

# Parents' mediation and a child's agency: A transnational sojourner family's online and offline language socialization

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## ABSTRACT

Parents of transnational sojourner families, who stay temporarily in a country other than their own, navigate across online and offline spaces to mediate their children's socialization into the linguistic competence they need for both contexts, namely the host country and the homeland. Simultaneously, their children establish agency in developing their own linguistic competence. However, language socialization studies have rarely examined the interconnection between parents' mediation and children's agency across both online and offline spaces of socialization. In this light, this study presents an ethnographic study that examined parents' mediation and a child's agency in the online and offline language socialization of an Indonesian-Muslim transnational sojourner family in the United States, which is underexplored in language research. Additionally, using Darwin and Norton's (2015) investment model, it explored how the family's identities, ideologies, and capital structured the child's language socialization. Data were collected from observations, interviews, and artifacts that depict language practices within the family. In-depth thematic analysis through triangulation of the various forms of data was conducted to obtain trustworthiness. The findings demonstrated that parents' mediation and their child's agency across online and offline spaces contributed to the development of the child's linguistic and multimodal repertoires while also strengthening the family's local and cross-border connections. The findings also demonstrated competing priorities in identity as well as in social and cultural capital investment, which were eventually resolved. The study provides a deeper understanding of transnational sojourners' language investment in their imagined communities, which span across the host and the home countries.

**Keywords:** Language socialization; language investment; parents' mediation; children's agency; online and offline learning

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## INTRODUCTION

The term "transnational sojourners" refers to people who leave their country to stay temporarily in another country (see Chao & Ma, 2019; English et al., 2021; Helnywati & Manara, 2019; Tran & Nguyen, 2016). Due to their short-term residence in a host country, transnational sojourner families strive to develop a sense of belonging in the host

country while maintaining a connection to their homeland. To develop their membership in the host country, the families leverage both offline (face-to-face) and online interactions. However, in maintaining connections with people in their homeland, they primarily rely on online communication through social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype, and more recently,

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Zoom. Online media enables them to co-participate in daily activities (Nedelcu & Wyss, 2016) and build a sense of closeness (Kędra, 2020) with people they left behind. Within the online and offline spaces of connections, children often participate in socialization involving languages used in both countries. In this article, I demonstrate how the multiple spaces of connections support parents' mediation and their child's agency within language socialization practices inside an Indonesian-Muslim transnational sojourner household in the United States (US). Additionally, I illustrate how identity, ideology, and capital influence the family's investment in multiple languages. The study is situated at the intersection of language socialization, language investment, online and offline learning, and transnational migrant studies. Hence, it contributes to the existing body of research in those areas.

### **Parents' and Children's Roles in Language Socialization**

In families, parents play a crucial role in mediating children's language socialization (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Studies in language learning have shown that parent mediation is a significant influencing factor in children's success (He et al., 2014; Hosseinpour et al., 2015; Wati, 2016; Zhou, 2020). Additionally, parents' roles are paramount in mediating not only children's physical but also their online modes of learning. As a result of omnipresent media, parents transcend their physical parenting concepts to encompass those in online environments as part of their child-rearing routines (Lim, 2016) and they mediate children's engagement in online practices (Jiow et al., 2017).

Although parents' roles are pivotal to children's language socialization, children's agency should not be overlooked. A number of studies indicated that children are not passive recipients as they maintain an agency to shape their own socialization and transform language practices (Fader, 2009; Moore, 2011; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2014; Sterponi, 2007). The concept of agency refers to intentional, reflexive activities that are conducted with the intent of achieving certain goals within the constraints of the social context (Huang & Benson, 2013). In transnational and bi/multilingual families, children maintain an agency to influence their family's language policy through resistance and negotiation (Fogle & King, 2013) and assert their own linguistic preferences to achieve communicative goals (Said & Zhu, 2019). Children in those families can also develop an agency to learn their heritage language while maintaining transnational affiliations by utilizing online social media (Kędra, 2020; Palviainen & Kędra, 2020).

Studies mentioned above have shed light on parents' and children's roles in shaping family language socialization trajectory, including those in

bi/multilingual families. Yet, most of these studies focused on the physical spaces of socialization. Only a few (e.g. Kędra, 2020; Palviainen & Kędra, 2020) examined families' language socialization in online spaces. Parents' mediation and children's agency across online and offline spaces of language socialization, especially in transnational sojourner families, remain under-examined. Similarly, Indonesian-Muslim families in the US are under-explored in language studies. Furthermore, underlying constructs of transnational sojourners' language investment (i.e. identities, ideologies, and capital) across online and offline spaces or their combination remain to be sought after. Therefore, this paper builds on previous work by examining not only how language socialization practices are organized in an Indonesian-Muslim transnational household but also how the construct of language investment influences such practices.

### **Language Investment of Transnational Sojourners**

As a consequence of their migration, transnational parents invest in their children's language education and multilingualism in order to provide them with the linguistic resources they need to access national and international imagined communities (Dagenais, 2003). That is also the case for parents of transnational sojourner families in the US. Darwin and Norton (2015) investment model posits that identity, ideology, and capital shape the underlying constructs of language investment.

