

The Buginese Language Shift in South Sulawesi

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ABSTRACT: This study was motivated by the phenomenon that the Buginese language has been indicated to have shift. This regional language is an inter-ethnic communication tool among Buginese ethnics and a mean for the understanding and implementation of buginess local wisdom values in South Sulawesi province, Indonesia. This study was aimed to describe and explain the shift rate of Buginese language based on areas in which it is used to obtain a more comprehensive description of the regional language state. When the description is acquired, measures to anticipate further shift can be thought of. This study was a mixed qualitative and quantitative study with sociological approach. The population of this study was the entire Buginese language speakers in South Sulawesi. Samples were selected by using area block technique to obtain a representative sample. Based on this sampling technique, urban and rural regions were determined in each of the selected areas of study location, namely Bone regency, Sinjai regency, Sidrap regency, and Parepare city. From each region 50 respondents were selected, resulting in total 400 respondents. Data were collected by questionnaire, interview, and direct observation. The obtained data were analyzed quantitatively and descriptively. Study findings indicate that the Buginese language shift occurring in urban regions (46.73%) was higher than that in rural regions (25.20%).

Keywords: Buginese language, language shift rate.

INTRODUCTION

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has designated the 21st day of February as International Mother Language Day. This designation is encouraged by the fact that there have been many of mother languages/regional languages that come into extinction in the last century. The young generations have abandoned their mother/regional languages. This relates to the very strong globalization impacts (Kompas, February 25, 2008). The same trend is taking place in Sulawesi Selatan province of Indonesia where the shift in Buginese language use has been observed. Initial observations indicated that the values associated to the Buginese language and other regional languages in this region have become degraded. This symptom is shown by the Buginese young generations with no interest and encouragement to use their regional language, even nowadays it is not difficult to find Buginese children or young generations that can not speak Buginese language, while those who actually can speak Buginese language prefer the Indonesian language in communicating, as well the foreign language that they think more modern. Their mother language (Buginese language) is considered outdated and started to be abandoned as communication tool in family or household level. This issue is made worse by the parents stance that do not support the language preservation through their regional language transmission to their offsprings. They give more consideration to what benefits they can get from the acquisition of their regional language.

This issue is very concerned because a regional language is not only a communication tool, but also a mean for maintenance, development, and preservation of cultural values particularly the ones with local wisdoms. Through regional language, those messages and values can be delivered because it is associated to local symbols. Various efforts have been attempted to anticipate the Buginese language functions degradation. For example, this language has been introduced as one of local content subjects in elementary and junior high schools. In addition, various studies, seminars, and even congresses on regional languages have been conducted. For the latter, the last was in 2012. However, all these efforts have not been enough to be an adequate solution for the improvement of positive linguistic stance of speakers on Buginese language existence in South Sulawesi. Darwis (2011), in his paper "The Fate of Regional Languages in Globalization Era", suggested that there are at least two main causes of regional language shift. First, the regional languages have a decreased prestige as a consequence of the strengthening of position and function of Indonesian language as a national language and lingua franca. Second, the social relationships among the speakers are becoming complex and globalized, which in turn result in pragmatic stance to prefer the acquisition of language that make the possibility of the speaker to be the part of the national or global society. The consequence is huge, there will be cultural identity crisis, starting from ethnical culture to national cultural crisis.

The maintenance and shift of language in sociolinguistics literature is an interesting phenomenon. The terminologies of language maintenance and shifting is first introduced by Fishman in 1964. Since then, various studies on language maintenance and shift have been conducted in many regions such as those conducted by Gal (1978) in Obertwart-Austria and Dorian (1981) in East Sutherland, Northern Britain-Scotland. These studies are interesting examples. In Obertwart, Hungarian and German languages were parallel and these two languages had a high prestige, but over time Hungarian as the language of native population shifted to German due to the strong influences of the immigrants. Hungarian language couldn't withstand the influence of German language. As a consequence, majority of Obertwart people did not inherit the previously high prestige language to the next generations. In contrast, the Gaelic language in Sutherland as the language of high-land population with low social status could survive and existed side by side with English that has long been the language of the low-land population with high civility. These two languages are kept used in certain realms. This was due to the clear functional division between these two languages.

