

**LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE OF BATAK TOBA LANGUAGE
AMONG YOUNG GENERATION IN KECAMATAN NAMORAMBE
KABUPATEN DELI SERDANG**

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Abstract

The research was about Language Maintenance of Batak Toba Language among Young Generation in Kecamatan Namorambe, Kabupaten Deli Serdang. This study was conducted by applying the descriptive qualitative method. The data source was taken from the conversations of male and female young generations who live in Namorambe, Kabupaten Deli Serdang. The technique for analyzing the data is descriptive qualitative research based on Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. The result of this research was factors of the Batak Toba Language maintenance of young generation in Kecamatan Namorambe, Kabupaten Deli Serdang are Ethno Linguistic Vitality, Neighborhood Domain (100%), Seeing Each Other Frequently, Family Domain, Visiting Homeland Regularly or Frequently (80%) and Practice Traditional Ceremony (50%). The Ways of Young Generations in maintaining the BTL are Acquisition the Language (100%), Socially Integrated Population of Active Speakers (90%), and Localities of People Habitually Using the Language (80%). The Reasons Young Generations Maintain the BTL are Identity (90%), Prestige or Pride (100%), and Keeping the Language (90%).

Keywords: *Language maintenance, young generation*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has many ethnic languages. It is known that Indonesia is an archipelago consisting of five big islands, in which there are different local languages, especially North Sumatera, which consists of various ethnic groups, such as Malay, Batak, Javanese, and other ethnic groups. The early tribes of the city of Medan were the more dominant Malay and Karonese ethnic groups. Based on the Central Bureau of Statistics North Sumatera (Badan Pusat Statistik Sumatera Utara) data source, in 2000, most of the population are Javanese, and the second largest is Batak (Toba Karo, Simalungun, Pakpak, and Mandailing).

Every ethnicity has its language. People usually have a local language to communicate with their community before a common language is understood by people in a country. The language indicates the existence and its ethnic identity. As in Kecamatan Namorambe, Kabupaten Deli Serdang, the Batak people use Batak Toba language. It shows that they have self-identity, and they want to maintain their local language because it is essential.

Batak Toba Language (BTL) is a mother tongue used in communication among Batak people, both spoken and written. The speakers use their local language in daily communication and interaction while they understand its language. The local language is usually used, such as informal events, ceremonies. Holmes (2008:61) states that language is considered an important symbol of a minority group's identity. Therefore, the language is likely to be maintained longer. Language cannot be separated from human life because language represents cultural values. Language and culture are related intimately. Language and culture change together. Language and culture reinforce each other and exclude something they cannot receive because their language does not allow them to think of those things or which their culture does not contain. Moreover, Corson (2001:174) said that the maintenance of a heritage language is vital for the self-identity and esteem of its speakers.

The importance of maintaining the BTL in a community is one of the communication strategies explicitly used in Batak people ethnic. The language is a social language used to interact among individuals and allows communication and transfer of information so that no individuals are outdated. It should happen naturally.

A language dies when nobody speaks it anymore. It may continue to have existed in a recorded form, traditionally in writing, more recently as part of sounds or video, or archive. As speakers cannot demonstrate their fluency, they stop using their local language. Effectively the language will die when there is no speaker left to use the language or no member of the young generation interested in learning it.

The speakers who married with other ethnic groups such as Simalungunese often use the BTL to their husband and wife who are not Batak people at all; unexpectedly, the husband or wife does not adapt or follow their Batak couple use BTL in their home. It certainly makes the existence of the Batak Toba

language itself can keep on maintenance. In this case, by supporting the society who are live around Batak Toba people. So intentionally or not, the people who are not Batak people understand and can speak using the BTL autodidact.

For instance: communication with friends.

S : *Tiur, naeng lao tudia ho? songon na tarburu-buru ho hubereng..*

(Tiur, where are you going? You look like in a hurry..)

L : *Naeng tu sikkola au sonari, adong saotik masalah na porlu huselesaihon..*

(I want to go to school now, there is a problem I have to solve..) S : *oh.. nga maridi ho?*

(oh, have you taken a bath?)

L : *ehe, dang sanga au maridi. Nga ma da..*

(Ehe, I didn't have time to take a shower. Bye..) S : *olo ma buti. Nanget-nanget ho da..*

(oh, okay. Be careful)

Language maintenance is a condition in which the language speakers make an effort to maintain the language by spreading its use as a means of communication or by raising its status, Eastman (1983:73). When language maintenance refers to the language in the broader speech community, language policy established by the authority is necessary to enforce its maintenance.

Language maintenance refers to the situation where the speakers or users continue to use their traditional language in the face of any situation that might develop a shift to another language. If language maintenance does not occur, it will bring several effects. First, the language may be lost, and even death, and so speakers become bilingual, younger speakers become curious about another language without understanding their local language.

Betty (2013:13) states the more parents were dependent on professionals to deliver intervention services, the more urgently they wanted their children to acquire English. In addition, Fishman (2013:32), the study of language maintenance and language shift is concerned with the relationship between change or stability in habitual language use, on the one hand, and ongoing psychological, social, or culture processes on the other hand, when populations differing in language are in contact with each other.

