



THE MAINTENANCE OF MANDAILINGNESE LANGUAGE

IN TANJUNGBALAI

Nurul Husnah Harahap

Didik Santoso

Anni Holila Pulungan

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ABSTRACT

This study deals with the language maintenance of Mandailingnese in Tanjungbalai. It uses qualitative research design. It is conducted descriptively. This study aims to examine the types of language maintenance by Mandailingnese people in Tanjungbalai, find out the ways in maintaining the Mandailingnese language in Tanjungbalai and find out the reasons why the speakers of Mandailingnese people maintain their language in Tanjungbalai. The subjects were 10 teenagers (boys and girls) of Mandailingnese. The use of instruments in this study were observation and interview. The observation were used to examine the types of language maintenance by Mandailingnese people in Tanjungbalai in order to describe the ways of Mandailingnese language maintenance. The interview was used to gain the reasons of Mandailingnese language maintenance in Tanjungbalai. The theories of Fasold, Fishman and Holmes are used in this study. The data were analyzed by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014). There are four types of language maintenance in Tanjungbalai namely; low maintenance, medium maintenance, strong maintenance and extreme maintenance. There are two ways to maintain Mandailingnese language in Tanjungbalai namely; join the community and teach the language to younger sister/brother. There are four reasons why they maintain their language namely; to express their identity as Mandailingnese people, to achieve self pride as Mandailingnese people, to tell certain issue and to create closer relationship. Analysis of data clearly indicates that Mandailingnese language maintenance were done in Tanjungbalai.

Keyword : *language maintenance, reasons for language maintenance, Mandailingnese in Tanjungbalai*

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INTRODUCTION

Every human being needs language to communicate each other. They use language in their daily communication. They can express everything in their mind by using language to follow every human activities. In other words, without language they can not communicate each other and they will get difficulty in it, because language is important part of human being to express their ideas and language can not be separated from social interaction. This social interaction happens not only in the native language users but also by the immigrants.

In social interaction, it is apparently that the immigrants live with two conflicting wants. They are they want to maintain their language as part of their heritage and identity, and they want to be involved within their host community. The first want may lead to language maintenance, whereas the second one may lead immigrants through generations to lose proficiency in their vernacular and finally shift to the dominant language.

Discussing the minority language, Kaplan and Baldauf (1997: 62) said that:

If both languages can serve all of the same functions and domains, then minority speakers are often drawn to the majority language because it offers greater access to material rewards, employment and economic opportunities. It may also be that there is status to be gained by linguistic and cultural association with the majority group.

In addition, urbanization situations, where minority individuals are drawn into urban centers-essentially for the same reasons of employment and economic reward-minorities are required to learn and use the majority language. Over time, these conditions lead to an environment in which the young have no incentive, and perhaps little opportunity, to learn the minority language.

Based on these statements, indicate that a group of people or the immigrants who come or move in certain region which the multilingual situation and ethnic cities do not have a chance to use their heritage language because their language is minority. And the language can be divided into two categories are majority and minority language. In this case, in Tanjungbalai, one of the minority languages is mandailingnese language and the majority is Malay language. Mandailingnese language is as a tool of communication by Mandailingnese people in their daily activities such as at home, in wedding party, religion, traditional event and etc.

In Tanjungbalai, there are some ethnic groups and vernaculars. Certainly the people who live in Tanjungbalai use Indonesia language as lingua franca. Indonesia language that influenced by Malay language. Absolutely mandailingnese people who live in Tanjungbalai involved on this case. This condition certainly makes mandailingnese people do not have opportunity to use their language. But, language must be maintained, because language showed the identity of the language users. As Holmes (2001:63) stated that where language is considered as important symbol of a minority group's identity, the language is likely to be maintained longer. Moreover, Corson (2001:174) said that the

maintenance of a heritage language is vital for the self-identity and esteem of its speakers. Therefore, language must be protected, preserved and maintained. So, if Mandailingnese language is not spoken anywhere, it will be lost. As Schiffman (1995:12) stated that if language is not maintained, there can be several results. One is language death, the speakers of certain language become bilingual and the younger speakers become dominant in other language.

