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TETUN LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE IN EAST TIMOR FORMER REFUGEE COMMUNITY

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Abstract

This study was conducted with the aims of: (1) describing the use of Tetun Language in East Timor former refugees community Manusak village and (2) describing the factors of Tetun Language's maintenance in Manuasak village. This research uses the sociolinguistic approach, the method used is descriptive qualitative method. The results of the study show that: (1) Tetun is still survives so far as it has migrated for 20 years from its native land. Of the 132 informants interviewed, 86.36% of informants used Tetun Language as a lingua franca with different age categories. For partner selection, 71.21% of informants use Tetun Language when communicating with family members and neighbors. Then 58% of informants use Tetun Language when communicating with family members, neighbors, and coworkers, while 21.21% of informants use the language when communicatin with family members, closest neighbors and game friends. The topics chosen were: (1) 59.09% of informants chose topic about daily life activities, 9.1% chose topics about daily life and some topics that are related to work, 14.4% of informants chose topics about daily life, economic topics, political topics, religious topics, and work topics, 6.81% of informants chose topics about daily life, topics about education, economic topics, political topics, topics about religion, and topics about work, and 10 , 60% of informants chose topics about daily life, topics about education, religious topics and work topics. For the domains of using Tetun Language, then Tetun Language is used in the family domain, neighborhood and at the workplace. Next are the factors caused the maintenance of Tetun Language: loyalty to mother tongue, pride in using Tetun Language, family supporting environment and regional conservation.

Keywords: Language Maintenance, Speech Community, East Timor, Former Refugee

Introduction

East Nusa Tenggara community (ENT) is known as a language community that has an epic and unique linguistic features. Spread across the eastern part of Indonesia, homogeneous ENT communities have hundreds of local languages. Those languages are used as the communication tools among the speakers, both in

the language geographical area or outside it. The habit of using the local languages show the dynamics of language communities in ENT province. As in one of the districts in ENT, namely Kupang district, there is a youngest ethnic group that comes from Timor Loro Sae, or it is common known as the Democratic Republic of East Timor (RDTL). On 30 August 1999, the people of Timor Leste (then known as East Timor) chose to separate from the Republic of Indonesia, through a referendum that was supported by the United Nations (UN). Because of the referendum, the Indonesian National Army (TNI) worked together with the anti-East Timorese Independence organization to evacuate more than 300,000 of East Timorese people to depart from East Timor. Therefore, there were about 3.000 moved to Kupang district, thus the majority of ex-refugee from East Timor inhabit in several areas and villages in Kupang district. Those villages are Noelbaki, Tuapukan, Oebelo and Manusak village. In daily life the ex-East Timorese people use Tetun (abbreviated into TL) and Kupang Malay (abbreviated into KML) as a means of communication among the fellow citizens.

The high contact interaction among ex-East Timorese and the indigenous people of Kupang district who come from various ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds could cause a language competition. Then a language competition itself could form a language maintenance or a language shift. A language is said to experience a shift when a community begins to leave its traditional language (local language or mother tongue). Sumarsono, (2011) stated that a language shifting are two sides of a coin, because these fenomenan are two fenomenan that occur simultaneously. Still according to Sumarsono (2011) the language shift occurs when a language changes its position as the first language in its' communication area. Meanwhile, a language maintenance is the strength of a language to stand in its position as a lingua franca, so that it cannot be interchangeable or displaced from surrounding languages.

In general, language maintenance is defined as the decision of a language community to use a language collectively from a generation to generation (Fasold: 1984). Jendra (2012: 26) stated that although there are some conditions that affect a language community to use another language, but if the community is not easily in using that other language, then a language maintenance has been occurred. Conversely, if a language community does not have the awareness to preserve its language, it will accelerate the extinction of their local language.

Judging from the history of former East Timor refugee communities (from 1999 - 2018) in several villages in Kupang District, the language and cultural adaptation must have occurred both in terms of language, culture and tradition. However, there is an interesting linguistic phenomenon that occurs in Manusak village, the use of TL is quite high. Almost all the children who were born in Manusak village by the former refugee's parents acquired TL as their first language, then they acquire KML as their second language.

