

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language plays an important role in human life. Language acts as a representation of the culture of the speaker in addition to being a vehicle for action. Behavior, actions, and situations can all be changed by language. For children, language plays a similar role. Children encounter a variety of difficulties when acquiring their first language, including the need to separate significant speech units from loud speech flows, apply labels to shifting preferences, and comprehend the varied syntax and morphology present in the more than 7000 languages spoken today.

Language is an important marker of ethnic identity. Ethnic identity is the way in which expressions through certain languages. Positive ethnic identities contribute to the low caring of the ethnic groups, and language love is as strong as how individuals regard themselves as social groups, which is mostly determined by how larger societies perceive them. The status of an ethnic group's language as a minority language in various dominant cultures renders it of little value. It changes to a more distinguished language and a high value positive attitude in the use of language from the loyalty of users of mother tongue greatly influences the existence of mother tongue in communication and makes it difficult to shift in society (maintenance of language), and vice versa, the loyalty of users about the potential of language.

However, some languages particularly traditional ones like Gayonese, are seldom ever spoken by young people, who instead choose using Indonesian for daily communication. As a result, language shift occurs when a group of speakers uses a language from a larger society, such as a majority or national language, less frequently or stops using their mother tongue or a minority language. A community is increasingly using one language at the expense of another, replacing the scope and functions of a minority language (May, 2012). Meanwhile, when another language is the dominant one in a bilingual or multilingual society, the mother tongue is more likely to be lost (Fishman, 2006).

In contrast, language shift can result in language endangerment when the dominant language of the speech community is gradually replaced by a new primary language as a means of communication (Abtahian et al., 2016) and the use of one specific language or other two or more languages keeps eroding in the speech community. Additionally, language shift occurs when people quit their heritage languages since the other language is more prevalent because they would like to speak it rather than their mother tongue (Al-auwal, 2017). It can also affect languages with majority speakers, such as Javanese, Sundanese, and Maduranese, in addition to languages with minority speakers (Ansori, 2019; Ravindranath & Cohn, 2014).

Similar to this, as technology advances, speakers of regional languages are connected to speakers of other languages, like Indonesia, Minang, Betawi, and others. Based on language users, this phenomena may influence language shift. If someone cherishes their culture, they will keep speaking their native language or

other ethnic language. If someone has careless attitude about their native language, then another language will take its place. This circumstance denotes language interaction between the mother tongue or first language of another language. Numerous phenomena, including disruption, language maintenance, language changes, and bilingualism, can result from these encounters.

Different parts of Indonesia experience language shift as a phenomenon. In Southeast Aceh Regency, families and environments might contribute to specific language shifts in children. Similar to what took place at the village of Jambur Damar in the Southeast Aceh Regency. Gayo ethnic people live in Jambur Damar Village in Tanoh Alas District, a lot of parents yet their children used Indonesian language to interact with their surroundings and there were also did not instructed their children to speak Gayo in daily conversation because they were unaware of initiatives to preserve the Gayo language. However, the researcher believes that many Gayo people in Southeast Aceh Regency tend to be proud of their ethnicity as evidenced by their usage of Gayo in both home and school settings. Based on this fact, this study was interested in examining how the Gayo language was transferred into Indonesian and why parents instructed their children to speak a second language in a setting where the majority of the population was Gayo.

Therefore, this research conducted a language shift of Gayonese in Southeast Aceh Regency. Language shift involves two languages: the retreating language and the replacing language since it is a result of one language becoming more popular than another (Anderson, 2006). Agyekum (2009) and Masruddin

(2013) stated that language shift refers to a situation in which a community of speakers switches from one language to another, effectively rejecting the one.

Language shifts are generally a result of education or school because second languages are always introduced to children who were initially monolingual, become bilingual, and eventually quit or shift the first language, this factor also affected Gayo language shift among two or more students of the elementary school coming from the same speech community (Gayonese speech community) shift their language into Indonesian language, here the preliminary data example.

Example 1

Kalau sama guru disekolah aku pakai bahasa Indonesia, dan kalau ada teman-teman yang pakai bahasa Gayo akupun berbahasa Gayo, tapi kalau ada yang pakai bahasa indonesia akupun berbahasa indonesia juga disekolah.