When learners invest in language learning, they invest in their identity to obtain legitimacy in the communities where they belong (Darwin & Norton, 2014). Darwin and Norton further stated that an individual's identity is not static, but temporally and spatially reconstructed. Helynywati and Manara (2019) showed that transnational sojourners in their study embraced potentially new identity formation, although they identified themselves as belonging to both their host and their home countries. Other studies have demonstrated that the desire to form a new and more desired identity is an influencing factor in language investment. Tran and Nguyen (2016) argued that international students' decisions to pursue education abroad were driven by their "aspiration for intellectual, professional, cultural, linguistic, and citizenship transformation" (p. 562) in the global landscape. In addition, Bae and Park (2016) revealed that parents of Korean students in Singapore directed their children to attain competence in multiple languages for their children to become global elites. Due to their movement to the US, Indonesian-Muslim sojourners may also experience new identity formation similar to those found in previous studies.

Another construct of language investment is ideology. Ideologies are broadly referred to as the

“ways of thinking that dominate particular social groups or entities and that constitute their practices” (Darvin & Norton, 2021). According to Darvin and Norton (2016), learners may encounter ideologies that are in opposition to their own when they move across different locations while forming their own identities and positioning themselves in different ways. For example, the context of Sweden became a site of struggle for the Somalis to learn their heritage language to maintain their “Somaliness” due to their different linguistic ideology from that of the dominant population (Palm et al., 2019). Indonesian-Muslim families in the US face similar struggles in developing children’s competence in their ethnic and religious language because their ideologies are not shared by the majority of the population. However, parents may navigate through conflicting ideologies to foster children’s competence in both the host land and the homeland contexts. As indicated in a study conducted by Chao and Ma (2019), while Chinese sojourner families in the US recognized that an English-only policy was important in the local context, parents continued to actively develop their children’s essential academic knowledge and literacy in Chinese to minimize their literacy gap when they return to China.

Along with their identities and ideologies, transnational migrants’ social, economic, and cultural capital also construct their language investment. According to Bourdieu (1986), social capital is the sum of actual or potential material and symbolic resources, which depends on the network size people can mobilize and the amount of their economic capital (e.g. money and material goods) and cultural capital (e.g. knowledge and skills). Learners who invest in additional languages gain access to a broader range of resources, increasing their cultural capital as well as their social power (Norton, 2013). Furthermore, Darvin and Norton (2015) argued that when people invest in learning, they not only aim at obtaining symbolic and materialistic objects but also use capital as resources for learning. They also stated that, in new contexts, learners not only use newly acquired resources but also transform resources they have previously obtained into valuable affordances for the new context. As evidence, Mendoza (2015) found that international students with prior Western cultural knowledge and those who had locally established social networks maintain the ability to navigate the demands of education in Canada.

With their temporary movement to the US, Indonesian Muslims mobilize social, cultural, and economic capital from their homeland to the host country. In the new context, they may acquire new resources and utilize the capital they already have into affordances for children’s language socialization. Therefore, examination of the capital along with the identities and ideologies of Indonesian-Muslim transnational sojourner families

becomes important in understanding the underlying factors of their language investment.

In recent years, many studies on language investment have focused on adults (Cao & Newton, 2019; Hajar, 2017; Mendoza, 2015; Palm et al., 2019; Vasilopoulos, 2015). A study by Ryan (2020) examined parents’ investment in children’s identity, ideology, and capital related to their bilingual education. Yet, only a few focused directly on children’s language investment (e.g. Palm et al., 2019). Hence, young children’s language investment remains under-explored. Furthermore, as noted by Darvin and Norton (2017), research on the intersection of identity, ideology, and capital in language investment needs to be examined continuously to test the usefulness of the construct in the current social landscape. Therefore, to contribute to the existing body of research, the study presented in this article closely examined not only parents’ but also a child’s language investment concerning issues of identities, ideologies, and capital in the child’s language socialization process.

In summary, transnational sojourner parents’ and children’s roles as well as their language investment across online and offline spaces remain to be examined. To address the gaps in research, this study aimed to examine language and literacy practices in an Indonesian-Muslim transnational sojourner family by answering the following questions: 1) How do parents’ mediation and a child’s agency across online and offline spaces contribute to the child’s language development? 2) How do constructs of language investment (i.e. identities, ideologies, and capital) influence language socialization practices in the family?

## **METHOD**

Language socialization research commonly involves the use of ethnographic methods and analysis of discourse to interpret communicative practices between children and their parents or caregivers (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2014). The study used ethnographic data and analysis of interactions obtained from one of the families in a larger language socialization study in an Indonesian-Muslim community in a US Midwest city. The family’s short-term stay in the US for two years and their intention to return to Indonesia justified their identification as transnational sojourners.

