

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Background of the study

All human activities always involve language as a means to interact among people. Indonesia consists of many ethnics and languages. So, there is a tendency that inter-ethnic marriages happens. Inter-ethnic marriage are a combination of two people from different ethnic and language also. It means that there are two languages exist in interethnic marriage couple. The existence of two languages means the competition between two language. So the researcher is interested in investigating this phenomenon especially in Chinese family in Kilometre 12 Medan. The researcher found the language shift and language maintaine that happened in inter marriage of chinese family. Fasold (1984:231) states that language shift refers to changes in language use among a community of speakers such as when a community starts to use one language in domains and functions in which its members had previously used another language and a shift in the number of speakers of a language. Weinreich (1978:79) states similarly as Fasold, he defines language shift as the changes from the habitual use of one language to another.

Furthermore, Romaine (2000:49) says that this shift is unavoidable when two languages compete for use in the same domain. In nature we find numerous kinds of communication system, many of which appear to be unique to their possessors, and one of them is the language of the human species. Basically, the purpose of communication is the preservation, growth, and development of the

species (Smith and Miller 1968; 265). Without a language the society can not be formed and there will no community, It is agreed that language can not be separated from culture, as language is a product of the culture, language is holistically part and parcel of human culture which not properly protected and propogated can loss its true nature and can equally deteriorate like every other misshandled or unprotected culture. It serves as people's of life, their heritage and national identity.

Chinese Indonesian account for about 3% of the population but they are influential, controlling most of the country's wealth and commerce. Nowadays, vernaculars in Indonesia as mother tounge face a challenge against the existence of Indonesia language and foreign language. Many vernaculars in Indonesia shifted even endangered. As it was informed in Kompas (2007) about 726 of 746 vernaculars in Indonesia are endangered. Only 13 vernaculars have more than one million language users. Speaking about Chinese -Indonesians are ethnic Chinese people living in Indonesia, as a result of centuries of overseas Chinese migration. The Chinese-Indonesian experience in Indonesia is one of extremes. On the one hand, they have made it their home and it's been a land of plenty as many have become fabulously rich, mostly in business. On the other hand, there have been some bloody pogroms targeting them, the most recent in 1998. Official discrimination is still on the books (or, at least, implemented as such) in most government offices.

Currently, there are roughly nine million Chinese-Indonesians spread throughout the archipelago, mostly in large urban centers. There are approximately three million Chinese-Indonesians in Greater Jakarta and despite

being a tiny minority of the overall ethnic makeup of Indonesia (less than 4 percent of the total), their enormous economic strength and concentration in the capital city means the Chinese-Indonesian "footprint" is ubiquitous in many sectors. Speaking about one of the ethnic groups is Chinese. Chinese: The most significant ethnic minority of foreign origin in Indonesia. Chinese began inhabiting Indonesia since the 15th century with significant waves in 18th and 19th century. Mostly concentrated in *pecinan* (chinatowns) in urban Java, Sumatra and Kalimantan cities with significant numbers in Jakarta, North Sumatra, Riau, Riau Islands, Bangka-Belitung Islands, and West Kalimantan. Since Indonesian independence, the Javanese and Batakese have replaced the Chinese as the largest ethnic group in Medan in 2000 census: A highly visible component of Medan's population is the large number of Chinese, the largest Chinese community on Sumatra Island, who are active in the business and trading sector. Almost all Chinese residents in Medan can speak fluent Hokkien, a dialect originating from Fujian Province in Southern China. Medan also has its own variation of Hokkien, known as Medan Hokkien the Chinese living spread throughout the city.

This research related with the previous study done by Musgrave (2006) from Monash University, which discussed about language shift and language maintenance in Indonesia. But the explanation which is given by him is not clear enough. That is the first reason why the researcher chooses language shift and language maintenance as her topic. The second reason, Indonesia consists of many ethnics and languages. So there there is a tendency that inter marriage happens. The third reason is from the previous research focused on National

language such as Bahasa Indonesia and some other ethnic language such as Mandailingnese, Karonese, Javanese, Bataknese and so on. But for Chinese still less, so in this research the researcher is interested to do the research in Chinese family.

The researcher in this study found it is important to conduct a study on Chinese language shift and language maintainance in mixed married families. In Medan, Chinese people socialized with many people who are from other ethnics. In this case, a man from Chinese is looking for a non Chinese woman or a Chinese woman is looking for a non Chinese man then they got married with. We classified their family into intermarriage families because they are different ethnic and culture. For example:

Table 1.1. Intermarriage Families

Married couple	1st family	2nd family	3rd family	4th family
Husband	Chinese man	Chinese man	Acehnese man	Javanese man
Wife	Bataknese Woman	Malaynesewoman	Chinese Woman	Chinese woman

From the intermarried family above the researcher find out language shift happened when a certain language has shifted the use of their mother tongue to the use of dominant language, and usually it happens to young generation.

