

The Vitality of Balantak Language in a Multilingual Society at Banggai Regency

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Abstract. The primary aim of this paper is to examine the degree of language vitality in the Banggai District by analysing patterns of language usage and intergenerational language transmission within the family domain. Luwuk Banggai serves as the primary hub for educational and commercial activities within the Banggai Regency. The presence of diverse languages in the Banggai Region has resulted in a multilingual society. The Malay Manado language is frequently employed as a lingua franca in addition to the Indonesian language and the three other indigenous languages. The prevalence of these two languages has been contributing to the gradual decline or potential extinction of the Balantak, Banggai, and Saluan languages in the near future. The Balantak Language warrants greater attention due to its relatively small number of speakers in comparison to the two other indigenous languages. This study examines the factors that influence the preservation of local languages within the family domain, as well as the specific areas in which these languages are maintained. Additionally, the obstacles encountered in this preservation process are explored. The research employs a qualitative methodology. The data are acquired by the utilisation of observation, interviews, and document analysis techniques. The present study has identified multiple elements that provide obstacles in the preservation and upkeep of this particular language.

Keywords: Language vitality, minority languages, Balantak language

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1 Introduction

The primary aim of this research is to conduct an empirical analysis of the language vitality in Banggai. This analysis is based on the examination of language use patterns, transgenerational transmission, and attitudes within the family domain. Banggai is a nation characterised by its linguistic and cultural diversity, with the presence of about three distinct languages being documented [1]. The three languages can be categorised into three primary groups: Banggai, Balantak, and Andio. Certain minority language communities have demonstrated varying degrees of resilience, which can be attributed to the geographical factors that have acted as barriers and safeguards against assimilation and the erosion of their ethnic and linguistic identities [2][3][4]. Several languages that fall into this category are Malay-Manado, Java, Gorontalo, and Andio.

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The coexistence of Bahasa Indonesia and other local languages in Banggai has resulted in minority language groups being subjected to socio-economic and socio-cultural dominance by other groups.

The increasing dominance of the Balantak language (hence referred to as BL) as, there is a significant decline in the use of other languages and cultures among the youth in Balantak Homeland (hereinafter referred to as BH), with the dominant and primary language being the prevailing mode of communication. The current circumstances have compelled individuals who speak minority languages to predominantly utilise the dominant language in various familial contexts, hence prioritising the use of the dominant language above their native languages [5][6].

This study provides an evaluation of the contemporary language landscape in BL by examining the extent to which different languages are at risk of endangerment across various levels. This study aims to ascertain the prospective trajectory, the magnitude of decline, and the potential strategies that may be used to mitigate this circumstance, so ensuring the preservation of the diverse multilingual and multicultural environment inside the nation, as well as safeguarding the invaluable linguistic and cultural legacy of the country [7][8].

2. Method

The statistics under consideration in this study were gathered throughout the period spanning from August 2019 to February 2020. The data were obtained from a diverse sample of respondents encompassing various age groups (generations), genders, and geographical locations. The majority of participants demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of Indonesia and Balantak, hence facilitating a smooth data gathering process. The utilisation of the Snowball sampling approach was implemented for data collecting across all communities. The chosen sample approach was deemed suitable for the current study due to the researchers' requirement to identify a limited number of informants within each community. These informants would subsequently assist in identifying additional community members who possessed the necessary information sought by the researchers.

The values were computed using basic percentage calculations. In order to determine a specific percentage, the total number of respondents who reported speaking a certain language within a specific community was divided by the overall sample size of 192 respondents. The data were obtained through the utilisation of a structured questionnaire, comprising inquiries designed to elicit replies pertaining to language

usage trends and the transmission of language and culture across generations [9][10][11].

3. Result and Discussion

The subsequent part provides an exposition of the discoveries derived from this investigation. This study investigates the degrees of language life within the realm of familial interactions.

Based on Location

The research findings indicate that there are six distinct languages spoken across six sub-districts, namely Balantak, Saluan, Andio, Javanese, Malay Manado, and Indonesian language. The linguistic usage patterns observed within this community provide evidence of varying degrees of ethnolinguistic vitality, as illustrated in Table 1. The use of language in the context of familial domains has a consistent pattern, wherein the Balatak language is consistently observed in five sub-districts, namely Balantak, Balantak Utara, Balantak Selatan, Lamala, and Mantoh. Subsequently, the Indonesian language consistently emerges as the secondary preference. In contrast, it is seen that the prevalence of the Indonesian language is consistently limited to the Masama sub-district as the primary linguistic preference, while alternative languages are favoured as secondary choices.

Table 1. Sample Composition

No	LOCATION	G1 (>50 yo)		G2 (21-50 yo)		G3 (13-20 yo)		G4 (6-12 yo)		TOTAL
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1.	Balantak	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	28
2.	Balantak Utara	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	21
3.	Balantak Selatan	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	23
4.	Lamala	3	3	4	4	4	5	4	4	31
5.	Masama	7	7	7	7	7	6	7	7	55
6.	Mantoh	3	3	5	5	5	5	4	4	34
	TOTAL	22	21	25	25	26	26	23	24	192

Based on Gender

Both gender choose to speak Balantak language more than other languages, followed by Indonesian language for the second choice. The use of language associated with gender shows that male respondents show a higher percentage of BL use than female respondents in in family domain. It shows the pattern of *always Balantak language*,

always Indonesian language and *other languages* is dominated by male respondents. On the other hand, the pattern of language use is *BL=IL* is dominated by female respondents.

Table 2. The use of BL based on Gender

Domain	Always BL		BL=IL		Always IL		OL	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Family	25.52	30.21	8.33	4.17	8.85	10.42	5.21	7.29

Based on Generation

The use of language associated with generation, G1, G2, G3, and G4 shows a pattern of *always BL* dominated by G2 in family domain. For the G1, the largest percentage is both *always BL* and *always IL*. Moreover, G3 prefer to choose *always BL* quite well even though it is very low in percentage. Especially for G4, the largest percentage is *always BL* but has the lowest percentage among other generations. The relationship between age and language use shows that there is a significant relationship in all domains.

4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of language usage trends in the six sub-districts examined in this study, the subsequent deductions can be drawn: The linguistic condition in the six sub-districts examined can be regarded as a reflection of the language usage trends in BH, owing to the significant impact of both Indonesian and Malay Manado languages. With the exception of the Masama sub-district, the Indonesian language holds significant prominence in both official and social contexts, particularly within the realm of familial interactions. However, even in this sub-district comparison, the classification of BL is still utilised in relation to certain minority languages. Both male and female correspondents also tend to favour the usage of BL in the context of family. With the exception of the Masama sub-district, the predominant language consistently observed across the remaining sub-districts is Indonesian. The level of loyalty exhibited by speakers towards numerous minority languages throughout various communities is experiencing a consistent decline across multiple domains, including fundamental aspects such as familial and cultural contexts.

The six sub-districts under investigation exhibit a consistent decrease in the usage of the BL language within the generation category. Notably, the BL language is predominantly

employed by individuals belonging to Generation 2 (G2), particularly in the context of spousal communication. The communication between parents (G1) and their children (G4) predominantly utilises the Indonesian language. This observation suggests a bleak outlook for the long-term viability of the native language. Nevertheless, it is certain that the Indonesian language would eventually dominate BL unless the government of the Banggai region takes purposeful and serious actions. Additionally, G1 should prioritise communicating with their children in BL to mitigate this linguistic shift.

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