## **Participants**

There were three members in the family (i.e. a father, a mother, and a child). They were chosen purposefully for this study due to their unique language investment when compared to that of the other families in the larger research, who were either permanent residents or citizens of the US. The parents’ willingness to participate was obtained through written consent, while the child’s

participation was made possible by verbal assent and written parental permission. For ethical purposes, I assigned pseudonyms to the family members' names. The mother of the family, Diah, was a graduate student at a US university. The father, Akmal, worked as an employee of a local business. Their only son, Rizki, was seven years old and a second-grade student at a public elementary school. At the beginning of the research, Diah had stayed in the US for about one year, whereas Akmal and Rizki had only been in the country for six months. While Diah was a fluent speaker of English, Akmal and Rizki were still learning the language. However, the family members shared multilingual skills namely Indonesian and Bangkanese. In addition, Akmal and Diah spoke Palembangese, a language they acquired previously during their undergraduate studies in Palembang, Indonesia. Besides speaking English, Indonesian, and Bangkanese, Akmal and Diah were able to read Arabic for the purpose of reading the Islamic holy book, the Quran. Indonesian is Indonesia's national and official language and the family's second language. The family mainly used Indonesian in formal settings, such as schools in Indonesia or when speaking to other Indonesians of different linguistic backgrounds. Rizki was still considered a learner of Indonesian. Because Bangkanese is the family's native dialect, Rizki was a fluent speaker of the dialect. Arabic is considered the language of religion. Although obtaining communicative competence in Arabic was not an obligation for Indonesian Muslims, the ability to read Arabic for religious purposes was considered an important element of religious piety. At the time of the study, Rizki was in the process of learning to read Arabic.

The Indonesian-Muslim population in the US accounted for only about 20 percent (Widjanarko, 2007) of the total US Indonesian population of 129,000 people (Budiman, 2019). Therefore, the family was a part of the relatively small Indonesian-Muslim community. While there is no official data, based on my observation, not more than fifteen Indonesian-Muslim families with children were living on the research site. These families lived in scattered locations within the city. Only those who were students lived closely with each other in a campus housing. As members of a minority group, the participating family's daily offline encounters with fellow Indonesians and fellow Muslims were limited. Therefore, in addition to offline affordances, they made extensive use of online resources in conducting ethnic and religious language practices.

### **Data Collection**

Grounded in an ethnographic perspective, language socialization research essentially involves longitudinal and field-based data collection methods that include the recording of interactions and other

language practices (Garrett, 2017). Data for this study was collected through observations, interviews, and artifacts over a period of eight months. The observations involved online and offline naturalistic interactions and activities concerning Rizki's multilingual development, which were audio and video recorded with the participants' consent. Meaningful events in the observations were recorded as field notes. As an Indonesian-Muslim and a close friend of the family, I positioned myself as a participant observer. I had already gained enough rapport with the participants to be able to minimize unnaturalness in their actions and interactions. Five audio-recorded semi-structured interviews with a total length of eight hours were conducted with the participants to understand their experiences in developing Rizki's multilingual competence, as well as the factors that construct their language investment (i.e. identity, ideologies, and capital). To gain more data, information about the participants' experiences was also obtained from my conversations with them during recorded field observations. For fluency in data collection, I used Palembangese when interviewing the parents and a blend of Palembangese, Indonesian, and English when interviewing the child. Before translating the non-English interview data, in order to ensure the data's equivalence with the English translation, I listened to the recordings repeatedly and carefully to fully understand the meaning conveyed by the participants. In addition to observations and interviews, I collected visual artifacts, such as the family's written products, drawings, and posts on social media platforms, which I photographed and documented with the participants' permission. The combination of various forms of data was useful in gaining a comprehensive picture of the family's language practices and the factors that influenced those practices.

### **Data Analysis**

In the process of data analysis, audio and video recordings of interviews and observations were played repeatedly. I created written logs to organize and document the data. Meaningful audio data were transcribed verbatim. Artifacts were carefully examined to find information that may have contributed to the findings. I applied Strauss & Corbin's (1998) coding procedures by assigning codes to themes that emerged from the data and categorizing themes to establish meaningful interpretations. For instance, in the first stage of open coding, I labelled the data based on the participants' language activities, such as "local conversations," "transnational conversations," and "reading sessions." In the second stage, I identified connections among the data and assigned codes, such as "parent-mediated activities" and "child-initiated activities." In the third stage, I connected categories and assigned labels, such as "multilingual

development” and “strengthening connection.” Theoretical perspectives on language socialization and the constructs of language investment served as an interpretative foundation in establishing coding categories. In developing and refining analytical categories, I conducted data triangulation from observations (e.g. online and offline language practices), interviews (e.g. experiences in language practices, beliefs, perceptions of self, and language goals), and artifacts (e.g. products of language practices).

## **FINDINGS**

The findings demonstrated the interconnection between parents’ mediation and the child’s agency as they navigated across multiple online and offline spaces and utilized the resources at their disposal to develop the child’s multilingual and multimodal repertoires. The findings also showed that the family’s identities, ideologies, and capital transformed across space and time in support of their language investment.

