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Language Maintenance in Regional Languages : Sociolinguistic Study

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KEYWORDS

Language Maintenance, Sociolinguistic

ABSTRACT

Abstract:

The problem currently facing regional languages is that their position and function no longer correspond to the position and function given to them. Regional languages are no longer used as a proud identity, and their function is no longer used as the main language of communication in the lives of families and their supporting communities. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain regional languages. This problem is related to the legacy of society's cultural values. If there is not a shred of culture that can be inherited by society, especially those whose languages are already extinct and almost extinct, then society will lose its cultural roots. This article discusses various efforts to maintain regional languages, so that benefits can be gained from efforts to maintain regional languages from various regions with different conditions.

INTRODUCTION

One of Indonesia's cultural riches that few other nations have is language diversity. The linguistic diversity of the Indonesian nation is a unique and rare heritage from our ancestors that must be protected and preserved. The obligation to protect and preserve this language does not only rest on speakers or language researchers, but all components of the nation are obliged to take part in protecting and preserving it. Through language, local wisdom of the nation can be explored and known. In this way, it is hoped that the nation's local wisdom will not only remain a memory, but will be able to make the nation's life better. The richness of Indonesian culture is also reflected in the richness of regional languages. Therefore, the Indonesian people are also known to be rich in regional languages. By having many regional languages, Indonesia is said to have extraordinary cultural diversity. In every regional language that grows and develops in Indonesia, various philosophies, local wisdom, folklore and various forms of tradition are stored.

Many language observers are concerned about the preservation of local languages because their speakers are decreasing. This concern is in line with UNESCO's estimate that in the 21st century, half of the six thousand languages in the world will become extinct (Tempo, 21 February 2007). For this reason, regional language maintenance strategies are needed. The strategy to maintain regional languages that are almost extinct and those that are already extinct will not be successful if done half-heartedly. There needs to be synergistic cooperation between government cultural agents and all cultural stakeholders. The role of regional government is important because maintaining regional culture is the autonomous right of regional government. The various alternative strategies that have been presented will not be successful if regional cultural stakeholders are not included in the handling process (Poerwadi, 2014: 8).

Language in society is a social interaction tool that is used to communicate and interact with other people to convey information and express all ideas and thoughts. Through language humans can interact with their social environment. Indonesian is the national language used by all Indonesian people and is still developing. As good Indonesian citizens, people are obliged to uphold the use and development of their national language. One of the factors that influences language development in Indonesia is the existence of regional languages used by various ethnic groups in Indonesia. Indonesian people should be proud because they have various ethnic groups and therefore have various regional languages as well. One of the regional languages that really supports the development of the Indonesian language is the Malay language family. This is a family of regional languages that are widely used in Indonesia. Malay consists of several varieties of languages and dialects, including Riau Malay, Deli, Batu Bara, Asahan, Palembang Malay, Bangka, and others. There are differences between one Malay language and another. This difference is caused by the different geographical locations of language use, which can influence the form of vocabulary contained in each Malay language. Linguistics is the science that studies language. One branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and the people who speak it is sociolinguistics. Language is used as a bridge to interact and communicate with society. Activities that occur in people's lives will be related to language and language use. This study in one of the linguistic sciences is a contextual study of variations in language use in natural communication that occurs in people's lives. So, sociolinguistics views language first as a social system and communication system, as well as part of a particular society and culture (Suwito, 1983).

It can be concluded that sociolinguistics and language activities are very closely related and cannot be separated from one another. Society has a language and the language must be maintained and preserved by generations so that it does not become extinct. Language maintenance is a language in an area that is able to survive due to the influence of the arrival of new language use in that area. By using regional languages in everyday life, language can be maintained in an area. Interaction between humans can occur because of language, so that people who actively interact with other people will dominate language use in that area. So, language will be able to develop by itself if the language is more widely used in society. On the other hand, if a language is not widely used, its vocabulary will be suppressed by the use of the more dominant language (Pateda, 1987). One of the factors in maintaining language is the speaker's choice of language when communicating and the language attitudes they have.

This is an important factor because the speaker's choice of language and his language attitude are a reflection of whether he wants to maintain his language or not. In maintaining a language there are supporting factors, including the number of speakers, place of residence, identity and cultural pride, and good economic conditions (Jendra,

2010: 144-146). Language diversity is one of the linguistic phenomena that is very interesting as an object of study in linguistics and society. The use of language is closely related to social phenomena, elements of globalization and cultural elements found in society. This relationship influences language shift, extinction and maintenance. Language shifts, extinction and maintenance exist and are phenomena in multilingual societies. So, without realizing it, this phenomenon is a threat and challenge for minority language speaking communities to be able to maintain and preserve their regional languages among majority speaking communities. Indonesia has 34 provinces.

