



Language Education Policy And The Local Language Maintenance As Cultural Sustainability In Central Sulawesi

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to investigate the local language maintenance of Tolitoli as a part of cultural sustainability supported by local communities, schools and the local government. The role of language education policy is also critically explored and examined. This paper focuses on the perception of local language endangerment, language education and language maintenance for the cultural sustainability in Kabupaten Tolitoli of Central Sulawesi. A case study was employed and the data collection is carried out thorough interview, observation and documentation. The findings show that the number of Tolitoli language speakers has reduced dramatically over the last few decades due to the language shift and poor language maintenance. Since decentralization or local autonomy policy was introduced, the indigenous people of Tolitoli language community members have become aware and more concerned with the Tolitoli Language endangerment threat particularly at some suburbs of urban Areas in Baolan Sub-district. The local government, community leaders and the local schools in Tolitoli currently provided real contribution to cope with the language endangerment potential. The Local Government of Tolitoli has introduced a local language and culture policy through legislation or PERDA. Tolitoli language has been incorporated into primary school curriculum, Tolitoli Language News Program has been introduced through local government Radio of RRI, every year the local government holds festival and competition of Tolitoli Songs, Tolitoli language speech contest, and the tribal leaders and local government has recommend the use of Tolitoli language in every wedding ceremony of Tolitoli ethnic group members.

Keywords: Language policy, education, minority language, maintenance, culture

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1. Introduction

Tolitioli language is identified as one of the endangered languages in Sulawesi. Language education policy and the language maintenance programs are expected to play important role in supporting the preservation of the endangered local language in Tolitoli as a cultural sustainability program.

Tolitoli Language belongs to Austronesian Language family. It has the same family root as the languages of South Philippines, Sabah, Serawak of East Malaysia and North Sulawesi. It is used by people who live along the coastal areas from Dadakitan to Lakuan which include Kecamatan Baolan and Kecamatan Tolitoli Utara. According to the linguistics theory, Bahasa Tolitoli or Tolitol language is grouped into sub-ethnic languages of Tomini Tolitoli based on the linguistics Territory of Tolitoli language users and the similarity the language root. Those languages are Tolitoli-Tomini Language which also includes Ethnic Languages of Balaesang, Dampelas, Dampal, Pendau, Taje, Tajio, Ampibabo-Lauje, Tialo, Dondo, Tolitoli and Bolano. Tolitoli language is very similar to Bolano Language.

Tolitoli language used to be widely spoken in many different parts of Tolitoli in the past. However over the last three decades, the number of Tolitoli speakers has reduced gradually and continuously. Today this indigenous language is only spoken in particular remote villages of Northern Tolitoli such as Binontoa and Lakuan. Those two villages used to be isolated for many years since they were located in the remote areas and far away from the capital city of Tolitoli.

Tolitoli Language has been identified as one of the local languages in Indonesia that is endangered. There are several factors that lead to the endangerment of Tolitoli language. They are such as a lot of intermarriage practices, language shift, and low motivation of young generation to learn and use the language. There are only few parents who are concerned with the transmission of the local language of Tolitoli to the younger generation. Furthermore the attempts of maintaining the local language through education were considered too late and poor.

2. LANGUAGE SHIFT AND LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE

Fashold (1984:2012-214) argues that language shift happen if the language speakers have chosen other new languages and shift their indigenous language. In other words language shift occur when the language speakers shift to the other language which is more dominant and prestigious. And the new languages are commonly used like the use of their former indigenous language (Awal.,2014; Paciotto, 2014).

Sumarsono (2007:231) states that language shift refers to the situation in which a former language is left by their native speakers and they shift to new languages. Language shift is generally associated with the process of language shift from particular one language to other languages in community linguistic repertoire. Thus, language shift refers to the shift of a language with other language.

Holmes (2000:57), suggests that two types of language shifts involve migrant minorities and non-migrant communities. The first type refers to the language speakers who migrate to the areas where the language spoken is different from their mother tongue; the second type is associated with the language shift experienced by the indigenous people. Thus Social, economic and political change occur immediately in the language community that can contribute to the language change as well. He further adds that language shift and language maintenance can happen in various aspects of life such as economy, social, culture, education, politics, government etc.