TL maintenance phenomenon in the midst of the competition of varied local languages in Manusak village is very interesting to study. Especially, a contact between TL and KML will automatically become an obstacle to the language pattern and the language attitudes in that community. If a speech interaction of ex-East Timorese community groups involves the members of the same ethnic group, then the verbal communication patterns is tend to use TL. Conversely, if the interactions between ex-East Timorese communities involve the members of

different ethnic groups, then the communication pattern will be marked by using KML. Furthermore, the effectiveness of TL speakers might show their partiality towards TL maintained, therefore this research must be carried out to unmask the phenomenon of TL survival in Manusak village. Practically, this research is expected to build a positive language awareness so it can play its role as a marker of ethnic identity, both in social role and communication tool.

By carrying out this research the researcher hopes that TL can be accepted by all residents of Kupang district as one of the local languages in the Kupang district. With the acceptance of TL, it is hoped that the former refugees from East who live in Manusak Village can also be accepted as part of other Kupang district communities, so that local conflicts between the indigenous people and the former refugees can be minimized. Furthermore, this research is also expected to be used as reference material or consideration in the framework of developing languages in ENT Province. Moreover, according to UNESCO, every year there are ten regional languages that are experiencing extinction (Antara News Report 2009: 01). The extinction of regional languages in Indonesia is caused by a variety of factors, therefore understanding of the importance of the diversity of regional languages in Indonesia in general and in Kupang Regency in particular must be improved. One effort that must be done to prevent language extinction is by maintaining the language. The preservation of local languages, including TL, as the nation's cultural wealth which is passed down from generation to generation, through a long historical journey, really needs to be improved in order to prevent the extinction of these languages. Hopefully this research can change the skeptical perspective on the importance of teaching local languages to the younger generation.

Method

This study uses a sociolinguistic approach, which is an approach that examines language in relation to the community, or the behavior of certain groups or language communities, not individuals (Wardhaugh and Fuller, 2015: 2). In accordance with the character of the problem examined, the method used is a qualitative descriptive method to obtain actual and natural exposure to TL maintenance. The research had been conducted in Manusak Village (\pm 71 km from Kupang City), East Kupang District, Kupang Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. The time of research is in April – July 2019.

The subjects in this study were 153 of ex-East Timorese who inhabitants in the housing complex built by the Indonesian government in RT 15 / RW 06 Manusak Village since 2011.

The data collection was carried out in several ways, namely: 1) Interview by referring to the list of questions prepared in accordance with the objectives of the study. The composition of the questionnaire contains the reasons for choosing the language of the informant by formulating the question of who is speaking to whom, what is the topic of the conversation, in what situations and in what areas is the language used. An unstructured interview was conducted to obtain information relating to the problem; 2) Researchers conducted participant observation and non-participant observation; 3) Mini survey to support qualitative data on language selection, topics of conversation and speech partners. Then in the data analysis techniques, the researcher involved five components, namely

transcribing recorded data, identifying data, classifying and tabulating data, analyzing data, and drawing conclusions.

Findings and Discussion

The Use of TL

To find out the choice of languages used, the researchers asked about the choice of languages (Tetun abbreviated into TL, Indonesian abbreviated into I, Kupang Malay abbreviated into KML and Other Local Languages abbreviated into OLL), the speech partner (family members, neighbors, classmates, coworkers and strangers) and the topics (daily, economic, social, political, education, health, etc.). There are 132 informants, the following are the presentations of the tabulated data the discussion.

Language Choices

Tabel 1. Language Choices

Age Category	Total Informants	%	TL	%	I	%	KML	%	OLL	%	Total
<18	22	16.6	19	86,4	0	0	3	13,6	0	0	100
19 - 25	21	15.9	19	90,5	0	0	2	9,52	0	0	100
26 – 35	13	9.8	10	76,9	0	0	3	23.1	0	0	100
36 – 45	44	33.3	37	84,1	0	0	7	15,9	0	0	100
> 46	32	24.4	29	90,6	0	0	0	0	3	9,38	100
Total	132	100									