### **Parents’ Mediation**

In their mediation, Akmal and Diah involved Rizki in various activities through their local, translocal, and transnational spaces of connections. Within the local space, they engaged Rizki in multiple offline settings (i.e. their neighborhood, public places, a nearby mosque, and Indonesian-Muslim gatherings). All of these settings provided Rizki with exposure to English. In addition, at the mosque, Rizki obtained religious teachings and learned to read in Arabic through Islamic schooling. Furthermore, in the Indonesian-Muslim monthly gatherings, Rizki was exposed to Indonesian through interactions and Arabic verses of the Quran that were conveyed through sermons. Within the translocal space, Diah and Rizki participated in a summer Indonesian-Muslim Midwest gathering and an annual conference jointly organized by the Indonesian and Malaysian Muslim organizations in North America. In the translocal gathering and conference, Rizki attended sessions and classes for children, where he was exposed to Indonesian, English, and Arabic. These languages served different purposes. While Indonesian and English were used communicatively as mediums of instruction, Arabic was learned only in relation to religious purposes, such as reciting and memorizing verses of the holy book and conducting religious rituals. Within the transnational space, both Akmal and Diah engaged Rizki in active online communication with their family in Indonesia through video calls and text messages. In such communication, the family mainly used their native dialect. Consequently, Rizki gained opportunities to maintain his ability to communicate in the dialect. Because of his full-time employment, Akmal was often unable to spend much time with Rizki. In

contrast, Diah’s time was more flexible because her full-time enrollment as a graduate student allowed her to work at home when no in-class meeting was scheduled. Hence, the parents divided their roles. While Akmal concentrated on fulfilling the family’s financial needs, Diah controlled the management of the household, including Rizki’s education. The division of roles was also based on a belief Akmal stated in an interview (Excerpt 1):

### **Excerpt 1:**

What’s important is for Rizki to contribute to his country, to his religion. He is safe in life and in the afterlife. That’s all I pray for. Which way he goes, I don’t know. That’s the duty of the mother. (Translated from Palembangse)

Akmal’s statement implied his expectations about Rizki’s future. However, he relied on Diah to realize these expectations. Akmal’s reliance on Diah was, in part, due to her professional experience as an educator in Indonesia. Diah’s professional skills were significant contributing elements toward the parents’ effort to provide the desired education for Rizki.

In the offline space of home, Diah made use of online resources to assist Rizki in improving his skills in Arabic reading as well as developing his competence in English and Indonesian. In order to increase Rizki’s Arabic reading skills, Diah used “Iqra,” an Indonesian online application that Rizki had already been using since the family were still in Indonesia. Learning to read in Arabic was only focused on being able to read the Quran without the obligation to understand the meaning word for word. Learning English and Indonesian, on the other hand, was aimed toward comprehension.

To support the development of Rizki’s communicative skills in English and Indonesian, Diah introduced him to various online applications for learning, such as YouTube, Google Translate, and Google Image. As a result, Rizki used these online applications as a means to obtain information of interest while also improving his English skills, which was Rizki’s main linguistic goal. To help increase Rizki’s English reading skills, Diah engaged Rizki in reading from online sources. For this purpose, the parents provided the necessary technological facilities, such as a computer, an e-book, and a tablet.

Figure 1 displays the use of an e-book and a tablet during one of Rizki’s reading sessions. A mix of languages was often used in those sessions. Excerpt 1 illustrates a naturalistic conversation between Diah and Rizki in English and Indonesian during a reading session about young “Peter Rabbit” when they come across the word “sword.” In the story, Peter’s mother held a carrot and pretended that it was a sword (as shown in Figure 1).

**Figure 1**  
An E-Book Application for Reading Sessions



**Excerpt 2:**

- (1) Diah : What is sword? How to say it? I don't know how to say it. Can you tell me what it is?
- (2) Rizki : Hey, Mom. If you don't have any "s", "that" means "word".
- (3) Diah : Word?
- (4) Rizki : If you don't have any "s", that mean it's "word". [Then looks up Google Translate]
- (5) Rizki : *Pendang* [mispronounced the word for the meaning of "sword" in Indonesian]. Sword [imitating the pronunciation audio in Google Translate].
- (6) Diah : *Pendang? Apa itu pendang?* (Pendang? What is pendang?)
- (7) Rizki : *Pendang?*
- (8) Diah : *Apa itu pendang? Pendang atau pedang? Do you know pedang? Tau ndak pedang? Yang mana pedang?* (What is pedang? Pendang or pedang? Do you know pedang? Which one is pedang?)  
[Rizki was silent while looking at his tablet]
- (9) Diah : *Tau ndak pedang itu apa?* (Do you know what pedang is?)  
[Rizki was still silent and examining the word on his tablet]
- (10) Diah : *Mama tanya, tau ndak pedang itu apa?* (Mama is asking, do you know what pedang is?)
- (11) Rizki : Mmm. I don't know.
- (12) Diah : Okay. *Buka di mana kalau gak tau pedang? Di mana bukanya? Di YouTube atau Google Image.* (Okay. Where do you look it up if you don't know pedang? Where do you look it up? On YouTube or Google Image.)