- Researcher : Dek, Kamu suku apa?  
(Dek, What is your ethnic?)
- Subject 1 : Kalau bapak suku China dan mamak suku Melayu kak  
( My father is Chinese and Mom is Malaynese )
- Researcher : Jadi kalau di rumah orangtua pakai bahasa apa?  
( So if you are at home, What language do you use with your parents ?)
- Subject 1 : Pakai bahasa Indonesia kak  
(using Indonesia language Sis )
- Researcher : Ngga pakai bahasa China atau bahasa Melayu ?  
(doesn't use Chinese language or Malaynese language?)

- Subject 1 : Ngga kak, bapak kalau kumpul ama keluarganya pakai bahasa China. Tapi mamak pakai bahasa Melayu kalau kumpul sama keluarganya  
( No, it doesn't Sis, my father uses Chinese language with his family but my mother uses Malaynese with her family)
- Researcher : Jadi kalian satu keluarga tidak ada yang mengerti bahasa Cina?  
(So None of you understand chinese language ?)
- Subject 1 : Ngga kak  
( No Sis )

In line with the conversation above, it could be seen that the child from intermarriage Chinese Man and Malaynese woman shifted their language into Indonesian.

- Researcher : Dek, Kamu suku apa?  
(Dek, What is your ethnic?)
- Subject 2 : Kalau bapak suku China dan mamak suku Batak.  
( My father is Chinese and Mom is Bataknese )
- Researcher : Jadi kalau di rumah orangtua pakai bahasa apa?  
( So if you are at home, What language do you use with your parents ?)
- Subject 2 : Pakai bahasa Cina kak  
(using Chinese language Sis )
- Researcher : Ngga pakai bahasa Batak?  
(doesn't use Chinese language or Malaynese language?)
- Subject 2 : Ngga kak  
( No Sis )

In line with the conversation above, it could be seen that the child from intermarriage Chinese Man and Bataknese woman maintained Chinese language.

Holmes states that (1992;29) "People may select a particular variety of code because it makes it easier to discuss a particular topic, regardless of where they speaking. Therefore, the numbers of the multiethnic speech communities have to decide on what language to use when they are in different domains. At home, people often discuss work or school, for instance, using the language associated with those domains, rather than the language of the family domain then people

from different ethnicity share more than one language, the question of appropriate choice of language arises because different speech communities have a range of linguistic variation. In these case, a speaker must choose which set of variants to use with in a single language in any given situation.

Therefore, when we consider within language variation to be a kind of language choice problem, then language choice is possible for monolingual speakers as well as bilinguals (Romaine, 1994,181). Certain social factors such as the participants, domains, the function and the topic of the interaction, social distance, the status relationship between people, features of the setting and the dimension of formality turn out to be important in accounting for language choice in many different of kinds of speech communities (Holmes,1992).

This thesis is a study of language shift and maintenance in mixed marriages in Chinese families. Broadly the goals of this thesis are as follows : firstly, to asses the degree of language shift in Chinese families, Secondly, to know the phenomenon of language shift or maintenance that occurs in mixed marriages in Chinese families. Chinese man has significance influenced language shift than the women who are from Chinese. Thirdly, in presenting these results ; to contribute to the area of language shift and maintenance.

To their family's member, they have some reasons why they choose one ethnics language or Bahasa Indonesia as their united communication in their family. The first reason, the couple do not know use their ethnics language to communicate with their family's members at home. They use Indonesia language in their communication at home. Second, one of the couples do not know how to say well or pronounce their ethnics language. For example, the man from Chinese

(CM) married with the woman from Malaynese (MW). His wife doesn't know how to speak Chinese, so the couple deal with Indonesian Language for their language. The third, they used one ethnics language to communicate. For instance, when they lived in Chinese environment mother is from Chinese and father is from Acehnese, they agree to use Chinese language at home. This situation explained that Chinese language can be maintain. Another case father is from Chinese and mother is from Malaynese. Mother does not know how to speak Chinese but both of them know Indonesian Language so they agreed to speak Indonesian Language.

## **1.2 The Problems of the Study**

Based on the previous background the problems are formulated as the following :

1. What factors make language shift and language maintenance occur in intermarriage Chinese families?
2. How do language shift and language maintain occur in intermariage Chinese families ?
3. Why do language shift and language maintain occur in intermariage Chinese families ?

## **1.3 The Objectives of the study**

In relation to the problems the objectives of the study are :

1. To find out the factors make language shift and language maintenance occur in intermarriage Chinese families

2. To find out how language shift and language maintain occur in intermarriage Chinese families
3. To find out why language shift and language maintain occur in intermarriage Chinese families

#### **1.4 The Scope of the study**

This study focused on language shift and language maintance in intermarriage families in Medan should be very interesting and it is closely related to language planning in intermarriages families, The writer only took 4 groups of families in that place. They are Chinese and Javanese, Chinese and Acehnese, Chinese and Bataknese and Chinese and Malaynese.

#### **1.5 The Significance of the study**

After conducting this study, it is hoped significantly relevant to theoretically and practicaly aspects.

Theoretically, this research finding hoped to be useful for the next researher who will do in depth research dealing about language maintenance and shift or any research about Chinese Language in mix marriages. Practically, it is hoped to be useful for all Chinese to realize that it is important to maintenance their language in order to keep the existence of their ethnic groups.