

THE ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE OF BATAK TOBA AND KARO LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Language maintenance is one of the efforts that can be done to keep regional languages from extinction. The purpose of this study is to determine the level of language maintenance of Batak Toba and Karo languages of middle age teenager of 15-18 years at Kwala Bekala District, Medan. The method used in collecting data is the 'cakap semuka technique' using a questionnaire distributed to informants and continued with interview. This research data assessment method uses quantitative methods and the data is analyzed using sociolinguistic theory. From the results of the study it was found that the maintenance of Batak Toba Language among middle age teenager of 15-18 year old at Kwala Bekala district XVII was (30 %) and the maintenance of Karo Language of middle age teenager of 15-18 at Kwala Bekala district XVII was (58 %). It can be concluded that the maintenance of Karo language among middle age teenager of 15-18 years old is higher than the maintenance of Batak Toba language among middle age teenager of 15-18 years at Kwala Bekala Medan.

Keywords: *Language Maintenance, Language Attitude, sociolinguistics, Batak Toba and Karo Language*

INTRODUCTION

In social life a person is not seen as an individual who can be separated from others but he is a member of his social group. Therefore language and language speakers cannot be observed individually but are always connected with the activities and culture of the surrounding community. Sociolinguistics places the position of language in relation to its speakers in society. This shows that sociolinguistics views language as a social system and a communication system and is part of a particular society and culture (Amar, 2004). The language of the archipelago is a valuable legacy that has begun to become endangered. According to UNESCO data, it is predicted that within a century, 50% of the approximately 6700 languages in the world will be threatened with extinction. Viewed from a theoretical point of view that a language will die if it is no longer used by its speakers in daily interactions and communication. This can happen because of parents who no longer teach Mother Language to their children. Parents prefer to use

languages that are more prestigious, , global and modern. These languages are considered to be more economically valuable and benefit to the speakers.

According to Chaer (2004) language maintenance is an act of the public consciously using their own language to defend the language from the threat of using other languages or new languages that are considered to be able to shift the language. When people consciously no longer maintain the use of their local languages, the language will eventually be threatened with extinction. Society in this case parents, often consciously or unconsciously, no longer use regional languages when communicating with their children at home. This is one of the reasons why children in the new generation do not know the local language well.

Batak Toba and Karo languages are a small part of the archipelago language which is also endangered. As someone who has a Toba Batak ethnicity, the author has his own experience about Batak Toba language. As a descendant of the original Batak Toba tribe who was born in Medan, the author and many of my writer's friends were unable to actively communicate using Batak Toba language. Both of the writer's parents are Bataknese who use regional languages when communicate at home. When parents communicate using the local language to the author, the writer still uses Indonesian when answering. As a result when growing up, the writer could not speak using Batak Toba language fluently. Another thing was experienced by fellow writers who had Karo ethnicity. All of writers' friends who are Karonese with same age able to communicate in Karo Language actively and smoothly. Batak Toba and Karo tribes are two tribes that live close together at Kwala Bekala district. According to the data obtained from the village chief of Kwala Bekala, the majority of people living in the area are the Batak Toba and Karo tribes. This is the reason why the writer wants to do research on the level of maintenance of Batak Toba and Karo languages in middle age teenager of 15-18 year at Kwala Bekala district, Medan City, which is dominated by the majority of Batak Toba and Karo tribes. This research is expected to provide information and input to parents of Batak Toba and Karo tribes in order to maintain the local language from the threat of extinction because regional languages are a very valuable inheritance. Based on the description of the background of the problem above, it is necessary to study "The maintenance of Batak Toba and Karo languages of Middle age teenager of 15-18 Years Old at Kwala Bekala District Medan.

Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is derived from the words "socio" and "linguistic". Sosio is related to community. Linguistics is the study of language, especially elements of language. So, sociolinguistics is a study that arranges theories about the relationship between society and language. Sociolinguistics also studies and discusses the aspects of community language, especially the differences in language which related to social factors (Nababan 1993: 2). Sumarsono (2013) said that the term sociolinguistics consists of 2 words, socio and linguistics. So sociolinguistic is the study of language associated with social conditions.