The phenomenon of local language endangerment and loss has been taking place in some particular parts of Indonesia including Tolitoli District (Crystal, 2014; Marhum, 2022). Based on the number of research paper presentation and conclusion on the international conference of language, literature and culture (ICON LATERALS) held at Brawijaya University of Malang in 2016 reported that there are a lot of local languages in Indonesia that are endangered. Of 719 local languages found in Indonesia, 707 still exist, 266 are endangered, 76 are moribund and 12 are extinct.

3. LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY TO RESPOND LANGUAGE ENDANGEREMENT

Language Policy in Indonesia at National Level is broadly and implicitly stipulated in Law No. 24/2009 on Indonesian Flag, Language, State Symbol and National Anthem. And in the local level the language Policy is also broadly stipulated. To some extent language policies in Indonesia are generally integrated into education policies and through school curriculum policy (Marhum, 2018; Marhum 2019; Bupati Tolitoli, 2019; Carruthers,2021).

The Local Government of Tolitoli has introduced a local government regulation or PERDA (Peraturan Daerah) Number 4/2019 on empowerment, preservation, development of local customs and cultural values, indigenous languages and Indigenous Cultural Institution of Tolitoli.

The local government regulation as instrument of language policy is implemented to preserve and maintain the indigenous languages of Tolitoli through the incorporation of Tolitoli language into school curriculum, the promotion of Tolitoli language through annual cultural festival of Tolitoli language and culture, the promotion of Tolitoli language through radio broadcast and the use of Tolitoli language in cultural performance, cultural ceremony and including wedding ceremony (Himmelman, 2001; Marhum, 2009; Nurhayani, 2016).

Tolitoli language is incorporated into the primary school curriculum in 2021. The teaching of Tolitoli language is offered only to six primary schools in the urban areas of Tolitoli in Sub-district of Baolan. Although Tolitoli language at the beginning was only taught only at six primary schools in Baolan Sub-District, teachers are motivated to be more serious to develop and promote Tolitoli Language Teaching at schools. In the future it is expected that Tolitoli language teaching should cover more than six schools or at least one sub-district one school.

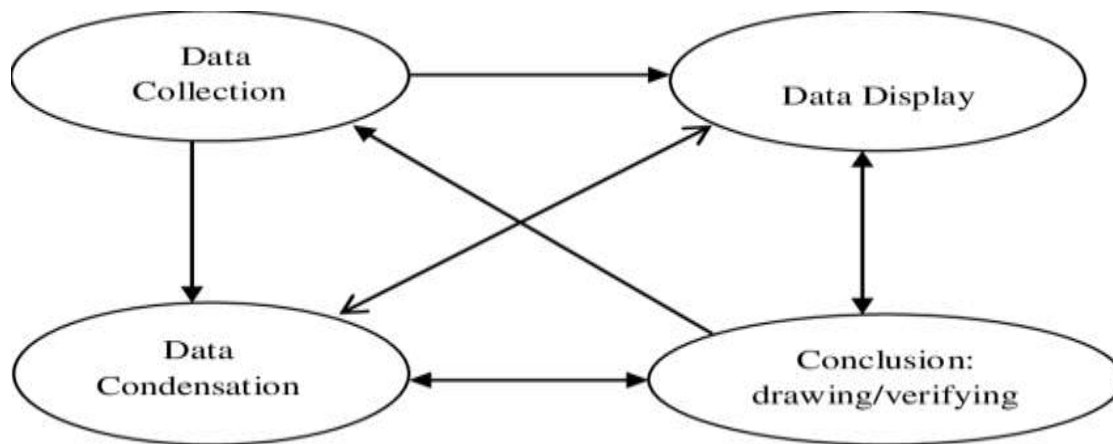
4. THE STUDY: SETTING AND METHOD

This research employed a case study with a qualitative approach and the main instruments of data collection are in-depth interview, documentation and observation (Marhum, 2005; Miles and Huberman, 2014; Yin, 2018). The research site and subject are in Kecamatan Baolan (Sub-District of Baolan), Kabupaten Tolitoli, Central Sulawesi Province. The in-depth interviews involved six informants. They are community leaders, teachers and government officials.