[Rizki searched the word on Google Image, then showed Diah the result of his browsing, which shows a picture of a sword]

- (13) Diah : *Nah! Itu dia pedang.* (There you go! That's pedang!)

Two categories of information can be drawn from Excerpt 2. Firstly, it shows Rizki's ability to recognize word forms in English, his initiative to use online applications in meaning-making as well as in learning to pronounce a word, and his preference toward using English as a medium of communication. Secondly, it depicts Diah's effort in assisting Rizki in navigating through various online platforms for meaning making, the application of her teaching skills, her mediation in Rizki's learning of English, and her dominant use of Indonesian.

Rizki's ability to recognize English word forms (Lines 2 and 4) indicated the development of his English competence. His use of Google Translate to look up the meaning of "sword" in Indonesian (Lines 4 and 5) was a response to his mother's question, "What is it?" (Line 1). Google Translate also assisted in his learning of the English pronunciation of the word (Line 4). To assist Rizki in meaning-making, Diah advised him to use YouTube and Google Images to find the meaning of the word "sword" (Line 12). Diah also applied conversational movements that showed her teaching skills (i.e. questioning, directing, repeating, and evaluating). Diah initially intended to mediate Rizki's learning of English (Line 1). Her use of Indonesian (Line 6) was a response to Rizki's use of the word "pendang" (Line 5). However, as Rizki preferred to continue the interaction in English, Diah continued to use Indonesian (Lines 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12). Diah's interactive moves signified her power in enforcing a multilingual policy toward Rizki. In an interview, Diah explained that it was important for Rizki to develop competence in English, especially for the purpose of schooling in the US. However, it was equally important for him to develop his skills in Indonesian due to the family's intention to return to their home country. Nevertheless, Rizki's consistency in speaking English (Lines 1, 2, 4, and 11) challenged Diah's dominant use of Indonesian. Diah's and Rizki's interaction displayed a negotiation between the speakers, in which each speaker permitted the dominant-language preference of the other speaker.

The findings described in this section showed Diah's dominant role in mediating Rizki's language development. Her time availability, her teaching skills, and her fluency in multiple languages provided affordances to Rizki's language socialization process. While Akmal did not play a dominant role in Rizki's learning of English due to his limited time availability and limited English

ability, he provided the facilities for learning and contributed to determining the goals of socialization. He also mediated Rizki's maintenance of Indonesian and Bangkanese through daily interactions inside the household and through the family's online transnational communication with their relatives in Indonesia.

**Rizki's Language Activities and Agency**

In his daily routine, Rizki regularly engaged in online and offline activities for language development, as shown in Table 1. The table shows a variety of Rizki's online and offline activities in relation to the use of languages (i.e. English,

Indonesian, Bangkanese, and Arabic). These activities were either mediated by his parents and teachers, facilitated by the surrounding community, or self-regulated. They were aimed at a variety of purposes. The data showed that Rizki's self-regulated learning was primarily targeted at increasing his English competence for the purpose of developing communicative competence in the US context. His self-regulated study of Indonesian was only frequent at the beginning of his stay in the US. Rizki's learning of Arabic literacy was mainly mediated by his parents and his Islamic school teachers.

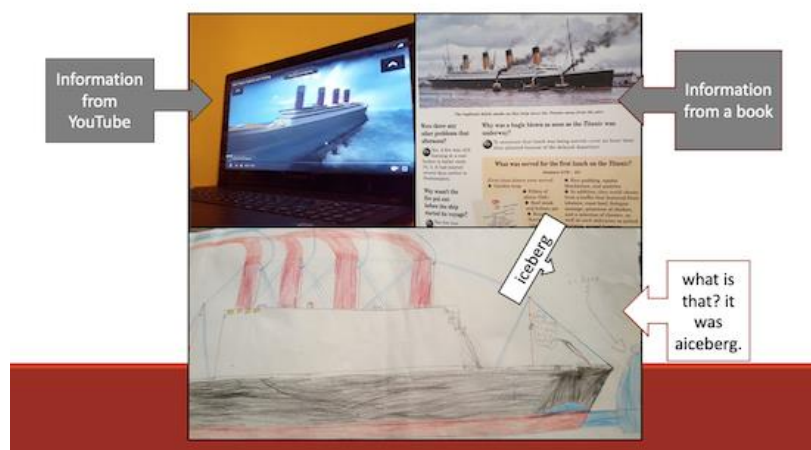
**Table 1**  
*Rizki's Online and Offline Activities*

Language	Online Activities	Offline Activities	Mediated/Self-Regulated	Language Purpose
English	Obtaining information	- Daily interactions - Learning in schools	- Self-regulated - Mediated by mother, teachers, and community	- Communication - Education
Indonesian & Bangkanese	Transnational communication through social media	Interactions with parents	- Mediated by parents - Self-regulated only at the beginning of his stay in the US	- Transnational relationship - Competence in homeland community
Arabic	Learning to read in Arabic with online application "Iqra"	- Learning to read in Arabic - Memorizing Quranic verses	- Mediated by parents and teachers	- Religious competence

