reflects the influence of bilingual acquisition, where both linguistic systems interact during speech production. Accent variations were also influenced by contextual factors such as topic of conversation, language choice of other family members, and interactional setting. When interacting primarily in Japanese, the children's speech showed stronger Japanese accent characteristics. Conversely, Indonesian accent features were more prominent during interactions involving Indonesian language use or Indonesian-speaking family members.

The findings of this study demonstrate that accent variation in the speech of the Ueno children is closely linked to their bilingual environment and daily language exposure. These results align with sociolinguistic theories that emphasize the role of social and linguistic context in shaping language use and accent development. The observed pronunciation differences support the notion that bilingual children develop distinct yet interacting

phonological systems. The influence of Japanese phonology on Indonesian pronunciation, and vice versa, reflects phonological interference commonly found in bilingual speakers. This finding is consistent with Maha et al. (2025), who reported similar phoneme substitutions and sound alterations in the Ueno children's speech.

The variation in intonation patterns suggests differing levels of linguistic dominance depending on the language context. The more stable intonation patterns in Japanese may indicate stronger exposure or dominance in Japanese, while variations in Indonesian intonation point to ongoing development. This supports Akhmedova's (2024) view that accent and language use are shaped by social and environmental factors. The occurrence of code-mixing and hybrid intonation patterns reinforces findings by Khasanah et al. (year of publication), who highlighted the impact of multilingual and multicultural backgrounds on language alternation. In this study, code-mixed utterances not only involved lexical switching but also phonological blending, further illustrating the complex interaction between the two languages. The influence of family roles, interaction patterns, and communication settings on accent variation highlights the importance of sociolinguistic context. Accents were not static but shifted according to interlocutors and situations, supporting the idea that accent is a dynamic social practice rather than a fixed linguistic feature. Overall, the findings suggest that the Ueno Family YouTube channel serves as a valuable microcosm for studying accent variation within a multilingual family. The observed accent features provide insight into how bilingual children negotiate multiple linguistic identities and adapt their speech to different social contexts.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study examined accent variations in the speech of the Ueno children as portrayed in videos from the Ueno Family Japan YouTube channel. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the research focused on pronunciation, intonation, and phonological features influenced by the children's bilingual Indonesian–Japanese environment. The findings reveal that accent variation among the Ueno children is shaped by the interaction of two linguistic systems, resulting in distinctive phonological patterns in each language. The results indicate that the children exhibit systematic accent variations, including phoneme substitution, addition, and deletion, as well as differences in intonation and speech rhythm. These variations are not random errors but reflect ongoing bilingual language development and varying degrees of linguistic dominance depending on context and language use. Japanese phonological features tend to be more stable, while Indonesian pronunciation shows greater variation, suggesting differences in exposure and frequency of use. Furthermore, the study highlights the significant role of sociolinguistic context in shaping

accent variation. Factors such as family interaction, communication setting, topic of conversation, and interlocutor influence how accents are produced and adjusted in daily communication. This supports the view that accent is a dynamic phenomenon closely tied to social identity and linguistic environment. In conclusion, the Ueno Family YouTube channel provides valuable insight into bilingual accent development within a multilingual family setting. This study contributes to sociolinguistic research by illustrating how accent variation emerges, evolves, and functions as part of bilingual identity formation. Future research is encouraged to explore a broader range of data, include acoustic analysis, or examine longitudinal changes in accent development to gain a more comprehensive understanding of bilingual phonological variation.

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