The six informants were two community leaders, two teachers, and two government officials. Furthermore the informants are labeled with the following codes for examples, Community Leaders, Community Leader One (CL01), Community Leader two (CL02), and for the Government officials are Government Official One (GO01) and Government Official Two (GO02) and the Codes of the two informant teachers are Teacher One (TC01) and Teacher 2 (TC02). In order to select appropriate informants, the researchers use snowball technique. And in addition, knowledgeable and trustworthy informants were recruited.

Data Analysis Techniques

Based on the data analysis chosen, we used the technique of data analysis that involved the analysis of data as recommended by Miles and Huberman (2014:308). In terms of data analysis in this study, it is crucial to consider such procedures as data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and verification, summarizing and integrating findings. The following figure is a flowchart of qualitative data analysis.



Source: Adapted from Miles and Huberman (2014:308)

Figure 1 FLOWCHART OF QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The following section will present and discuss the research findings on the Toltoli language endangerment, language education policy and language maintenance programs. The data obtained from observation, documentary data and in depth interview.

According to informant CL01, several strategies have been recommended in order to maintain Tolitoli language. They are to promote and encourage local communities to actively participate in maintaining and preserving Tolitoli language in the community. The real action it is urgently required.

From the result of interview with informant TC01, it was revealed that The Tolitoli language dictionary has been available and they will be distributed to the Tolitoli people. He further added that Tolitoli Tribal Community Organization will collaborate with the local government to promote and support the incorporation of Tolitoli language into school curriculum and the teaching of Tolitoli language from Primary school to the university level. The statement above is similar to the views of TC02 on the role of education institution like schools in maintaining and preserving local language of Tolitoli.

According to GO02, it is in line with the Local Government Regulation or **PERDA Number 14/2019 on the local language and cultural preservation**. Article 26, verse 3 of point e. supporting the collaborative program of local language maintenance with related local government departments in promoting local custom, languages and culture. He further recommended that language education policy made by the local parliament house of Tolitoli is urgently needed in order to promote Tolitoli language. So far there have no explicit and detailed language policies either in central level or local one (Bupati Tolitoli, 2019; Marhum, 2018; Marhum). Language policy in central level is implicit and not stipulated in detailed and many language policies in relation to language teaching are only integrated into education policy and school curriculum policy. The introduction of language policy to maintain and promote local language of Tolitoli is good in order to preserve Tolitoli language.

GO01 suggests that language education policy and language maintenance programs are supported by PERDA or the Local Government regulation. He further refers to the Local Government Regulation or Peraturan Daerah (PERDA) Number 14/2019 on Empowerment, Preservation of Custom Values, Local Languages and Culture. As stipulated on Chapter IV, Article 16 (Verse 1) it stipulates that Custom Values, Local Languages and Culture must be preserved and maintained. (Verse 2) the maintenance and preservation of Custom Values, Local Languages and Culture must be carried out continuously and in

sustainable way which is also supported by the Local Government of Tolitoli. (Verse 3) the maintenance and preservation are conducted through education, media news and in the cultural performance or ceremony and all the architecture of office buildings, office gate should be in the form of Tolitoli Traditional Architecture form. Article 17 stipulates that the maintenance and preservation meant in Article 16 can be implemented through: a. the incorporation of Tolitoli Local Languages into school curriculum; b. all local mainstream media in Tolitoli must provide special column of news written in indigenous local languages of Tolitoli such as Tolitoli, Dondo and Dampal; Local Radio and TV must also provide special programs in local languages of Indigenous people of Tolitoli; d. Particular places, areas and building must have association with local languages' names of Tolitoli.

The following picture shows the Introduction and Dissemination Event of PERDA on Language Policy for the preservation and maintenance of Tolitoli Language which were attended by an Academic from School of Law, Tadulako University, Vice Bupati, Government Officials.