In Indonesia such studies have been performed in several locations such as that performed by Lukman (2000) in Javanese transmigrant population in Wonomulyo-Polmas, in which he found that even though the population have inhabited an area with different language for more than 70 years or up to fourth generation they still maintain their mother language. In a different study, Gunawan (2006) found that Lampung language had a very fierce competition with Indonesian language. In addition, it was found that the lower the age group of Lampung family the higher the average value of language acquisition. This indicates that the younger the Lampung family the more the Indonesia language be used rather than Lampung language. Gunawan (2006:99) suggested that besides Lampung language, several other regional languages have the same fate. Dorian (1982) stated that generally the linguistic competition is started by bilingualism, diglossia, code switching/code mixing, interference, and finally maintenance and shift of language. When one language is more dominant, more modern or even more "superior" than other language, the language will be certainly maintained, whereas the other languages, within several generations, will be abandoned by their speakers and gradually lead to language death.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Type of Study

This study employed a mixed quantitative and qualitative method. Anderson (2010) suggested that the most appropriate method to evaluate language shift is by performing sociolinguistic survey using questionnaire, interview, and direct observation on language use in target region or area. Information on languages spoken by the speakers, the use of each language in various life situations, stance on language, and fluency in articulating the used language, were collected to obtain accurate information.

Study Location

The study locations were determined by block area technique: 1) Bone regency as a representative of the central area of Buginese language use, 2) Sinjai regency as a representative of southern area; 3) Sidrap regency as a representative of northern area, and Parepare city as a representative of urban region or area.

Data and Data Source

Data were obtained according to the answers of the respondents to questionnaire questions that were focused on four most determining communication situations in offspring language acquisition from parents. These questions include what language is used by (1) parents and children communicating at home (PC); (2) children communicating at home (CC); (3) children communicating with friends outside the home (CF); and (4) husband and wife communicating at home (HW)? Anderson, (2010:140) suggested that as long as a specific regional language is still used in household or family level the language will survive. In contrast, when majority of parents abandon the regional language in communicating with their offsprings, it will be shifted and potentially be extinct.

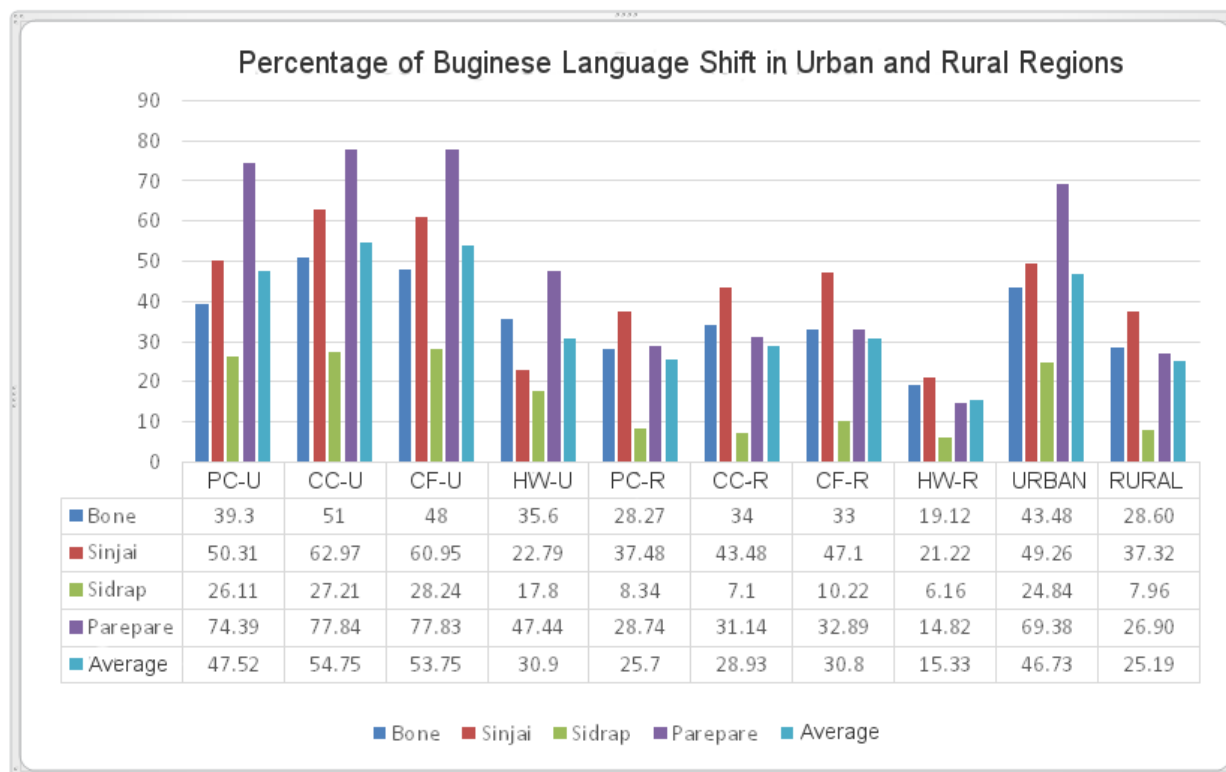
Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected by questionnaire, interview, and observation. The entire questionnaire data related to language shift rate were collected base on villages and city, and the average of respondents language use by using "Average" formula in excel application. Data from interview were analyze qualitatively from detailed transcription. The data analysis was based on complete transcription from interview results by using codification and classification techniques. Investigator will read the transcript several times to obtain deeper information provided by the respondents (Cresswell, 2005:232). Finally, the