One of previous study which conducts the study about language maintenance is Batubara (2012). This previous study and this research are discussed the same topic about language maintenance. However, the previous study relates the maintenance of Mandailingnese language in Medan-Tembung, while this research relates the maintenance of Mandailingnese language in Tanjungbalai. The aim of the previous research is to find out the factors of language maintenance that effect Mandailingnese language maintenance in Medan-Tembung. On the other hand, this research intends to find out the type of language maintenance that effect Mandailingnese language maintenance in Tanjungbalai. According to her study, the second generation namely parent, they still maintain Mandailingnese language. While the third generation or the children dominated use Indonesian language so they could not speak use Mandailingnese language. Then the previous study from Wamalwa and Oluoch (2013), *Language Endangerment and Language Maintenance: Can Endangered Indigenous Languages of Kenya Be Electronically Preserved?*. Their paper addresses the need to preserve and maintain endangered indigenous languages. The paper has highlighted the current state of language endangerment in Kenya.

Fishman (1991) further argue that language maintenance has not only been an interest of linguists, but also a great concern due to the fact that by the third generation, there is often a complete shift from the heritage language to dominant language in migrant families.

In line with the explanation about language maintenance above, in reality during the interaction between a mother and a son, there is different phenomenon, such as in the following.

A: *Mangua de latni ma ?*

(What happen mom?)

M: *On kak Husna, adong tugas nia manaliti. Au pe na mangarti dah. Sapai ma ia.* (Husna has a task. I don't understand. Just ask her).

A: *Tugasapa tu kak ?* (What is it ?)

H: *Ini dekkakak ada penelitian tentang orang Mandailing yang tinggal disini. Masih mempertahankan bahasanya nggak mereka, karena kan disini dominasi bahasa Melayunya kan dek. Khususnya yang kakak teliti anak-anak suku Mandailing yang kelahiran disini dek. Jadi mereka tu tau nggak berbahasa Mandailing, gitu dek. Ingat kakak kan Abdul pernah berbahasa Mandailing sama bang Im kan. hehehe*

(I have a research about Mandailingnese who live here. Do they still maintain Mandailingnese language? We know that Malay language is dominant here. Especially i research the children of

Mandailingnese people who were born here. Do they can speak Mandailingnese language? I remember that you ever speak Mandailingnese language with my brother, hehehe).

A : *Hahahaha iya, kalo kami memang kalo jumpa bahasa Mandailing ajanya kami. Enak juga rasa ku pande bahasa Mandailing bisa mengkatain orang hahaha.*

(Hahahah ya, if we meet speak Mandailingnese language. I think it's good can speak Mandailingnese language, we can reproach someone, hahaha).

H: *hahahaha itu pula keuntungannya ya dek.*(hahahah that's the benefit).

A: *hahahaha, iya lah.kakak rupanya pande bahasa kita ?*(hahahah, ya. Can you speak Mandailingnese language?)

H: *hahahahh, malo la dek.*(hahahah, yes, i can).

A: *hahahaha, baen ma. Jadi aha selanjutna ?*(hahahaha, please. So what's next ?)

The conversation above is occurred on Sunday at 08.00 pm in a participant's house on jln. Anwar Idris, Tanjungbalai. The participants are mandailingnese people. A is a male, third generation, and M is a female, second generation. As Silva-Corvalan (1994) stated that in sociolinguistic terms, the parents are the first generation, the children second, and the grandchildren the third. Their conversation shows that, A speaks Mandailingnese language with his mother. It means that A as a third generation still maintains Mandailingnese language. This situation motivates the researcher to do the research. Then, the preliminary data above also has connection with previous study from Habtoor (2012) that has relation with this study, the previous study, the speakers speak Tigrinya mostly at home and this study, the researcher found the data, the speakers speak Mandailingnese language at home because the researcher found the informants at home in using Mandailingnese language. The previous study, In his study Language Maintenance and Language Shift among Second Generation Tigrinya-speaking Eritrean Immigrants in Saudi Arabia. His paper is summarized a study of this research reveal that second generation Tigrinya teenagers have a limited ability to understand, speak, read, write, and translate orally Tigrinya into Arabic and vice-versa. In comparing the level of their proficiency in both Tigrinya and Arabic it is found that they have a lower proficiency in Tigrinya than in Arabic. Second generation Tigrinya teenagers speak Tigrinya mostly at home because their parents generally speak to them in Tigrinya, but the teenagers are able to understand, speak, read, and write in Arabic better than Tigrinya. The use of Tigrinya is seemingly decreasing and the use of Arabic is increasing. Therefore, there is evidence from this study that second-generation Tigrinya teenagers' proficiency is shifting toward Arabic rather than maintaining the native language.