Figure 2 Introduction and Dissemination of Language Policy

GO01 and CO02 both share the same views on the importance of explicit and detailed Language education policy and language maintenance program for the preservation of Tolitoli language in order to stop language endangerment threat. They refer to the Local Government Regulation or PERDA Number 4/2019, Article 26 (Verse1) which stipulate that the team of control and supervision on maintenance, preservation, development of custom values, local languages and culture are formed by Head of District or Bupati. (Verse 2) the team in charge as mentioned in Verse 1 consists of Government Officials in charge of culture and from Tribal Organization of Tolitoli Ethnic Group. (Verse 3) The team in charge as stipulated in verse 2 are as follows: 1. a. Supervising and monitoring the maintenance and preservation of custom values, local languages and culture; b. evaluating the maintenance and preservation of custom values, local languages and culture; c. Coordinating the preservation and maintenance program of custom values, local languages and culture; d. Designing program of maintaining and preserving custom values, local languages and culture; e. Collaborating with related local government departments to promote local custom, languages and culture; f. Designing routine activities to maintain and preserve local custom, languages and culture. Verse 2, a. making sure that the language maintenance and preservation program are implemented well; b. mediating among tribal leaders in Tolitoli district. c. coordinating the custom, local language and cultural

performance programs; d. becoming a role model of the local community in the maintenance and preservation of custom values, local languages and culture.

In relation to the language endangerment threat, informant CO02 state,

“The elderly members of Tolitoli ethnic group are worried about the loss of their ethnic language in the future if there is no language education policy and the language maintenance program fail. He further added that ethnic language is associated with folklore and if it disappears then the identity of Tolitoli will disappear as well. Furthermore, what make elderly members of Tolitoli ethnic group worried about are when their children will shift their language to other ethnic language such as Bugis Language and Bahasa Indonesia. Thus the language endangerment and language loss will become a reality and that is why many elderly members of Tolitoli ethnic group become more worried about such phenomenon”.

The good ideas of maintaining, preserving and promoting Tolitoli ethnic language as recommended by Tribal Leaders Organization should be highly appreciated. The real attempt of maintaining and preserving Tolitoli ethnic language through education and other related program which have emerged more frequently over the last two decades. The real attempts of language maintenance program and language policy implementation in the future is expected to stop Tolitoli language endangerment potential as perceived by informants, CL01 and CL02.

In relation to the contribution and participation of Central Government, informant CO01 argues,

“The tribal leader criticized Ministry of Tourism and Culture which is assumed to have less attention on ethnic language as cultural asset and heritage. The Ministry has probably never conducted a research through survey or questionnaire distribution to find out the endangerment and moribund situation of ethnic language in order to recommend a language and culture policy for the language maintenance program to stop the potential of Tolitoli language endangerment”.

According to informant TC01 and TC02, Tolitoli language was officially incorporated into local content of primary school in Tolitoli in 2021 which was sponsored by the Local Government of Tolitoli and Department of Education and Culture. Official launching of local content curriculum of Tolitoli language was attended by Bupati, Head of District and related stakeholders. The historical event took place at Pembina State Primary School of Tolitoli at Kampung Baru Suburb. The local content curriculum of Tolitoli language is named in Tolitoli language that is **Moguru Tinga Ttorly** which means “**Learning Tolitoli Language**”. The local content curriculum was designed by teachers, educators and curriculum designer from Department of Education and Culture. Tolitoli is taught to students of Primary Schools of six schools as a pilot project in Sub-district of Baolan.

The Official Launching of Tolitoli Language School Curriculum which were attended by Bupati and vice Bupati, Teachers and School Children in Tolitoli Traditional Attires.



Figure 3 The Official Launching of Tolitoli Language Curriculum

Official launching of Tolitoli language teaching is attended by researchers from Provincial Language Center of Central Sulawesi. The official ceremony was also marked by handing in a book of Tolitoli language as teaching materials to the principal State Primary School of Pembina Tolitoli represented six schools designated. This program was also sponsored by Central Government, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology and represented by Badan Pengembangan Bahasa (Language Development Body) and Central Sulawesi Provincial Language Office.

