

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In Indonesia, there are hundreds of ethnic languages that consist of five big islands and hundreds of small islands. Each island has some ethnic groups which are create of many languages. Each of these languages is unique. Based on the data of UNESCO in the year of 2001, there are 6.900 languages in the world, and 2.500 of them are extinction. UNESCO said that Indonesia is facing a very big danger of language shift. Based on the data of UNESCO, almost 200 languages do not exist any longer after three generations, because they lost their native speakers.

Similarly, as it was informed by Multamia (2008), about 736 of 746 vernaculars in Indonesia are endangered. One of the languages that issued in endanger is Siladang language. She also explained that generally the numbers of the vernacular languages' speakers tend to be less caused of there is no writing form of the language. Thus, the oral tradition that developed in minority languages if not immediately documented it will be difficult to maintain their existence. But, it is not occurred for Siladang language, this language is still well and alive. Siladang language is not extinct because the speakers are still use the language until now, and there are more than 2000 inhabited. The language will face the endangered language if the speakers are less than 500 speakers.

Siladang language is one of vernacular in Indonesia. There are two tribes in Siladang language namely the Lubu and the Ulu. Lubu and Ulu tribes come from Minangkabau who fled to Mandailing because of a lot of wars. Ulu tribe's

language is different from Mandailing language that exists in area of South Tapanuli. Siladang language also absorbs Mandailing vocabulary and mixes it with Ulu language. The change of the language occurred in the pronunciation and phoneme of the words.

Language is a cultural identity. Language and identity are inextricably linked each other and in order to save identity, language users must attempt to save their language. Similarly, Thomas, et. al. (1999:158-159) said that the use of language is one way that is used to establish our identity and shaping of other people's views of who we are. Thus, language plays an important role in defining who we are, and makes us instantly recognizable to other members of our particular speech community.

For Siladangnese people, using Siladang language in their daily communication, it is show the identity of Siladangnese. Siladang language is a symbol identity of Siladangnese. Ethnic identity is the way in which the expression through a language. Attachment to language is as strong as people regard themselves as social group, which is influenced largely by how the larger society regards them. Language must be maintained because language showed the identity of the language users. As Holmes (2001:63) stated that where language is considered as important symbol of a minority group's identity, the language is likely to be maintained longer. Moreover Corson (2001:174) 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.

It also done by the Siladangnese speakers, the increasing of the dominant language is not affect the Siladang language, it can be seen from the used of

words such as; *oku (I)*, *oko (You)*, *Bopok (Father)*, *Nanang (Mather)*, *mantuhe (Aunt)*, *momok (Ancle)* are still used by them until now.

Language maintenance refers to the situation where speech community continues to use its traditional language in the face of a host of conditions that might foster a shift to another language. It is the product of language contact where a linguistic minority or a dominated ethno linguistic group is successful in keeping its original language in spite of the pressure exerted on it by a dominant linguistic group.

As the research conducted by Dweik and Al-Obaidi (2014) talked about Syriac Language Maintenance among the Assyrians of Iraq. They found that the Assyrians have been successful in maintaining their ethnic language despite the long-term contact with many languages such Arabic, Kurdish, Turkish and Persian. The factors that helped the maintain the Syriac language include using it at home with family members and relatives, the church, the tight social relations, the media, the positive attitudes they exert towards it and internal marriages. Related to this research, this study also observed the factors of the maintenance of the Siladang language. The existences of Siladang language toward the Mandailing language one of the researcher's reason interested to do the research about the maintenance of the Siladang language, and this language became potential phenomenon in linguistics study to be researched.

Actually, language shift potentially happen in vernaculars in Indonesia. It happens in Indonesia continually. Bilingualism/multilingualism is one of factors which affected the language shift. Siladangnese people are multilingual; they can speak Siladang language, Mandailing language and Bahasa Indonesia. Beside

that, the Mandailing language is more dominant in their society, because their territory is still region of Panyabungan. When they out from their territory they are prefer to use Mandailing language or Bahasa Indonesia because it is more prestigious than their language. From this phenomenon, the language shift might be happened. But, in fact Siladang language is still maintained. The Siladangnese people are still used this language in their society, particularly in their home, because of that their children also can speak this language.

Based on the observation, living together and see each other frequently is one of the main factors that affect Siladangnese people maintaining their language. Beside, there are another factors can affect the maintenance of Siladang language such as ethno linguistic vitality, the using of language in family domain (Intra marriage and intermarriage), use of language in neighborhood domain, use of language in workplace domain, use of language in religion domain, and practice *Adat Istiadat* (traditional) ceremony. Beside the factors in maintaining the language, the ways and reasons of the Siladangnese speakers using the language are also important one to be observed.

Based on the explanation above, Siladang language is maintained by Siladang speaker in Desa Sipapaga. They keep the existence of their vernacular by using that language when they communicate. Saragih (2010) said that language maintenance is a must and should be done because both the value and the wealth of the local language should be maintained for the heritage of national culture. The death of a vernacular may cause the death of certain ethnics. The loss of culture means loss of the human asset and their unique which differentiate them with the others.

Thus, this study conducted the research about the maintenance of Siladang language that focused on the factors which contribute to the maintenance of Siladang language, the ways and the reasons of the speakers of the Siladangnese maintain their language in Desa Sipapaga.

1.2 Problems of the Study

The focus of this study is the language maintenance of Siladang language. Based on this focus the problems of the research formulated as below;

1. What factors do affect the maintenance of Siladang language?
2. How do the Siladang people maintain their language?
3. Why do the Siladang people maintain their language?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

A long with the problems of the study there are some overreaching objectives, they are:

- 1) to examine the factors affecting the Siladang language maintenance in Desa Sipapaga
- 2) to find out the ways in maintaining the Siladang language in Desa Sipapaga
- 3) to find out the reasons why the speakers of Siladang maintain their language in Desa Sipapaga

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study is limited to identify the factors affecting the maintenance of Siladang language, where there were 20 Siladangnese speakers as the participants of this study. This is also related to the strategies and the reasons of Siladang people maintenance their language. This study focused on the maintenance of Siladang language in Desa Sipapaga.

1.5 Significance of the Study

After conducting this study, it was hoped significantly relevant to the theoretical and practical aspects.

1) Theoretically

The finding of the study was useful for developing of the theory of language maintenance. This research finding also was useful for improving the knowledge about the vernacular language.

2) Practically

The result of the study was useful as a reference for the university students who are interested in studying language maintenance. This research finding also was useful for the next researchers who are interested in conducting any further studies in language maintenance.