Furthermore, it is important to conduct a study about Mandailingnese language maintenance. Thus, based on the phenomena which have been mentioned above, this research tries to find out the type of language maintenance that influence Mandailingnese language maintenance in Tanjungbalai, how the process and the reasons of Mandailingnese people maintain their language.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was a qualitative research. Patton (2002) defines qualitative research as an attempt to understand the unique interactions in a particular situation. The aim of qualitative research is to truthfully present findings to others who were interested in what people were doing. In this research, the researcher herself is as the key instrument. As the Bogdan and Biklen (1992:31) points out that qualitative researcher has the natural setting as the direct source of the data and the researcher is the key instrument.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Many researchers have conducted about the language maintenance. This study also took in different language, community, and place. It can be concluded that this research had different findings with the previous study and supported by previous theories.

From the findings above, there are four findings that found in this study, they are (1) proficiency language maintenance, (2) acquisition of language by adults, (3) the way in maintaining a language, (4) the reason in maintaining a language that affect the Mandailingnese people in maintaining Mandailingnese language in Tanjungbalai. Some findings that find out this research are not wholly line with the theory of Holmes even there are new findings to maintain the language that found in this study.

Based on the findings, there are four types in mantaining Mandailingnese language. As Lewis (1996:21), there are three types in maintaining the language, it is not line with this study findings. In this finding, there was one finding, namely extreme maintenance. Extreme maintenance in this study means the people of Mandailingnese are not only used Mandailingnese language but also creat a community namely IKATABAGSEL.

In maintaining Mandailingnese language, there are some strategies that can be conducted by minority. According to Fishman (1991), there are eight stages that can be done by the indigenous speakers in order to maintain a language. They are 1) Acquisition of the language by adults, 2) Create a socially integrated population of active speakers (or users) of the language, 3) Number of people habitually using the language, 4) All age groups encourage in the language, 5) Encourage the use of the language in compulsory state education, 6) Encourage the use of the language in workplace, 7) Encourage the use of the language in local government services and mass media, 8) Encourage the use of language in higher education and government.

In this study, there were two strategies that conducted by Mandailingnese people in Tanjungbalai to maintain Madailingnese language. They are (1) join the community, (2) teach the language to younger sister/brother. The findings of this research were not wholly line with Fishman (1991) strategies. He stated, there are eight strategies that conduct to maintain the vernacular language but in this research only found two strategies that conducted by Mandailingnese people in

Tanjungbalai to maintain Mandailingnese language because this study conducted in different language and place.

According to some experts (Holmes, Thomas, Baker, and Fishman), the reasons in maintaining the language, there are five reasons namely, (1) to express and identity or an ethnic, (2) to achieve honor ,(3)hope, self esteem, and self pride, (4) to help their community to develop and progress, and (5) for the essentially of language diversity. From findings of this study, the researcher found that Mandailingnese people maintain their language, there are four reasons, they are(1) to express identity, (2) to achieve self pride, (3) to tell certain issue, (4) to creat closer relationship. These findings are extremely different with perivous theories. The reasons of telling certain issue and creating closer relationship are not line with theory, both of them are new findings in this study. To tell certain issue is used when they want to tell something secret to others. From informants' information, they use Mandailingnese language to make other ethnics not understand what they said and the next one, to creat closer relationship, it means that when they use Manailingnese language, it will make them closer nad know more. It is like know for along time even though they just meet for the first time. This study was supported by Holmes (2001) which stated that when the language see as to express identity, to achieve self pride, it is generally maintain longer. They spoke Mandaingnese language because they are proud of being Mandaingnese people. The use of Mandaingnese language in their daily communication showed their identity as Mandaingnese people. Thus, the attitude of Mandaingnese people toward their vernacular supported them in maintaining their language. Furthermore, the maintenance of Mandaingnese language is also the maintenance of culture because every culture activity needs to use a language. For this case, Mandaingnese language is an element national culture for Indonesian should be perserved.

CONCLUSIONS

This study focused on the maintenance of Mandailingnese language in Tanjungbalai. It was aimed to gain the types, ways, and reasons to support Mandailingnese language maintenance in Tanjungbalai. Based on the analysis, the conclusions are:

- (1) There are four types of language maintenance of Mandailingnese language in Tanjungbalai, they are low maintenance, medium maintenance, strong maintenance and extreme maintenance.
- (2) The process of language maintenance that conducted by Mandailingnese people in Tanjungbalai were not all of processes from the theory occured in the field, there are eight ways in maintaining the language in the theory, but in this study, there are two ways found to maintain the language. They are join the community, teach the language to younger sister/brother.

- (3) The reasons of Mandailingnese people maintain their language were not all of reasons from the theory in line with theory. This study found four reasons why they maintain their language in the way they do. There are two new findings from this study. They are to tell certain issue, to creat closer relationship. Mandailingnese language is the national culture of Indonesia that should be perserved.

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