Bupati Tolitoli as a head of District argues that the incorporation of Tolitoli language into school curriculum is a real attempt of preserving and maintaining Tolitoli language as a cultural heritage and cultural sustainability. Thus the indigenous language of Tolitoli is expected to be continuously transmitted from generation to the generation. Bupati's statements are supported by informant CL01 and CL02. According to those two prominent community leaders, the real attention and contribution of Tolitoli local Government are expected to bring about a good and promising future of Tolitoli language maintenance and preservation program.

Tolitoli is an indigenous language. And the indigenous people of Tolitoli have also been assimilated culturally and linguistically with the migrant ethnic groups such as Bugis, Manda, Selayar, Java, Gorontalo etc. The assimilation of Tolitoli indigenous people with the migrant people has significant implication for the language shift incidence (Awal, 2014; Himmelmann, 2001; Marhum M, 2009). A lot of Tolitoli people have gradually shifted their language to Bahasa Indonesia and to other migrant local languages especially Bugis Language which is a very dominant language of migrant people from South Sulawesi. People of Bugis Ethnic group play important role in many aspects of life such as politics, economy and business, agriculture and education. They become more dominant and influential. The present Head of District or Bupati and his wife are from Bugis Ethnic background.

Informant CL01 and CL02 have the same perceptions on the factor that cause language shift case in Tolitoli, they both give similar opinion on the language maintenance case. They argue that on the one hand tolerance and openness of Indigenous people of Tolitoli have contributed to the vulnerable language shift cause. On the other hand, the attempt of language maintenance seems to be more challenging and hard (Awal, 2014; Crystal, 2014; Paciotto, 2014).

As a matter of fact Tolitoli is a multilingual and multiethnic society and the indigenous people are very tolerant, open and understanding. In other words the indigenous people of Tolitoli are not fanatical

and loyal with their native language. It can be argued that indigenous language of Tolitoli is really endangered since a lot of indigenous people tend to shift their native language to Bahasa Indonesia and to other ethnic language such as Bugis Language (Crystal, 2007; Marhum, 2009; Himmelmann, 2001).

Bupati as a Head of District argues that Tolitoli language is a mother tongue and in addition to be a unifying language within people of intra ethnic groups. The local language use can keep supporting solidarity and unity. Furthermore, through local language teaching, younger generation can learn about their ancestral history from their local language through folklore written in their local language.

Tolitoli language maintenance and preservation program also include Tolitoli language festival or competition through story telling for school children, speech competition, song and dance festival of Tolitoli Language. The following picture shows Tolitoli School girls participated in Tolitoli language song and dance festival for the revitalization of Tolitoli indigenous language programs.



Figure 4 Tolitoli Song and Dance Festival

Local language of Tolitoli is considered as the cultural treasure and heritage of Tolitoli ethnic group and it is evidence that there is the real local Culture, Arts and civilization of Tolitoli inherited either in the written form or oral one. The local government of Tolitoli recommends all members of society in Tolitoli district to maintain and preserve cultural values and cultural heritage. According to GO01 and GO02, the local Government recommends the indigenous people of Tolitoli to maintain and preserve their local language based on the PERDA Number 14/2019 which recommend the preservation and maintenance of local language and culture. Thus Cultural performance and wedding ceremony for example must be held and conducted in Tolitoli language and culture especially recommended to those who are from Tolitoli ethnic group.

Informant TC02 state,

“The tribal leader of Tolitoli speculated that there are 500 local languages around the world that are endangered and moribund and Tolitoli language is one of them. Furthermore he argued that the participation and contribution of young generation in Tolitoli language maintenance program lead to the real attempt of coping with the endangerment of Tolitoli language”.

According to the research finding of a linguist, Tolitoli language is on the brink of extinct because many parents and elderly people of Tolitoli were not so concerned with the attempt of Tolitoli language maintenance particularly in promoting and passing on Tolitoli language to the young generation (Himmelmann, 2001; Marhum, 2009). In reality it can be seen in the community that the young people are often very reluctant to use Tolitoli language in their conversation in public. It is speculated that many young people feel inferior to use their local language in public.