One of the provinces in the west is North Sumatra. North Sumatra has eight large indigenous tribal (ethnic) groups, namely Malay, TobaSamosir, Mandailing-Angkola, Karo, Simalungun, Dairi, West Pakpak, and Nias. Apart from these indigenous tribes, there are also immigrant tribes, including Javanese, Minang, Banjar, Acehese, as well as ethnic Chinese and Indians. Due to the diversity of tribes and ethnicities in North Sumatra, it is known as one of the provinces that has a multilingual society. A multilingual society is a society that has the ability to speak more than two languages when communicating or interacting with other members of society (Holmes, 2001: 19).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research approach used is descriptive qualitative. Descriptive research is research that attempts to describe solutions to current problems based on data. What is meant by qualitative research is research that intends to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects holistically, and by means of descriptions in the form of words and language, in a special natural context and by utilizing various scientific methods (Moleong, 2007:6). The type of qualitative descriptive research used in this research is intended to describe information regarding language maintenance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE CONCEPT

Language maintenance, as shown by the results of studies conducted by language maintenance experts, is an effort to ensure that a language continues to be used and appreciated, especially as an identity for a group in the language community concerned (Kridalaksana, 2001: 159). Jendra (2012:26) states that language maintenance is a situation when a community can maintain or continue the use of their language from generation to generation even though there are conditions that can influence them to switch to another language. Through the positive attitude of the language community to maintain their language, language shift will be prevented which will lead to language extinction. On the other hand, without a society's awareness of maintaining or preserving its language, it will accelerate the extinction of the language. Language maintenance refers to a situation where members of a community or society try to maintain the use of the language they are used to (Hoffman, 1991:186). One way to examine language use in speech communities requires domain theory, a term popularized by the American sociolinguist, Joshua Fishman (1968). Fishman (1972:442) defines domain as an abstract socio-cultural description of communication topics, relationships between communicators, and the place where communication events occur according to the social structure of the layers of society.

B. Successful Language Retention

Holmes (1993:14) says there are three main factors in the success of language maintenance:

- a. The number of people who recognize that language as their mother tongue. Judging from quantity, a large number of speakers of a language makes a language survive.
- b. Number of media that support the language in society (schools, publications, radio). If mass media such as radio, television, newspapers, literary books use regional languages, it will support the maintenance of a language.
- c. An index that relates the number of people who admit to the total comparison of supporting media.
- d. The large number or quantity of speakers and the media that support the use of a language greatly influence the maintenance of a language.

Language Maintenance Factors According to Miller (1972):

- a. Prestige and Loyalty Factors If a speaker is proud of his culture, including his language, then he will use their regional language in a heterogeneous community.
- b. Migration Factors and Regional Concentration If a number of people who speak a language migrate to an area and their number increases over time so that it exceeds the population of the native population of that area, then language shift can be created, but if a regional concentration pattern is formed then it can support the preservation of a language .
- c. Mass Media Publication Factors Radio and television advertise many products in regional languages rather than other languages to make them more familiar.

This supports successful language maintenance. If the number of media that supports the use of a language is greater, it will really support the maintenance of that language. Javanese Language Maintaining Factors in Suriname (Komariyah and Ruriana, 2010):

- a. Javanese language radio and television broadcasts Radio and television with Javanese as the medium of instruction can support the maintenance of the Javanese language.
- b. Geographical names which include street and village names. Geographical names, including roads, villages, etc., which are characteristic of the Javanese region, also contribute to the maintenance of the Javanese language.
- c. Proper names. Proper names that are typical of Javanese descent also contribute to the maintenance of the Javanese language.
- d. Religious lectures in Javanese. Religious lectures delivered in Javanese as the medium of instruction usually show familiarity, humor, are easier to understand and will also support the maintenance of the Javanese language.

CONCLUSION

The maintenance of regional languages, both national and foreign languages, cannot run well without the role and contribution of regional language users

themselves. The sustainability of this regional language requires a positive attitude that underlies language use and the norms of language use. Garvin and Mathiot (1968) stated that positive attitudes towards Indonesian include: a) language loyalty, namely an attitude that encourages people in a language to maintain their language and, if necessary, prevent the influence of other languages, b) language pride, namely an attitude that encourages people to develop their language and using it as a symbol of identity and community unity, c) awareness of the existence of language norms that encourage people to use their language carefully and politely and is a factor that has a very big influence on actions, namely activities using language. Maintaining a language will not occur if there is no participation and good use of the language by the language users themselves. Language users have their own way of using the language. Later history will see whether a language will survive or not. The same thing happens with various regional languages as ethnic languages owned by Indonesia. It is in our hands that this language will continue to live and develop. But in our hands this language will die and will only exist in stories and history. For this reason, as a wise generation, it would be better if we continue to pass on this cultural language heritage so that it can also be enjoyed by our children and grandchildren and future generations.

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