I speak Indonesian when I'm at school with the teachers. I also speak in gayo when those around me do. On the other hand, I will use Indonesian at school if someone else does.

The statement above included the factor language shift in education or school. The results of the interviews above show that the children are able to communicate in two languages. When asked to speak in Indonesian, she will do so; when asked to speak in Gayo, she will respond in Indonesian and she still use Gayo language to communicate with their parents at home. However, they shift Gayo language into Indonesian language only when they are having conversation with their peers and teacher at school both in formal and informal context.

Example 2

S1 : *Beli dimana tadi?*
(Where did you buy?)

- S2 : *Mau? Ngga tau aku, dari mamak ini.*
(Do you want? I don't know, my mom give it to me.)
- S1 : *maulah, makasih ya.*
(Yes, I do. Thank you.)
- S2 : *Iya, kayaknya belik di kede seberang sana.*
(Yes, it's seem she was it buying at the shop across.)
- S2 : *Oh gitu.*
(Oh I see)

The dialogue above describes the conversation between two children it can be seen that the first speaker used full Indonesian when asked question to the second speaker and vice versa, it means that they shift the Gayo language into Indonesian when interacted to each other in their environment even though they comes from same speech community that is Gayonese ethnic group. That's why language shift occurs to both children because they are more interested in using Indonesian than the Gayo language when talking to their friends around them, and this is one of the reason language shift of Gayonese occurs in Jambur Damar village, namely due to environmental influences.

Language shift is the term used to describe the aforementioned phenomenon. The replacement of one language by another is a phenomenas. Language shift is a phenomenon when one language is supplanted by another language. Meanwhile, Rostyana (2017) states that language shifts can happen when people decide to utilize another language as their primary language instead of their native tongue. It can start with regional languages that are typically exclusively spoken by a group of adults and are not utilized by children as a first language. As the number of speakers of one language declines, this could put it in risk. Identity is lost as a result of it.

Uswar (2017) stated that language is crucial for a sense of community. The following generation may suffer if the native language is lost since they will be unable to identify their location. Thus, it is essential to preserve traditional languages in order to safeguard a community's history. Language shift also results in language death (Masruddin, 2013). This indicates that a certain generation no longer speaks a certain language.

Based on the explanation above, it is obvious that the factors that cause parents to teach their children to use Indonesian as their first language are children from the family whose parents especially mothers, has a variety of languages in the environment, and other external factors. Parents have been encouraging children to learn new languages due to various factors. Language Shift of Gayonese in Southeast Aceh Regency is the study's title, which the researchers developed based on the aforementioned phenomenon.

1.2 Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the problems in this study were formulated as follows:

- 1) What are the types of language shift of Gayonese found in Jambur Damar village, Southeast Aceh Regency?
- 2) What factors influence language shift of children in Jambur Damar village, Southeast Aceh Regency?
- 3) Why does language shift occurs of children in Jambur Damar village, Southeast Aceh Regency?

1.3 Scope of the Study

This study focused on the field of Language Shift. Furthermore, this study concerned limited to language shift of children in Jambur Damar village, Tanoh Alas District, Southeast Aceh Regency and is specifically with the children shift from the Gayo language to Indonesian.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

In line with the statement of formulation of the problem stated above, the objectives of the study as follow:

- 1) To investigate the types of language shift of Gayonese found in Jambur Damar village, Southeast Aceh Regency.
- 2) To describe the factors influence language shift of children in Jambur Damar village, Southeast Aceh Regency.
- 3) To explain language shift occurs of children in Jambur Damar village, Southeast Aceh Regency.

1.5 Significances of the Study

The results of this investigation have theoretical and practical applications as follows:

- 1) Theoretically, this study is expected to widely give more information about language shifts, particularly in Gayo language. Moreover, the result can be used as a new finding and additional references in investigating language shift.

2) Practically, the results of this study significantly give impact and bring benefit to the readers by providing them with clear information about the language shift of Gayonese in Southeast Aceh Regency. English teachers who is specialize in teaching language change can use this research as a component in supporting teaching learning processes. The students who are studying language changes and particularly about language shift hopefully to enlarge their knowledge, and finally the government, with the support of this research, the government can observe language shifts and possibly encourage families to teach their children the comprehensive Gayo language as their first language.