quantitative and qualitative data will be elaborated in study findings and discussion. Quantitative data were supported by data from interview and observation.

STUDY FINDINGS

Four hundred of questionnaires were distributed in four sampling area. The obtained data from questionnaires were processed and analyzed as presented in the following diagram:



According to this analysis results it can be explained that the Buginese language shift in four main situations of language use in household level has a significant difference between urban and rural areas. From the four studied situations, the urban situation (PC-U) in Bone regency indicates a relatively high shift (39.30%) compared to in rural situation (PC-R) (28.27%). In CC-U situation, the language shift reaches 51% and in CC-R situation 34%, followed by CF-U situation (48%) and CF-R situation (33%). In HW-U situation, the language shift reaches 35.60%, whereas in rural in HW-R situation was only 19.12%. Based on these results, the average shift in Bone urban region was 43.47% and in Bone rural region was 28.59%. This shift level was considered high.

For Sidrap regency, it seems that the shift occurring in this area is relatively high compared to other four areas. In PC-U situation, the shift was 50.31% and in PC-R situation it was 37.48%. In CC-U situation, the shift level was 60.59% and in CC-R situation it was 43.90%, in CF-U situation was 60.95% and in CF-R situation was 47%. In HW-U situation, the shift was decreased (22.79%) and in HW-R situation was 21.22%. Therefore, the average shift level in urban area was 49.25% and in rural area was 37.4%. Generally, the Buginese language in Sinjai regency has a relatively high shift compared to other areas.

The next location is Sidrap regency. Data analysis indicated that the Buginese language shift level in this region was the lowest. This was observed in PC-U situation (26.11%) and PC-R situation (7.10%). In CC-U situation, shift level was 27.21% and in PC-R situation it was only 10.22%. In CF-U situation, the shift percentage was 28.41%, and in CF-R situation it was about 9.93%. In HW-U situation the shift percentage was 17.80% and in HW-R situation it was 6.16%. The low shift level indicated that the Buginese language survived the most in Sidrap regency region compared to other regions. This was made clear by the average percentage in four communication situation in household in urban (24.84%) and in rural (7.95%).

In Parepare city, data analysis results indicated that in PC-U situation, the Buginese language shift was high (78.84%), while in PC-R situation it was only 28.74%. The shift difference was highly significant. In CC-U situation, the shift was 77.83%, whereas in CC-R situation it was 31.1%. In CF-U situation, the shift was high (77.83%), nearly similar to the shift level in CC-U situation, whereas in CF-R situation the shift was 32.89%. In HW-U situation (47.44%), the shift level was much lower compared to CC-U and CF-U situation, and in HW-R situation it was 14.82%. Based on these analysis results, it was evident that the Buginese language shift in urban regions was very high, averagely 70%, whereas in rural region it was averagely 26.88%.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study showed that the Buginese language shift in South Sulawesi have reached an alarming high rate. Average shift in urban regions indicated significant value, 45% and in rural regions 25.30%. Despite the different shift percentage in each region, some of the regions had a high value, for example Parepare and some had relatively low value such as Sidrap regency. Parepare as the representative urban area showed a high shift percentage (70%). This indicated that the Buginese language use in four main situations in family level remained only 30% and the rest was Indonesian language. Therefore, the indication of shift in urban area was very significant and in extreme situation. This was due to the fact in urban areas the population is very heterogenous. In addition, city is the center for various activities, such as business/trade, politic, social, and others that attract people to come to the cities, including Parepare city. They come from various ethnics that the intensity of national language use is high. That is why, it is theoretically said that regional language use in cities is lower but in rural areas remain high. This situation gives a hope for the regional language to keep exist.