According to Chaer (2010), Sociolinguistics is a linguistic sub-discipline that studies language in terms of its use in the society. Abdul Chaer stated that what was discussed in sociolinguistics is the use of language, the place of language used, the grammar levels, the various consequences of contacting two or more languages, and the variety and timing of the use of various languages, (Chaer, 1995: 4). Fishman (in Umar, 1994: 2), states that sociolinguistics is the study of relationship between language use and social behavior. As an object in sociolinguistics, language cannot be seen or approached as language, as is done by general linguistics, but rather seen or approached as a means of communication in society (Chaer, 2010: 3). Fishman (1972: 1), states that sociolinguistics highlights the whole problem which includes the use of language, behavior towards language, but also attitudes of language, language behavior and language use.

Language Maintenance

Language maintenance is defined as the decision to continue using language collectively by a community that has used the language before, Fasold (1984). Furthermore, Fasold states that the preservation of this language is the opposite of language shifts; that is, where a community decides to change the language it has used or choose another language instead of the language it has used. Language shifting concerns with the issue of language use by a group of speakers that occurs as a result of the shift from one speech community to another. If a person or group of speakers moves to another place that uses another language, and interacts with the speech community in the area, a language shift will occur. Migrant groups generally have to adjust to leaving their own language and using the language of the local population. In other words, migrants tend to adjust to the language of interlocutors. This process of language shifting

could have been preceded by a small number of speakers and was only said to be in full shift when a number of groups or people participated in making language adjustments. Language shifts usually occur in countries, regions, or regions that give hope for a better socio-economic life, thus inviting immigrants to come to them. The event of language shift is caused by at least a number of factors, some of which are: bilingualism, migration, and economic development, language status which is considered higher by social society and imperialism or colonialism.

Language Pride

Garvin and Mathiot (in Chaer, 2004: 152) say that language pride in addition to awareness of the norm and language loyalty is also a very important factor for the success of language maintenance efforts in the face of external pressures from economically and politically dominant language-holding societies have greater influence. Linguistic pride can be raised from the peculiarities of that language. Batak dialect is a dialect that has a number of peculiarities as a vehicle for the cultural community that is not owned by other languages. A number of lexicons, phonemic structures, and intonation of the typical Batak dialect are elements to be proud of because all of these elements are not easily mastered by speakers of standard languages.

Batak Toba Language

Batak Toba language is one of the regional languages that is mainly spoken in the area around Lake Toba and its surroundings, including Samosir, Humbang Hasundutan, North Tapanuli and Toba Samosir, North Sumatra, Indonesia. Batak Toba language belongs to the Austronesian language family, and is part of the Batak language group. At present there are an estimated 2,000,000 Batak Toba speakers, who live in the western and southern parts of Lake Toba. The writing of this language has historically used Batak script, but today its speakers almost always use the Latin script to write it. The number of speakers who have moved to the city is one of the causes of the decline in the number of Batak Toba speakers.

Karo Language

Karo tribe is one of the tribes at Karo Regency, North Sumatra. Karo Regency located in the highlands of North Sumatra Province, Indonesia. Karo Regency is often called Tanah Karo. The population of Tanah Karo is around 409,675 people (2018) (<https://karokab.bps.go.id/>). Karo Language is the language used by the Karo people who inhabit the Karo Plateau (Karo Regency), Langkat, Deli Serdang, Dairi, Medan, to Southeast Aceh in Indonesia. Karo language has

historically been written using Karo script or often also called the Aru / Haru Letter which is derived from the Brahmi script from ancient India. But now only a small number of Karo people can write or understand Karo characters, and vice versa Latin characters are used.

METHODOLOGY

This research is quantitative study with a survey method that presents quantitative data. This research includes cross-sectional and longitudinal studies using questionnaires or interviews in data collection, with the aim of generalizing populations based on samples, (Cresswell,2014). This research was conducted in the XVII Environment Kwala Bekala District, Medan. This research was conducted for one and a half months starting on 10 June 2019 - 31 July 2019. The source of the data in this study were middle age teenager of 15-18 years old at XVII environment, which dominated by Batak Toba and Karo tribes. The data obtained in this study were questionnaires distributed to 50 middle age teenager aged 15-18 years at XVII environment of Kwala Bekala Medan, which is 50 middle age teenager of Batak Toba and 50 For Karonese. Primary data collection is carried out by distributing questionnaires and interviews. The method used in analyzing research data is quantitative method. The use of quantitative methods begins with data analysis in the form of answers to questions raised by respondents through questionnaires.