According to Holmes (2008:61), there are some factors of language shift in different communities: the first, from migrant minorities. Immigrants who look and sound 'different' are often regarded as threatening by majority group members. Therefore, there is pressure to conform in all kinds of ways. Second, from nonmigrant communities. Language shift is not always the result of migration. Political, economic, and social changes can occur within a community, resulting in linguistic changes. The third, from migrant majorities, where a group abrogates political power and imposes its language along with

institutions, government administration, law courts, education, and religion. Minority groups will likely find themselves under increasing pressure to adopt the language of the dominant group.

Language change treats language as an entity independent of its speakers and writers. In reality, it is not so much that language itself changes, as that speakers and writers change the way they use the language. Speakers show innovation, sometimes spontaneously, but more often by imitating speakers from other communities if their innovations are adopted by others and diffused through their local community and beyond into other communities. Then, linguistic change is the result.

The process of language shift does not finish at the end of a person's life or a group of people; instead, it gradually develops from generation (Fasold 1984). In addition, Devan said: "in such situation, the members of a group start using the more prestigious language in a series of a progressively higher number of domains and communicative situation.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. *Language Maintenance*

Fishman (2000:15) argues that language maintenance efforts in those cases may need to begin with the reconstruction of the language from elderly and remaining users. Those committed to reversing language shift must understand the functional disruption of their particular language in social space and must focus and prioritize their effort in a precise stage to succeed.

Language maintenance is the preservation of language, which is the language used by a group's native language as a first or second language where pressures threaten or cause a decline in the status of the language. Status of language is intertwined with language prestige and language function. Language status is the position or standing of a language. The effect of language maintenance programs can be highly favorable for threatened cultural groups.

2. *The Factors of Language Maintenance*

Language maintenance mostly happen when certain language is considered a minority language. A minority language is a language spoken by a minority of the population of a territory. There are some factors that push the people to keep the language. Actually language shift is not separated from language maintenance. A language shift can happen because of some causes such as bilingualism which is not one factor that supports the language shift problem.

The maintenance of a language such as BTL, entails the maintenance of the group of Batak Toba speakers. Holmes (2008:63) explains more specifically, that there are some factors that can maintain a language, such as:

1. Living together and see each other frequently, in other words, it is refers to living in an area dominated by Batak people
2. Visiting homeland regularly or frequently

3. Inter-marriage
4. Ethno linguistics vitality
5. Use of the language in family domain
6. Use of the language in neighborhood domain
7. Use of the language in workplace domain
8. Use of the language in education domain
9. Use of the language in religion domain
10. Practice of *adat istiadat* (traditional ceremony)

Meanwhile Curzon (2001:13) states that the important factor in maintaining a language is the attitude factor of the speakers. This deals with the cultural value (ethno linguistic vitality), whatever the group sees their language and culture needs to be maintained or not. Holmes (2008:61) also states that when the language seen as an important symbol of ethnic identity, it is generally maintained longer.

3. *The Way to Maintain a Language*

As Holmes (2001:4) states, some efforts can be made to maintain a specific language. They are: (1) A language can be maintained and preserved when it is highly valued as an important symbol of ethnic identity for the minority group. (2) If families from a minority group live near each other and see each other frequently, their interaction will help maintain the language, (3) For emigrating individuals from a minority group, the degree and frequency of contact with the homeland can contribute to language maintenance. (4) Inter-marriage within the same minority group is helpful to maintain the native language, (5) Ensuring that the minority group language is used at formal setting such as school or worship places that will increase language maintenance, (6) a typical extended family in which parents, children, and grandchildren live together and use the same minority language that can help to maintain the language, (7) Institutional support from a domain such as education, law, administration, religion, and the media can make a difference between the success and failure of maintaining a minority group language.

While for endangered language, according to Crystal (2003), there are some factors which help an endangered language to progress, He postulates that an endangered language will progress if its speakers;

1. Increase their prestige within the dominant community
2. Increase their wealth
3. Increase their legitimte power in the eyes of dominant community
4. Have a strong presence in the education system
5. Can write down the language
6. Can make the use of electric technology

4. *Reasons of language maintenance*

Pauwels (2005:21), a family is one of the most critical factors in maintaining the language. Within a particular group of language use, the interaction among the group members will be significant in maintaining their language. The interaction will occur in a very natural setting. Most of the work will have to be done primarily by small groups themselves rather than by any interactional agencies and networks that exist today.

Crystal (2003:17) language maintenance should be done in order to (a) creating cultural diversity, (b) keep ethnic identity, (c) enable socio adaptability, (d) increasing the security for the children psychologically, and (e) increases the sensitivity of linguistic. The five terms are related to each other; for example, when a specific language is maintained, language users' identity is maintained, and the language will automatically form cultural diversity. It also makes the users of specific languages able to adapt to society. It will increase security feeling to users and will affect their psychology.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. *Research Methodology*

The research was conducted by applying a descriptive qualitative method. A descriptive qualitative method is used to describe situations, events, or occurrences so that this method is intended for the primary data. Descriptive research studies are designed to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena (Ary, 1979:295). The term descriptive research refers to the type of research question, design, and data analysis applied to a topic. The data have been collected in various ways, such as observations, interviews, and tape recordings. Bogdan and Biklen (1982:27) stated that qualitative data was a direct source of data, and the researchers were the critical instrument. Qualitative means finding out how a theory works in different phenomena whose data collected are in words rather than a number.

