

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Background of the Study

People use language as a means of thinking and feeling, as well as a means of expressing thought and feeling in a society. There are millions of languages used in the world. It is because language is a product of culture, which means that different cultures may have different languages or different dialects. It is also functioned to show their existence, identity and culture in the society. In other words, a community's way of using language is a part of the community's culture, is a way of displaying group identity. Ways of speaking function not only to facilitate communication, but also to identify the social position of the speaker. As Crystal (1997) states that people keep maintaining their language in order to create cultural diversity, keep ethnic identity, enable social adaptability, increasing security for the children psychologically, and increase the linguistic sensitivity.

Indonesia is a multilingual country, language shifts potentially happen. Language shift simply means that a community gives up a language completely in favor of another one.

Language shift is the process by which a speech community in a contact situation gradually stops using one of its two languages in favor of the other. In this case Tamil language is shifted in usage to the Tamil community in Kel. Madras Hulu, Medan. If the disfavored language is one that has as its last speakers

the members of the community in question, then the language faces endangerment and eventually, language death.

Language shift and language maintenance is similar to two sides of coin which cannot be divided each other (Fasold, 1984: 213). They form a collective result of choice. He says language shift simply means that a community gives up a language completely in favor of another one. Language shift is the progressive process whereby a speech community of a language shifts to speak another language. It is in fact crucial for the language survival.

Almost all minority groups who live in such multilingual circumstance lack political and economic power; minority groups often become bilingual in the dominant language for both instrumental and psychological reasons. Even the speakers who are in the process of shifting do not show the same degree of shift all at once in all of the purposes or situations for which they use any language.

Further, from the stand of dominant group the presence of minority groups can be an obstacle to communication and, more importantly, to national integration, it may sound cynical but history supports the comment of Laponce (1987: 198) that dominant groups tolerate minorities “only on condition that they accept at least partial linguistic assimilation (learn the dominant language) and keep their numbers small.”

Medan is one of the province in Indonesia. It is one of the big city in Indonesia which has many kinds of different ethnics who live side by side. The city has diverse communities, reflecting its history. For instance there is a Tamil ethnic community, largely made up of the descendants of people transported from

India in the last century to be employed as contract workers in various plantations in Medan.

Beside indigenous ethnics, there are several other majorities ethnics found in Medan, such as Javanese, Batakese, China, Malaynese and Tamil. Each of those ethnics live and create their community in a place. One of them is Tamil people. They live in Kampung Madras or as we have ever known before as “Kampung Keling”. This Place is the land marked “*Indian Tamil*” in Medan. Tamil people in Kampung Madras interacted each others speak by using Tamil language. Tamil language is spoken not only as means of communication among Tamil people, but it was used to the events such as ritual ceremony, trading, wedding and holi. But at this moment time, Tamil language did not spoke all the layers of aspect life. But while Tamil language include as one of language has undergone shifted. Tamil language was used to in wedding, at home, ritual ceremony and so forth. In the fact, at the wedding, when a Tamil woman presents the wedding occasion. For instance :

Gayetri (woman) : hai ..Vannakam, Enna ceyti? (*Salam... How are you today?*)

Simran : hi .. Gayetri...aduhh ..kau ngomong apa sih ? ngomong Indonesia aja lha. (*Salam...oughhh...what are you talking about..sih?just speak Indonesia lha*).

Gayetri : ihhh ..... ni illai mutiyum moli tamil! (*Ihh..can not you speak Tamil*)

Simran : aduhh gimana mau pake bahasa tamil aku pun sehari hari pake nya bahasa Indonesia. Lagi pula di sekolah dan di rumah terus sama teman, tetangga, aku pun aku harus pake bahasa Indonesia.(*ough...how could I sepak Tamil Language. Everyday I speak Indonesia language. Eventhough at school, at home and then with neighbour ...I have to speak Indonesia*)

Based on data transcript data above, it is clear that Tamil language shift occur shifting. It is caused by bilingualism. When Gayetri speaks Tamil language, but Simran answered by speaking Indonesia. It is marked with “*ngomong Indonesia aja lha*” (Simran).

Considering all of situation explained above, it is important to conduct a study on Tamil language shift. It is very important to analyze the language shift in Tamil language, to make a good language planning for reversing a language shift. Therefore thus study will be conducted in order to observe such language shift in Tamil language based on environment in Kampung Madras, Medan.

### **1.2 The Problem of The Study**

Based on the explanation in the background, the problems of the study are formulated as the following.

1. What are the factors that influence Tamil language shift into Indonesia language in Kampung Madras, Medan.
2. Why does Tamil language shift into Indonesia language

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

In line with problems, the objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the factors of Tamil language shift in Kampung Madras, Medan.
2. To find out the reason Tamil language shift in Kampung Madras, Medan.

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

Language shift covers various. This study focused on the factors and reason for this shift of Tamil people by its speakers into Indonesia language. The two aspects are in focus since they are highly assumed to be related in the study of the shift. It is of interest to note that the shift is suspected to be related aspects in the study.

#### **1.5 The Significance of the Study**

Theoretically, the study is considered to enrich the theories of language planning especially about Tamil language in Tamil community in Kampung Madras Medan, the factors influence Tamil language shift in Kampung Madras Medan, and the reason of Tamil language shift occur to the teenager.

Practically, the results of the study are considered to contribute information about language shift in Tamil language in the Tamil community members in some places for students, lecturers, researchers, and also the government. Secondly, the teachers, students, and Tamil can use it to support the reversing of the Tamil language shift in Kampung Madras Medan. Thirdly, the result of this study can be a previous knowledge for the next researcher who has intended to gain a deep insight especially in Tamil language in Tamil communities in Kampung Madras Medan. and generally in language planning theories. The last, in this case Pusat Bahasa, hopefully the result of this study helps them to make a well planned of language planning particularly to keep maintaining the Tamil language, so the language is not lost.