NB: TL (Tetun Language), I (Indonesia), KML (Kupang Malay Language), OLL (Other Local Languages)

By looking at table (1) above, we got the results of the language choices based on the age categories as follows:

1. From 22 informants whose age is under 18 years there are 19 informants or around 86.4% of the informants answered that TL is the only language choice that they use everyday. From the 19 informants, there were 13 informants who were still in elementary school level, 4 informants in junior high school level and 2 informants in senior high school. Even though they have attended school and have friends who use KML as a medium for exchanging information in communication, the frequency of using TL is more frequent. However, there are 3 or about 13.6% of informants in this age category chose KML. The reason for choosing KML is because those informants have already worked as the child caregivers in several families who are living in Oelamasi (the capital of Kupang district), hence they are tend to use KML more often than TL.
2. From 21 informants there were 19 informants or around 90.5% informants chose TL. The majority of the 19 informants have been married and have had the jobs as the farmers, therefore the domain in using TL is only around their

family and in the fields where they planted their agricultural products. While there are 2 informants or around 9.52% of informants chose KML as a means of daily communication. Both of them work as the security officers at the Kupang District Office so the intensity of using TL is more intense than any other languages;

3. From 10 informants or 76.9% of informants chose to use TL. They argued that their life activities are more in agricultural fields and in residents, so TL is their choosing languages to be spoken. They added that they only use KML if they meet and talk with other residents in Manusak village who are come from other ethnics, but the duration of their conversation is not too long and not too frequent. Whereas there are 3 informants or around 23.1% of informants chose to use KML because of work demands, there are 2 informants who trade the vegetables in the Oesao market and 1 informant who works as the corn seller. Thus work place becomes the reason of choosing KML than TL for three of them.
4. From the 44 informants, there are 37 informants or around 84.1% of the informants chose TL. The 37 formants said that TL is their daily language, while there are 7 informants chose KML compared to TL. This is also for work reasons, their professions are the vegetable traders in the Oesao market (4 people), some work as household assistants (1 person) in one of the families who live about 2 kilometers from the housing location, and there are two people who work as a fueling officer at a gas station in Kupang District. Because of the demands of the job they chose to use KML, because KML is a lingua franca in Kupang district.
5. There are 32 informants aged over 46 years, from that numbers there are 29 informants or around 90.6% of informants chose TL over other languages. In Manusak village, the 32 informants are elders. Some of them are the former Indonesian National Armies. Furthermore, in addition to that, there are 29 informants chose TL, there are 3 informants or about 9.38% of informants who only speak in Mambae language (local language in East Timor), those three informants are hardly understand TL or any other languages.

Selection of Speech Partners

Table 2. Selection of Speech Partners

Total Informants	%	The family members	The neighbors	Co-workers	playmates
94	71,2 1	√	√		
10	7,58	√	√	√	
28	21,21	√	√		√
132	100				

Next table (2) shows that there are 94 informants or around 71.21% who use TL when communicating with family members and neighbors. Furthermore, there are 10 informants or around 7.58% who use TL when communicating with family members, neighbors, and coworkers who also have the same migration history as them, while there are 28 informants or 21, 21% have quite a wide variety of speech partners: they use TL when the speech events happens among the family members, closest neighbors and playmates.

Selection of Discussion Topics.

Tabel 3. Topic Selection

Total Informants	%	Topic					
		Daily life Topics	Education	Economics	Politics	Religions	Jobs
78	59,09	√					
12	9,1	√				√	
19	14,4	√			√	√	√
9	6,81	√	√	√	√	√	√
14	10,60	√	√			√	√
132	100						

For the selection of discussion topics, the informants have chosen some variety topics when communicating using TL. Table 3 shows that the most commonly topic is the topic about daily life. From 132 informants there were 78 informants or around 59.09% who chose to talk about the daily life. The 12 informants or around 9.1% chose the topics that are related to daily life and job. When the researchers asked the reasons why the topic of job was chosen, they answered that they often exchange information about workloads and their responsibilities in carrying out their work with the other fellow colleagues who also speak in TL. Furthermore, 19 informants, or around 14.4%, chose a topic that was quite varied, namely topics on daily life, economic topics, political topics, religious topics, and work topics. Next there were 9 informants or around 6.81% who chose topics that varied widely, the topics are about the daily life topic, education topic, economic topic, political topic, religion topic, and topics about work. The last is there are 14 informants or around 10.60% who communicate in TL to discuss some topics about the daily life, education, religious topics and work topic.