2. *Techniques of Analyzing Data*

In analyzing data, the researcher used model Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014:12) state that qualitative data in the emphasizes on people's lived experiences, are fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, processes and structure of their lives and for connecting these meanings to the social world around them.

In the research, there are three stages to analyze the data namely:

1. Data condensation that has some steps such as: selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming.
2. Data display, *and*

3. Drawing and verifying conclusion

The data were analyzed as follows:

1. Elaborating the theories and anything related to the problems
2. Identifying the language maintenance of BTL (Batak Toba Language) in young generation in Kecamatan Namorambe
3. Classifying the language maintenance into three of research questions: (1) factors, (2) ways, and (3) reasons.
4. Counting the data in percentage from by using a simple formula.

FINDINGS

Based on the data analysis, some research findings were specified below :

1. Six factors that affecting the BTL maintenance for young generation in Kecamatan Namorambe, Kabupaten Deli Serdang namely: Seeing Each Other Frequently, Ethno Linguistic Vitality, use of the language in family domain, use of the language in neighborhood domain, Visiting Homeland Regularly or Frequently and Practice of Adat-Istiadat (traditional ceremony). All this factors which caused young generation could build up a good socialization among them.
2. Some ways of young generation to maintain the BTL, they were; Acquisition of the Language, Create a Socially Integrated Population of Active Speakers and Localities of people habitually using the language.
3. The reasons of having maintained the BTL were; show identity, pride and keep the language.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

This study was aimed at describing the factors of language maintenance, ways and the reasons of the BTL maintenance. After analyzing the data, the conclusion can be drawn as follows:

- (1) The factors of young generation to maintain the Batak Toba language that found in Kecamatan Namorambe, Kabupaten Deli Serdang: by living in area dominated ethnic, ethno linguistic vitality, use of the language in family domain, use of the language in neighborhood domain, visiting homeland regularly of frequently and practice of adat istiadat ceremony. Living together and see each other frequently being the most factor that support young generation maintaining their local language. By living together, young generation can build up a good socialization among them. It was reflected to the young generation by keeping the tradition and used the BTL in their daily activities. The young generation keep on maintaining the Batak Toba language because loyal and

show the close relationship.

- (2) The ways of young generation to maintain the Batak Toba language: firstly, acquisition of the language. It means that since the young generation born, they had acquired the Batak Toba language as means of communication eventhough in modern era. The secondly, the young generation had been created by a socially integrated population of active speakers where they lived. The last, was to localize the Batak Toba language as the habitual language used.
- (3) The reasons of maintain the BTL were show identity, pride and keep the language, because the strength of BTL especially spoken language in Kecamatan Namorambe, Kabupaten Deli Serdang. So, it was considered so much important in the process of re-excavation of the values of local wisdom can be interpreted from poetry, song, fairy tales, folklore, legends and so on. All of which implies a message and reflects the general character encountered from certain ethnic groups. Like the wedding ceremony that has any message about honest, seriousness, works respect to the parents, etc.

From the data analysis, the objectives of this research are to identify the factors of language maintenance of HS in young generations in Kariahan, ways of young generations to maintain HS, and the reasons of young generations to maintain HS. This research is conducted by using qualitative method which is making a description and the percentage of the result. It is found:

1. There were six factors for young generations to maintain HS; living in area dominated ethnic, ethno linguistic vitality, use of the language in family domain, use of the language in neighborhood domain, use of the language in religion domain and practice of traditional ceremony.
2. There were three ways of young generations maintained HS; acquisition of the language, create a socially integrated population of active speakers and localities of people habitually using the language.
3. There were three reasons for young generations maintained HS; show identity, pride and keep the language.

Suggestion

Based on the finding that had been gotten from this research, the researcher can be given some suggestion as follows:

- (1) The parents of young generation in Kecamatan Namorambe Kabupaten Deli Serdang should keep on speaking by using BTL among family members in domain in order that children can learn and speak BTL to show them as the next generations of the ethnic group.
- (2) The researcher suggests to the parents in order to teach the Batak Toba Language to young

generation from an early age. It is such as want to learn the BTL, either just know or also participate in practicing in it our lives, participate if there are activities in context of cultural preservation, practice the use of the BTL and loving your own culture without degrading and harassing the culture of others and it is suggested that parents should encourage the positive attitude to their children in maintaining the BTL in vernacular language.

- (3) Stay proud and keep the heritage of ancestors because the BTL as a local language that remains one of the identity of a tribe and as a Batak Toba people continue to maintain the BTL in order to not eroded by the changing times.

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