In what follows, I illustrate examples of how Rizki's agency shapes the trajectory of his own language development. While his parents asserted a multilingual policy, his self-regulated activities were more focused on learning English. As a second-grade student, Rizki had already learned how to write and was passionate about developing his English skills. His language practices in English across online and offline spaces became more self-regulated throughout the period of his stay in the

US. Rizki's online navigation was often based on his interests (i.e., vehicles and transportation). He browsed online sources (e.g. YouTube and Google applications) and offline sources (i.e. books) to find information about various topics. Rizki often created drawings to record and present the knowledge he learned from various sources. An example of Rizki's self-regulated study is shown in Figure 2, which demonstrates his online and offline activities in learning about the ship "Titanic."

**Figure 2**  
*A Collage of Rizki's Online and Offline Activities*



The top-left picture was taken from Rizki's online learning from a YouTube channel about the structural, mechanical, and historical aspects of the Titanic. The top-right picture depicts a book about the Titanic that Rizki borrowed from his school library. During one of my observations of his literacy activities, Rizki showed me a drawing of the Titanic (bottom picture) that he made based on the information he gathered from YouTube and the book. The drawing represented a part of the knowledge he obtained from the two sources. When describing the drawing to me in English, he pointed to two bubble captions: "what is that? it was an iceberg" and "iceberg" along with his explanation. The two bubbles represented Rizki's agency in developing his writing skills, although spelling and grammar errors as well as non-capitalized beginnings of sentences were found.

In an effort to develop his speaking skills, Rizki often performed oral presentations that displayed his knowledge and his drawings, which he asked his mother to record audio-visually for his own viewing and as a form of practice. Another form of Rizki's agency in developing his English speaking skills was constructing sentences in writing before uttering them. Rizki explained that the writing activity was meant as a preparation for oral interactions. Through time, Rizki's English speaking skills developed and the language became a dominant part of his language repertoire.

Rizki's agency in developing his English skills convinced Akmal and Diah to allow him to use English as his primary language of communication. The parents occasionally displayed Rizki's English skills on their online social media as conversation starters. An example is Akmal's video post on Facebook approximately one month before the family's return to Indonesia, as shown in Figure 3. At the time, Rizki had already stayed in the US for approximately thirteen months. Akmal's Facebook post was also meant to bridge Rizki's interaction with one of his uncles. Excerpt 3 was derived from my transcription of Rizki's spoken message, which his father video-recorded.

**Excerpt 3:**

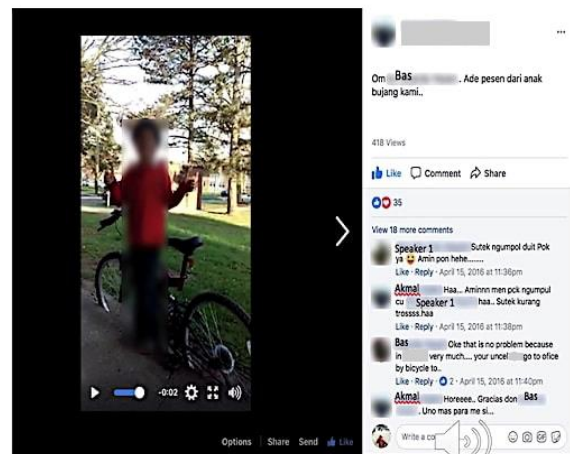
Uncle Bas (pseudonym), can you buy this bike. I really like it because it goes superfast. It climbs and it's going two inches tall. So, can you just really buy it for me? I love this bike! Please!

Rizki's message demonstrated his progress in developing fluency and confidence in English. His pronunciation almost mimicked that of US native English speakers.

The post showed that Rizki's agency not only contributed to the development of his own competence in English but also strengthened the family's relationships. It attracted "like" reactions

and initiated a conversation among Akmal, his family, and his friends. As a result, it contributed to the family's efforts to maintain their connections with people who were remotely or closely located. Although the conversation in the post was mainly conducted in their native dialect, the uncle replied in English, thereby indicating his acceptance of Rizki's dominant use of English. The family was proud of Rizki's achievement in acquiring the language. In short, the data indicated a negotiation between Rizki and Akmal. Rizki accepted the multilingual practices that Akmal maintained in the family, while Akmal allowed Rizki's dominant use of English.

**Figure 3**  
*Akmal's Facebook Post*



**Identity, Ideologies, and Capital in Language Investment**

In this section, I discuss the family's identities, ideologies, and capital, which influenced the family's investment in languages as reflected through the parents' mediation and the child's agency. The constructs of language investment were indicated in the interviews, observations, and artifacts related to the participants' language and literacy practices.

