

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is not just an instrument for communication but also often an important, even constitutive feature of community's identity, Ferguson (2006:78). The main function of language is as an instrument for communication that links one to another individual, besides that language is a symbol of community's identity and it is part of a community which covers cultural identity. Fishman (1992:4) states that "the destruction of a language is the destruction of a rooted identity". The loss and the destruction of a language are similar with the loss and the destruction of ethnic identity. If a language already destructed then the culture will also be destructed, so that the community will lost their ethnic identity. May (2003:373) in Ferguson argues that "language may well be just one of many markers of identity in practice, it is often more than that". Thus, the function of a language is wider than only as communication device, it also covers cultural identity of an ethnic community.

Language maintenance is an effort in keeping the language alive by using that language continually in facing the competition among other language in society (Fishman, 1991). A language need to be maintained when the amount of speakers using that language decreases because the young generations prefer to use the dominant language in their society. In other words, language maintenance should be done when that language becomes a minority language in society. Mesthrie (1999:42) defines language maintenance as the continuing use of a language in the face of competition from regionally and socially powerful or numerically stronger language. It is clear that using the language continually in daily communication is one of the ways in maintaining language. By using that language frequently

when interact with people with the same language, that language can be developed and preserved.

Fishman (in Nancy : 2006), the study of language maintenance and language shift concerned with relationship between change (or stability) in language usage patterns and on going psychological, social or cultural process in population that utilize more than one speech variety for intra-group or inter-group process. A language needs to be maintained in order to save identity, for many reasons maintaining and preserving native language is crucial things to do because language is a sign to differentiate one community from other community. For example immigrant ethnic groups who live in a big city should keep using their heritage language when communicating with people from the same ethnic. That is only thing which can be a sign that they are different from other people surrounding and sign that they are people from that ethnic group. More specific example can be drawn from the use of ethnic language among multicultural society in an area for example Javanese people in Medan. Javanese people who live in Medan are immigrant from Java Island. In 1860s, the organized forced emigration from Java began it started with Deli district where Dutch planters had set up tobacco plantation in 1860s. Many Javanese people were sent to Medan as workers in Plantation Company which was governed by the colonial. Javanese people who live in Medan should keep using Javanese language when communicate with people from the same ethnic. In this case Javanese language is the minority language, if Javanese people did not preserve and maintain their language by using the language continually then the language can be endangered.

Endangered language can be defined as language in the process of dying or in other word endangered language is a threaten language; a language is potentially endangered if the children start preferring the dominant language and learn the obsolescing language imperfectly (Janse, 2003). A language will face its endanger level if children or young

speakers of that native language are no longer acquire their native language even though thousands of elderly speakers still spoken that language, as the consequences the native language will vanished by the time. This can be happen in all layers of community, children may easily being influenced by the development of communication media and other language such slank language which is become phenomena nowadays. The language used in electronic media such as TV and internet may become main issue which evokes this phenomenon. Therefore, language society should responsible to their language vitality; beside that it is family's responsibility to control children's language development by encouraging them in using the language. "There are six categories of language endangerment namely safe, at risk, disappearing, moribund, nearly extinction and extinction", UNESCO (2003:9). The levels of language endangerment namely, (1) a language is potentially endanger: if the children start to use dominant language than indigenous language, (2) endangered: if the youngest speakers are young adults and there are no or very view child speakers, (3) seriously endangered: if the youngest speakers are middle-aged or past middle-aged, (4) it is terminal endangered or moribund if there are no speakers left at all, (Wurm in Janse, 2003:1).

In this research, Javanese families in the regency of Deli Serdang specifically in the district of Desa Sambirejo Timur were immigrant, moreover in some area they are minority group. Holmes (2001:70) cites "the more domain in which minority language is used, the more chances there is to maintain it". Desa Sambirejo Timur is located on the east side of Medan City bordered with Desa Tembung and Bandar Klipah. This area is the boundary area of Medan City and Deli Serdang. The large of Desa Sambirejo Timur are about 429,892 Ha consist of 11 sub-district in Indonesian called as *dusun*. The profession of the society in Desa Sambirejo Timur are varies, such as civil servant, private employees, seller, construction laborers, and housemaids. Desa Sambirejo Timur was dominated by Javanese, some cultural celebration such as annual event which called as *ruwat desa* was held. This celebration means

purifying the village from disasters as the ancient did. In that event some traditional arts is performed, such as *wayang kulit*, *ludruk*, *ketoprak* and etc. This information is stated by an informant Suyono (75 years old) one of the elder in Desa Sambirejo Timur:

“Sambirejo Timur ini dulunya kebanyakan orang Jawa, kalau sekarang memang sudah banyak pendatang dari suku lain. Penduduk Jawa disini dulu buka lahan bebas yang gak dikuasai sama PTP. Benar-benar Jawa lah kampung ini dulu. Kalau setiap tahun disini selalu buat acara ruwat desa untuk tolak bala, kenduri juga rutin dilakukan disini. Sampai sekarang pun masih ada beberapa kesenian dari Jawa seperti ludruk, wayang kulit, angguk, ketoprak gamelan, tayyiban banyak lah. Tapi semenjak orde baru ini lah yang agak kurang, dulu ada organisasi Lekra (lembaga kebudayaan rakyat) karena dikira komunis jadi organisasi itu dilarang sama pemerintah. Jadi ya gini udah berkurang sekarang, walaupun masih ada tradisi itu disini tapi udah gak sesering jaman dulu”.

Based on the statements above, it can be concluded that the use of Javanese cultural arts in that area already decreased. As language and culture is closely related, the destructed of a culture will give impact to the destruction of that language. By the time, people from other ethnic group come to live in that area and the frequency of Javanese language spoken by society is decreased. Thus the writer thought that it is interesting to find out the factors and the dominant factor which affect language maintenance in Desa Sambirejo Timur.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

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

1. What is the dominant factor affect the language maintenance by Javanese families?
2. How did Javanese families maintain their language?
3. Why did they maintain their language?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Referring to the problems of the study, the objectives of this study were decided as follows:

1. This research was intended to find out the dominant factor affect the maintenance of Javanese language in Desa Sambirejo Timur.
2. This research was intended to find out how the Javanese families maintain Javanese language in Desa Sambirejo Timur.
3. This research was intended to find out the reason Javanese families maintain their language.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

This study is focused on the factors which affect Javanese language maintenance by Javanese families in Desa Sambirejo Timur.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

This study reveals the dominant factor affect Javanese language maintenance in Desa Sambirejo Timur Kecamatan Percut Sei Tuan. The finding of this study expected to be significantly relevant theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the research finding is expected to enrich the people's knowledge about language maintenance and the factors which

potentially affect Javanese families' language maintenance in Desa Sambirejo Timur. Moreover, this research is expected to be useful for further researchers to find more information about Javanese language maintenance in Medan particularly in Desa Sambirejo Timur. Practically, since this research focused on the factors of language maintenance by Javanese Families in Desa Sambirejo Timur, hopefully it helps to know the process of vernacular language maintenance and can be applied in the society as the references in keeping language maintenance.