This study found that the use of Buginese language in Parepare city in rural situation indicated significant difference. Language shift in rural area of Parepare still indicated a relatively equal percentage to other villages, averagely 26.88%. This means that despite the occurrence of shift, the shift is not in the same rate as in shift occurred in urban. This was due to the fact that in rural areas the population is more homogenous. Such situation favors the use of the Buginese language to be dominant except in certain situations, for example in official event or in the presence of new comer from different ethnics, and others. In addition to Parepare city, Sinjai regency also has a relatively high shift level in urban area (50%) and rural area (37.32%). This was due to the fact that population in this area tended to use regional language, namely Konjo language and Bugis Sinjai accent. These two dominant languages are mutually unintelligible that for communication, the speakers of Buginese language often use Malay Bugis and Indonesia language as an alternative connecting language.

The shift level occurring in Bone regency, particularly in urban area also indicated a high percentage (43.47%), slightly lower than Sinjai. However, in rural areas the percentage was only 28.62%, much lower compared to in rural situation of Sinjai (37.32%). Buginese language of Bone dialect in South Sulawesi is known as the most polite dialect. Regarding the speech politeness measures, according to Brown and Levinson (Gusnawaty, 2011:201) the most rough strategy is the frankly strategy and the most polite is the silent strategy. Gusnawaty (2011) suggested that the speakers of Buginese language in Bone in specific situations implemented more the silent strategy to avoid conflict. They were so careful in their speech particularly to the people they did not know. Speech rule in Buginese language in Bone regency is very sensitive. Someone can be judged as impolite or without etiquette when doing any mistakes in his/her speech, even though the mistakes are committed unintentionally. Therefore, it was indicated that the speakers of Buginese language in Bone regency preferred the Indonesian language than Buginese language. The reason was Indonesia language is not as complex as the speech rule of Buginese language.

In contrast, for Sinjai regency, the Buginese language shift occurring in urban area indicated the lowest level, averagely 24.48%, lower than rural situation in Bone regency. Whereas, in rural area the shift level was only 7.9%. This indicated that among the four regions sampled in this study, Sidrap had the lowest shift. One of the explanations was that the Buginese language in Sidrap regency still had a high prestige as a dignified cultural product. This was reflected in the joined efforts by society and government to preserve the local art and culture. Kecapi, a Buginese traditional music instrument, has been introduced as an extracurricular activity in elementary and junior high schools. Kecapi is a Buginese musical instrument used to accompany Buginese songs composed by Buginese artists in Sidrap regency. These indicate that real efforts were exist to preserve Buginese stuffs in this area. In addition, Sidrap people have long been known as egalitarian society, considering that social relationships should be at the same level, so in communicating among them, they never be burdened by the speech rules associated to social stratification in society. Therefore, diglossia is relatively stable between Buginese language and Indonesian language.

It can also be said that the speakers of Buginese language in this region still keep the local cultural traditions in determining the planting season (mappano bine) by social discussion that also called tudang sipulung (tudang = sitting, sipulung =

gather or can be translated as a Big Conference) attended by Pallontara (experts in Lontara' book) and other society figures. After harvesting, they do a thanksgiving event (mappadendang) as a gratitude expression for the abundant harvest every year. Such events relate directly to Buginese language empowerment. Empowering Buginese language based on its function as a prominent ethnic identity will directly increase the regional language prestige. Buginese language is treated as a high cultural aspect that the speakers are motivated to use it properly. By this way, people identify the level of their social degree through the use of symbols or the prestige language. Finally, the society will have positive stance on Buginese language.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

From the findings of this study it can be concluded that the Buginese language shift rate in urban area is higher than that in rural area with percentage of 46.73% and 25.19%, respectively. In Bone regency, the average shift level in urban was 43.48% and in rural was 28.60%. For Sinjai regency, the shift level in urban was 49.26% and in rural was 37.32%. Overall, Sinjai was the area with relatively high shift level compared to other two regency areas. In Sidrap regency, average shift level in urban was 24.84% and in rural was 7.95%. Among the four areas selected as sampling areas, Sidrap had the lowest shift level. In Parepare city, the average shift level in urban and rural was 69.38% and 26.90%, respectively. Therefore, the Buginese language condition in urban area can be categorized as a potentially endangered language, or it has the potential to be extinct because the young generations have began to move to majority language (Indonesia language) and rarely use mother language (Buginese language).

Based on these findings, it is suggested that the Buginese Government and Society increase concern on Buginese language existence as a realization of cultural responsibility by preserving the Buginese language entirely. This can be attempted by keeping the commitment in introducing the Buginese language into school curricula as an independent subject or local content. In addition, activities that directly relate to Buginese language empowerment should be thought of to increase the prestige of the regional language as a dignified Bugis ethnic identity that support regional-based nation characters development in South Sulawesi.

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