**Identities**

Akmal and Diah perceived Rizki's identity as being Indonesian and Muslim, similar to how they identify themselves. However, Diah had an extended view of the family's identity. In an interview, she expressed the following:

**Excerpt 4:**

I always say to Rizki that he is a global citizen... In terms of religion, we are not just Indonesian but a part of human race...but still contribute to Indonesia. (Translated from Palembangse)

In Excerpt 4, Diah identified Rizki as a global citizen and, in her religious belief, a member of the



human race. However, her statement that Rizki should “still contribute to Indonesia” reflected her view of Rizki’s national identity. Due to their perception of Rizki’s multiple identities, Akmal’s and Diah’s investment in Rizki’s multiple language socialization was aimed at strengthening those identities. Like his parents, Rizki strongly identified himself as an Indonesian and a Muslim. Nevertheless, his self-regulated language investment was driven more toward building his identity as a part of the local US community. As a result, throughout his stay in the US, Rizki directed his agency more toward learning English than developing his skills in other languages.

### ***Ideologies***

The findings revealed two salient forms of ideology, namely language ideology and religious ideology. The family’s language ideology was closely associated with their identities. They believed that competence in multiple languages was an important asset for being competent members of the communities where they belonged. Rizki’s belief in the value of multiple languages was reflected in his statement during an interview conveyed in English.

#### **Excerpt 5:**

In my classroom, my friend from Malaysia and from China, from India and he can speak like Spanish, English. My friend from Malaysia, he can speak like English or speaking like Indonesian.

The interview indicated Rizki’s observation of his friends’ language repertoires. When mentioning his friends from Malaysia, China, and India who spoke Spanish and English, he meant that they came from diverse countries and have the ability to speak multiple languages, including English. Rizki additionally mentioned his Malaysian friend who spoke English and a language similar to Indonesian, which is Malaysian. During the interview, Rizki also expressed his desire to be able to communicate fluently in English with his friends. Hence, Rizki’s multilingual ideology had strengthened. With regards to religious ideology, the interview data showed that Akmal and Diah had a mutual objective that Rizki must become a pious individual to secure his future in life and in the afterlife. They believed that the ability to recite and memorize verses of the Quran was an important factor in developing religious piety. However, while Rizki did not hold opposing language or religious ideologies with his parents, his language investment was focused on learning English.

### ***Capital***

Rizki’s multilingual development was largely accommodated by the family’s social, economic, and cultural capital that they mobilized from the

homeland and those they acquired in the US. The family mobilized their social capital (e.g. their social network), cultural capital (e.g. skills in multiple languages and Diah’s teaching skills), and economic capital (e.g. electronic devices) needed for Rizki’s multiple language development. In the US context, the family’s local and translocal networks gave Rizki opportunities to acquire more cultural capital, such as English competence, religious linguistic knowledge, and Indonesian development. Diah’s increased teaching skills due to her educational pursuits also afforded Rizki’s multilingual socialization. Furthermore, their transnational network furnished Rizki with social capital to maintain his competence in the family’s native dialect. However, while his social and cultural capital provided him access to multilingual development, Rizki leveraged the capital primarily toward acquiring English to strengthen his social capital in the local US community.

### **DISCUSSION**

For transnational sojourner families, establishing membership in the host country while keeping connections to their homeland is essential. In that regard, as exemplified in the study, parents socialize children into multiple languages necessary for the contexts in both countries. Socialization into languages not only entails the acquisition of languages but also encompasses other elements, such as identity, culture, norms, and values of the community (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2014). Akmal’s and Diah’s efforts to socialize Rizki into multiple languages were made possible by providing exposure to multiple languages through engagement in local, translocal, and transnational community activities across online and offline spaces. The importance of exposure in language acquisition has also been highlighted in existing studies (Al Zoubi, 2018; Kozhevnikova, 2019). Furthermore, the findings indicated that community engagement is important in children’s language socialization, similar to that experienced by participants in Chao and Ma’s (2019) study. As the family’s interactions with people in their neighborhood and public spaces intensified, Rizki’s communicative competence in English increased. Meanwhile, the family’s involvement in the local mosque and the Indonesian-Muslim community exposed Rizki to Arabic, the religious language of Islam. Simultaneously, Rizki and his parents’ online connections with their Indonesian family provided him with exposure to the family’s native dialect. Their frequent transnational interactions also created an “ambient co-presence” (Madianou, 2016) and emotional attachment (Kaur & Shruti, 2016) to the homeland.

In summary, through their leverage of online and offline resources, Akmal’s and Diah’s

mediation furnished Rizki with a rich linguistic, cultural, and multimodal repertoire. As a result, within the social contexts of home, school, and community, Rizki developed agency by actively navigating online and offline multimodal spaces for learning. His primary focus was learning English. In his self-regulated learning, Rizki made sense of online and offline information by producing written forms of expression (e.g. drawings with descriptions) and audio-visually recorded oral presentations. Rizki's agency not only supported his language-learning ventures but also contributed to strengthening the family's relationships across multiple geographical spaces. For example, the audio-visual recordings of his oral presentations and communication shared by his parents on Facebook served as topics for conversations among the parents, friends, and relatives wherever they resided.