Factors Supporting TL Maintenance in Manusak

Loyalty to Mother Tounge

Loyalty to TL as a mother tounge has a very high frequency. All informants are more likely to choose TL as a mother tongue than any other languages. They acquired TL directly when they were toddlers, then in the stages of development, they used the language when communicating with parents and other family members who lived in the house. Therefore it is not surprising that they are very

loyal in using TL as their native language. This loyalty factor is the most important factor for the survival of a language, even though the language has experienced migration from its origin place for decades, even hundreds of years.

Pride in using TL

From the interviews, information was obtained that the ex-East Timorese people still felt proud of their motherland, even they still frequently visited it in order to meet with their relatives in the State of Timor Leste. The moments of Christmas, Easter, weddings, deaths and ceremonies for making traditional houses, are moments when the ex-East Timorese people visit Timor Leste.

A feeling of pride of their native land is also one of the main factors for the fertility of TL in Manusak. In addition to visiting families who live there, there are also some young people who choose to make a living by migrating to Dili, the capital of Timor Leste. Currently the city of Dili and several regions in the country of Timor Leste are in the infrastructure development, so the country needs a lot of construction workers. These young men work as monthly contract laborers paid in dollars. When their work contracts are completed they will return to Manusak, so TL continues to flourish in the village, because TL is the lingua franca for job seekers in Timor Leste.

Family Environmental Factors

The family environment is a supporting factor for maintaining TL in Manusak village. TL maintenance can be seen from the frequency of using it among children under 12 years of age. This can be seen from the use of language that has a high enough frequency in the realm of the home and neighboring domain, while the frequency for using MKL and I is very low. MKL is a second language for East Timorese children, most children get the language in the realm of association with other children in the surrounding environment. Whereas Indonesian is obtained and used in the education domain. However, even though they learn Indonesian but they still cannot use Indonesian properly and correctly.

Migration Factors and Regional Concentration

Migration and regional concentration are actually a factor in language shifts, but this case is not in line with Fasold's (1980) opinion, that if the speakers of a language migrate to another place, and the number of speakers over time increases, then it will produce and create an environment that is significant enough to encourage language shifts. But the facts show that the higher the population of former East Timorene in Kupang district, the stronger TL has roots in that village. This is likely due to the establishment of housing estates for former refugees in Kupang Timur sub-district, so that the concentration TL speakers are more found in several villages in that sub-district.

Conclusion

Empirically, based on data from the results of structured interviews, observations, mini questionnaires and document searching, the researchers formulated several conclusions that answer the problem. First, it can be concluded that BT is still very much survived even though the language has migrated for 20

years from its original land, East Timor and settled in Manusak Village, East Kupang sub-district, Kupang Regency. Table 1 shows that from a total of 132 informants, as many as 94 informants or 83.2% of informants used BT as the language most frequently used daily. From 132 informants, there are 94 informants who use BT when communicating in their daily lives. The 94 informants have a variety of different speech partners when they speak using BT. Table 2 shows that 100% of informants used BT as a means of communication between fellow family members. Table 3 shows the informants had various topics when communicating using BT in their daily lives. The most common topics are the problems of daily life. BT is also the most widely used in the realm of the home, the realm of neighborhood and the realm of traditional activities. So it is very clear that for the case of BT retention in Manusak village that the more a regional language is introduced to children at a very early age and the higher the intensity of the use of language in the realm of the home and neighborhood, the higher the language survival. Second, the factors that cause BT survival in Manusak village, there are four factors. Second, it appears that BT retention is caused by several factors, namely: (1) loyalty factor towards mother tongue; (2) pride factor for BT; (3) family environmental factors; (4) migration and regional concentration. Third, the language attitude influences the level of BT retention of members of the spoken word. The entire conversation shows that their language attitude is very positive towards BT.

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