FINDINGS

The following will discuss the results of a survey questionnaire regarding language skills and language use based on language events.

Tabel 1: The Percentage of regional language skills

No	Language	Language Ability					
		Active	%	No	%	Passive	%
1	Batak Toba	15	30%	8	16%	27	54%
2	Karo	29	58%	14	28%	7	14%

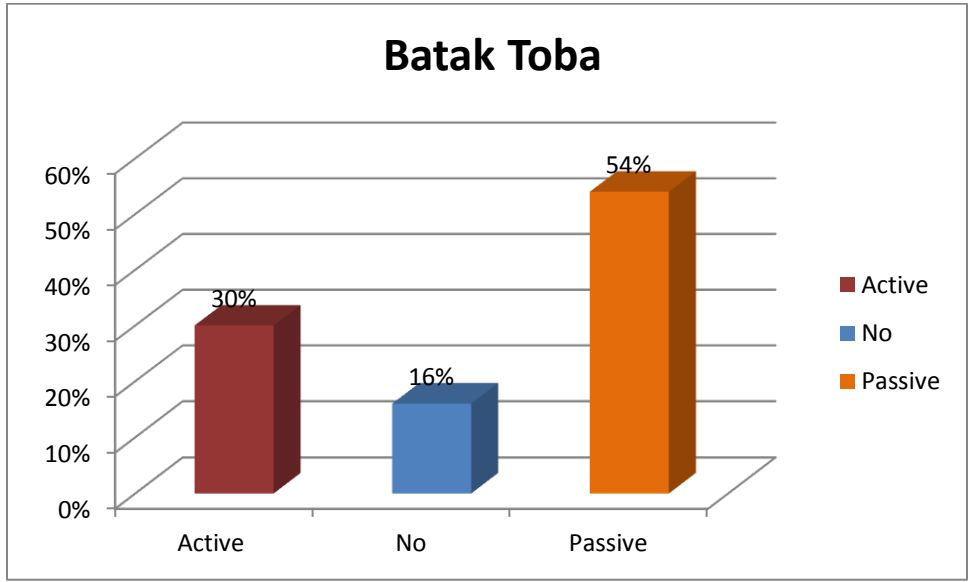


Figure 1: Percentage of regional language skills

From the results of the questionnaire distributed and interviews conducted, data obtained that 30% of them can communicate using Batak Language actively, 16% of them can not speak using Batak Language and 54% of them can speak passively. In this case the teenager mixes Batak and Indonesian when speaking.