Investment in identities (Darvin & Norton, 2017) was salient in the language practices of the family. Diah's imagined global identity for Rizki directed her actions to support Rizki's multiple language developments. Diah's and Akmal's identification of the family as Indonesians and Muslims influenced their investment in Rizki's development in Indonesian and Arabic literacy. However, although parents' roles are crucial in children's socialization, children's agency is also a significant factor (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2014). Learners are able to achieve their objectives while developing agency within the restrictions of their social environment (Huang & Benson, 2013). In this regard, Rizki's emphasis on learning English was aimed at developing his identity as being a part of the host land. Parents find it challenging when their children's attitudes coincide with their imagined identity for their children (Ryan, 2020). Nonetheless, in Rizki's case, parent-child negotiation took place. As a result, the family achieved a consensus to allow Rizki's dominant use of English at home. The change in the family language policy as a result of negotiation was similar to that in studies conducted by Fogle and King (2013) and Said and Zhu (2019).

At the intersection of identity and ideology lies a learner's position (Darvin & Norton, 2015). In terms of ideologies, Rizki and his parents did not have opposing beliefs regarding the importance of multiple language skills. However, as stated earlier, there was a contention between Rizki's and his parents' priorities in identity formation. Due to their short stay in the US and their intention to return to Indonesia, Akmal and Diah's mediation was more driven toward Rizki's long-term national, global, and religious identity formation. Such actions indicated that they positioned Rizki in relation to his multiple identities and multilingual ideology. Rizki, on the other hand, positioned himself as a member of US society and believed that he needed to be

more committed to learning English than to learning other languages.

Rizki's socialization into multiple languages was afforded by the social, economic, and cultural capital his family maintains. The forms of capital that the family mobilized from their country, along with those they established while living in the US, became significant contributors to Rizki's language development. The findings echoed Darvin and Norton (2015), who argued that, in new contexts, language learners not only obtain new capital but also use the capital they already own and transform the capital into valuable assets for learning. According to the data, Rizki and his parents had different priorities in terms of social and cultural capital investment. Despite his agreement with his parents' investment in his long-term multiple imagined communities, Rizki's social and cultural capital investment was mainly directed toward short-term objectives in the local context. He prioritized developing an imagined identity as a member in the local US context through the acquisition of English. Nonetheless, the family's language policy was negotiated, as evidenced by Rizki's acceptance of his parents' multilingual exposure and the parents' acceptance of Rizki's dominant focus on English. The parents' acceptance was partly motivated by the fact that Rizki's agency strengthened the family's social capital across multiple geographical spaces, as reflected by their social media display of Rizki's English skills.

## **CONCLUSION**

For transnational sojourner families, the host land environment is a place of struggle as parents socialize their children into new communicative and cultural competence while maintaining homeland languages and cultures. The parents' mediation across online and offline local, translocal, and transnational spaces contributed to child's linguistic and multimodal repertoires. Simultaneously, the child's agency contributed to his own language development and strengthened the family's local and cross-border connections. The interconnection of the parents' and the child's roles shaped the trajectory of the child's language development. The family's language investment was mainly constructed by the following factors: 1) their identities as Indonesians, Muslims, and members of the US community, 2) their language and religious ideologies, and 3) the social, economic, and cultural capital they mobilized from their home country and those they acquired in the US. Although the parents and child shared similar multilingual and religious ideologies, they had opposing priorities in terms of identity as well as social and cultural investment. The parents were more focused on a long-term objective for their child. They invested in their child's global, national, and religious imagined

identities by supporting his multilingual development. In contrast, the child focused on a short-term objective. He invested in strengthening his identity as a member of the local US community by acquiring English fluency. Therefore, while the parents emphasized developing the child's multilingual abilities, the child focused on acquiring English skills. However, their competing priorities were resolved as reflected by the parents' social media display of the child's English skills, which generated local and cross-border conversations. Based on the findings and analysis, I argue that a child's language socialization trajectory is dependent upon the interconnection between parents' mediation and the child's agency as well as their negotiation of language investment. I also argue that children's agency and language investment are crucial aspects of their language socialization and, therefore, should not be disregarded. Furthermore, I contend that in transnational sojourner families, parents' long-term multi-context language investment may compete with children's short-term context-specific language investment.

Several implications can be drawn from the study. It furthers the empirical conversation on parents' and children's roles in language socialization practices within transnational sojourner families. It also illuminates how identities, ideologies, and capital transform across space and time (Darvin & Norton, 2017), resulting in possible conflicting language investment priorities among family members. Parents-child negotiation demonstrated in this study echoed that of earlier language socialization studies in transnational families (Fogle & King, 2013; Said & Zhu, 2019). However, the study looks closely into the conflict and negotiation with regards to parents' and a child's language investment. Nevertheless, since the data was limited to one family, further investigation into the language practices of other families is needed to deepen our understanding of how language investment shapes language socialization practices inside transnational sojourners' households.

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