According to informant CL01 and GO02, other factors that contribute to the language endangerment of Tolitoli is that there are a lot of intermarriage cases in Tolitoli meaning that many male and female of Tolitoli ethnic background married people from other ethnic background whose mother tongue are identified as stronger local languages. If their spouse is not from Tolitoli ethnic background and can speak other language, then the couple will use the other language most of the time that is why their spouse of Tolitoli ethnic background had to shift their Tolitoli language to their spouse's mother tongue or other language and the children did the same thing (Fashold, 1984, Holmes, 2001; Sumarsono, 2007). Furthermore, if a spouse of Tolitoli ethnic background cannot speak their first language or mother tongue, the couple will use Bahasa Indonesia at home most of the time and their children will acquire and use bahasa Indonesia most of the time as well. Therefore, the tribal leader argues that one day Tolitoli language will disappear and will only become a historical record in the future.

As a multicultural and multilingual society, the endangerment potential of local indigenous language of Tolitoli becomes more vulnerable. The intermarriage practices between the indigenous people of Tolitoli and the migrant people are more rampant. In many cases when local men or women of Tolitoli marry people from other ethnic background for example Bugis ethnic background, Gorontalo or Mandar background, the migrants' strong local language are more influential. The women or men of Tolitoli ethnic background are more frequently influenced to follow the local language and culture of other migrant ethnic local language due to the strong status of the migrant local language.

The introduction of regional decentralization policy or local autonomy policy has significant influence to the awareness of the local indigenous people of Tolitoli to maintain their local language through education and other related programs which are supported by language maintenance program and the language education policy (Informants CL01 and CL02). Recently languages and cultural preservation policies was introduced by the local government of Tolitoli. There have been language and culture policies in the national level introduced by Central Government but the articles and verse are too broad and implicit. There have not been any inclusive, explicit and detailed language policies. In addition, language policies in Indonesia have been integrated into education policy and curriculum policy particularly when it comes to the aspect of language teaching and language education program.

It is until most recently the local government and the local community just realized the importance of language preservation and maintenance and then incorporated it into primary school curriculum. Furthermore since Tolitoli are multiethnic and multilingual areas so that many local languages are spoken particularly the migrant local languages and dialects. There are few migrant local languages which are very popular and dominant.

The most dominant migrant local language has significantly contributed to the language speaker shift and has potential as language killer (Crystal, 2014; Himmelmann, 2001; Marhum, 2009). Bahasa Indonesia as a national language and it is widely spoken among the local community of Tolitoli. It can be speculated that Bahasa Indonesia also brings about contribution to the continuous reduction of Tolitoli local language speakers since many young children consider Bahasa Indonesia is more prestigious than local language.

Furthermore today lot of young people in Sub-district of Baolan cannot speak Tolitoli (Himmalmann, 2014; Marhum, 2009; Crystal, 2014).

The wider use of Bahasa Indonesia among the local communities and at schools as instructional language also results in the low motivation and attention of the school children to acquire and use their mother tongue bahasa Tolitoli. The most dominant local language in Tolitoli is bahasa Bugis which has also contributed to the less motivation and attention of local children since they are both more exposed to bahasa Indonesia and bahasa Bugis instead of their indigenous language of Tolitoli.

6. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the language endangerment case in District of Tolitoli are caused by several factors. There is language shift case that has lasted for many years. A lot of members of Tolitoli ethnic groups have shifted their language to Bahasa Indonesia and other dominant local language such as Bugis Language. There has been a language shift phenomenon in Tolitoli over the last few decades.

The factors that bring about language shift are mainly caused by the speakers of Tolitoli ethnic language is not loyal and fanatical to their mother tongue. Inter-marriage practices have taken places among couples of different ethnic group that have contributed to the language shift case. The other factor is that many parents did not effectively transmit their first language to their children.

The alternative solution of overcoming the language endangerment threat is by introducing PERDA or Government Regulation as instrument of language education policy. **PERDA Number 4/2019** is on language maintenance and preservation as well. Tolitoli language has been incorporated into school curriculum, the promotion of Tolitoli language is offered through annual cultural show and cultural festival joined by school children. The local government and community leaders have encouraged young people and their family to keep maintaining Tolitoli language as important local culture sustainability.

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