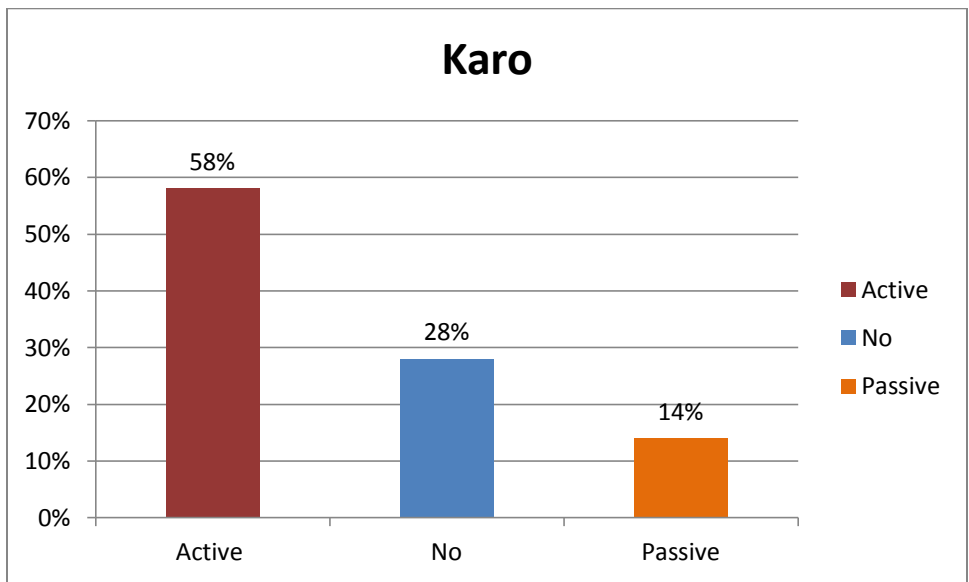


Figure 2: Percentage of regional language skills

The percentage of middle age teenager of 15-18 years of Karo tribes who can communicate using Karo Language as much as 58%, who cannot speak Karo as much as 28% and who can speak a little using Karo Language as much as 14%.

Tabel 2: The use of Batak Toba Language Based on Events

No	Language Event	Language Use	
		Batak Toba %	Indonesia %
1	What language does father / mother use when communicate with you at home?	26%	74%
2	What language do you use everyday for your father / mother at home?	18%	82%
3	What language do you use everyday with your siblings (sisters and brothers) at home?	12%	88%
4	What language do you use everyday for others at mosque / church environment?	4%	96%
5	What language do you use everyday when meet with teachers outside the house?	0%	100%
6	What language do you use when talk with someone by phone?	6%	94%
7	What music do you often sing?	32%	68%
8	What language do you use when you text?	0%	100%

Tabel 3: The Use of Karo Language Based on Events

No	Language Event	Language Use	
		Karo %	Indonesia %

1	What language does father / mother use when communicate with you at home?	56%	44%
2	What language do you use everyday for your father / mother at home?	52%	48%
3	What language do you use everyday with your siblings (sisters and brothers) at home?	32%	68%
4	What language do you use everyday for others at mosque / church environment?	20%	80%
5	What language do you use everyday when meet with teachers outside the house?	0%	25%
6	What language do you use when talk with someone by phone?	8%	92%
7	What music do you often sing?	40%	60%
8	What language do you use when you text?	8%	92%

DISCUSSION

The number of respondents in this study consisted of 50 teenagers 15-18 years who belong to Batak Toba and 50 teenager who belongs to Karo. The use of Batak Toba Language in the first event, it can be seen that the majority of parents with Batak Toba ethnic are more dominant using Indonesian when talk to their children at home (74%) and Batak Toba language used is only 26%. When parents are more dominant using Toba Batak Language, their children also respond by using Indonesian Language which is 82%. Those who use Batak Toba Language in the second event are 18%. The use of language in all events, are dominant Indonesia. This shows that the role of parents in using language at home is very influence their maintenance of the Regional Language. When parents are more dominant using Indonesian when communicate with their children at home, the language maintenance of their mother tongue will also be low. This is the evident of language maintenance of Batak Toba Language of middle age teenager of 15-18 year old at Kwala Bekala district.

The use of Karo language based on each language event, dominant parents with Karo ethnicity used Karo language when talk to their children at home (56%) and who used Indonesian as much as (44%). When parents use Karo Language, their children also answer using Karo Language (52%). This shows that the maintenance of Karo Language among middle age teenager of 15-18 year old at Kwala Bekala is in high category. In all language events, it can be seen that the use of Indonesian is more dominant. This shows that the role of parents in using language at home is very influential on the maintenance of the Maintenance Language. When parents are more dominant using Indonesian when communicate with their children at home, the language maintenance will also be low.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that language maintenance of Batak Toba among middle middle age teenager of 15-18 years old in the low category (30%). This is influenced by the habits of parents who use Indonesian more than Batak Toba Language which results in low confidence of using Batak Toba Language. On the other hand, the maintenance of Karo Language of middle age teenager 15-18 years old at Kwala Bekala regency is included in the high category (58.3%). The percentage of Karo Language use in all language events is quite high. This is influenced by the habits of parents who more often to use Karo Language when they are at home and the habit of returning to Tanah Karo quite often because of the “Kerja Tahun” celebration. This makes Karo teenagers have their own pride when they are able to speak Karo Language with their family in their hometown.

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