

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Linguistics is thought to have been a vital aspect of society since they convey life's values. Fishman (1992) states that "every language used in society shows the important thing that makes people understand the values." Indonesian contains 707 languages spoken by 221 million people. This means that Indonesia is home to around 10% of the world's languages. On another together, it is a source of confidence as it demonstrates our vibrant variety of languages and cultures. On the other hand, maintaining those languages becomes a challenge, if not a pain.

According to UNESCO (2018), a total of 6,700 language spoken throughout the globe. 2,500 of those are extinct. According to UNESCO, Indonesia is a bilingual nation with a high rate of language migration. According to UNESCO estimates, around 200 languages became extinct after three generations due to a loss of speakers. Furthermore, UNESCO records show that Indonesia ranks third with 147 alternative languages. 719 of her 41 ethnic languages in Indonesia are endangered, having less than 500 speakers (UNESCO, 2018). Language and culture are intricately intertwined; language is an integral part of culture. Language is used as a form of communication in social settings. When used in the context of communication, it must be based on and connected to the cultural context, which differs in more subtle ways.

Language and culture are viewed as intricately intertwined. They differ yet cannot be separated since linguistic roles communicate speakers' culture and self-identity. Thomas et al. (1999:158–159) said that the use of language is one way

that is used to establish our identity and shape other people's views of who we are. Language is important in the construction of individual and social identities; it can also be a powerful means of exercising social control. Likewise, language has its own convention for a certain group, which not only relates to the words we use but also to the way we say them. People can identify themselves with the social group or community they belong to.

Language maintenance is an effort to keep the language alive by using it continually in the face of competition among other languages in society. Language society should keep the language alive in order to preserve it so that it will not become an endangered language, because the existence of a language depends on the effort of the language user. Language maintenance is also a part of language planning, similar to the statement of Kapla and Baldauf (1997), "Language maintenance is one of the goals in language planning." Moreover, Musk (2006) argued that in sociolinguistics, the term maintenance is generally used to describe a minority language facing the majority language. It means that language maintenance is concerned with the relationship between minority and majority languages because the purpose of language maintenance is to balance the use of minority and majority languages in communication.

The phenomenon of language maintenance has been discussed in several ways in the literature. The complexity of the field has resulted in the formation of nations of language maintenance within sociolinguistics. Language is an ethnic identification symbol. This implies that Indonesia will lose one of its ethnic identities. Language conservation is necessary to preserve ethnic identity. Furthermore, Schiffman (1995) emphasized if the language is not preserved, a number of problems may occur. One is language death, which occurs when speakers become bilingual and their children gain

prominence in another language, causing the language to perish. People in Labuhanbatu Utara continue interacting in the Kualuh Malay language. The examiner discovered the continuing existence of the Kualuh Malay language in Medan city by the students from Labuhanbatu Utara in the following conversation:

KA : *Abah Ulong, ondak kamano abah?*

‘Brother, where are you going?’

AS : *Nak ka kost adek Ongah ha, mangantakhkan gobakh nyo ni*

‘To my young sister’ hostel, I want to give this blanket.’

KA : *Oiyoiyo, sampekkkan la salam ku samo si ongah yo bah.*

‘Alright, please convey my regards to her.’

AS : *Iyo, nanti kok udah jumpo kami abah sampekkkan.*

‘Okay, I’ll inform her when I see her.’

Based on the conversation above, it was shown that they use the Kualuh Malay language when they communicate with their friend. The transmission of the Malay language in the young generation still continues, even though they meet many people who use Indonesian in their daily conversations, but they can speak the Kualuh Malay language when they have met with other Kualuh Malay speakers.

The researcher interviewed them to find out why they still use the Malay language. They said that they are proud of the Kualuh Malay language and that they are close to each other if they use the Kualuh Malay language. By using the Kualuh Malay language, they can show their identity as Labuhanbatu Utara people. Carson (2001) said that the maintenance of a heritage language is vital for the self-identity and esteem of its speakers. Therefore, language must be protected, preserved, and maintained.

The phenomenon of language maintenance makes the researcher interested in finding out the factors affecting the language maintenance of Labuhanbatu Utara students in Medan City. How they maintain their language and their reasons why they still use or maintain the Malay language. Due to the progress of the times as well as the development of the younger generation, quite a few are reluctant to preserve regional culture, including regional languages. For this reason, we see that many students who have continued their education in the city, when they return to their area, sometimes no longer use the regional language.

This research had a different finding from the previous research. This research about the language maintenance of the Kualuh Malay language by the students from Labuhanbatu Utara in Medan City has not been conducted yet. The researcher needs to know the language maintenance in the community, the factors affecting language maintenance, the way they maintain it, and the reasons for maintaining the Kualuh Malay language. For this reason, research about Kualuh Malay language maintenance in Medan City is needed.

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

Specifically, the study addresses the maintenance of the following research questions:

1. What factors affect the maintenance of the Kualuh Malay language by students from Labuhanbatu Utara in Medan?
2. How is Kualuh Malay Language maintained by Student from the Labuhanbatu Utara?
3. Why is Kualuh Malay Language maintained by Student from the Labuhanbatu Utara as the way it is?

### **1.3 The Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are to answer the research question. Thus, the objectives of the study are:

1. To discover the factors affecting the Kualuh Malay Language by students from Labuhanbatu Utara in Medan city.
2. To analyze how students from Labuhanbatu Utara maintain the Kualuh Malay language in Medan city.
3. To evaluate the reasons why students from Labuhanbatu Utara in Medan city maintain their language.

### **1.4 The Scope of the Study**

There are many native languages in Labuhanbatu Utara, but this study only focuses on the Kualuh Malay language. Kualuh Malay language maintenance is investigated through the language use of the students from Labuhanbatu Utara who live in Medan City.

### **1.5 The Significances of the Study**

The findings of the study are expected to be relevant and useful theoretically and practically.

Theoretically, the results of this study are useful for;

1. The enrichment of theories of language planning especially on the language maintenance in Indonesia
2. The improvement of the knowledge of the local language and how to maintain it.

Practically, the results of this study are useful for:

1. University students, who are interested in studying language maintenance as a reference.
2. The next researchers who are interested in conducting any further studies in language maintenance.



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