

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Right now, six thousand languages are spoken on the planet. Three thousand of these-half of the world's known languages-are expected to die within the next century. Of the estimated remaining languages, 40 percent of these are threatened. Within only 100 years, 90 percent of the world's existing languages might be extinct or seriously threatened. "That leaves only about 600 languages, 10 percent of the world's total, that remain relatively secure-for now," writes linguist James Crawford.

In nature we find numerous kinds of communication systems, many of which appear to be unique to their possessors, and one of them is the language of the human species. Basically, the purpose of communication is the preservation, growth, and development of the species (Smith and Miller 1968:265). Without a language the society can not be formed and there will be no community. It is agreed that language can not be separated from culture, as language is the product of the culture. Language is holistically part and parcel of human culture which not properly protected and propagated can lose its true nature and can equally deteriorate like every other misshandled or unprotected culture. It serves as people's way of life, their heritage and national identity.

According to UNESCO data, there are 6,900 languages and 2,500 of them in all over the world will shift and endangered. In 2001, there are 900 languages will death and based on the new data, there are only 199 languages in the world will be mastered by a dozen of people. Many linguists predict that by the next century, about half of the world's five or six thousand

languages will be extinct (*Nettle and Romaine 2007*).

Nowadays, vernaculars in Indonesia as mother tongue face a challenge against the existence of Indonesian language and foreign language. Many vernaculars in Indonesia shifted even endangered. As it was informed in Kompas (2007) about 726 of 746 vernaculars in Indonesia are endangered. Only 13 vernaculars have more than one million language users. They are Javanese, Bataknese, Sundanese, Balinese and many more ethnics groups.

Indonesia is multilingual country, language shift potentially happen in vernaculars in Indonesia. Siregar (1998) found that language shift happen in youth generation bilingual society in Medan. According to the data from BPS, the population of ethnics group in Medan until 1999 is 2,035,200 people live in 21 distric and 151 sub distric. Among of them, they are 20,93 % Bataknese and only 4,10 % are Karonese (BPS,1999:15).

Speaking about one of the ethnics groups is Batak. Batak can be devided into 6 parts. They are Batak Karo, Batak Toba, Batak Simalungun, Batak Mandailing, Batak Angkola and Batak Pakpak. The writer of this study finds it is important to conduct a study on Karo language shift in mixed marriages families.

Speaking about Karonese, They live in some distric (Kabupaten) in North Sumatera, such as Karo Distric ( Berastagi and Kabanjahe), Deli Serdang Distric, and Langkat Distric. In addition to the residential areas that have been described above, Medan is the most favourite place for them to stay/live in. In Medan, there are some subdistric (Kecamatan) which are populated by Karonese, such as: Medan Tuntungan, Medan Selayang, Medan Johor, Denai, Medan Kota, Medan Area, Medan Maimun, Medan Polonia, Medan Baru, Sunggal, Medan Helvetia, Medan Petisah, Medan Barat, Medan Timur, Perjuangan, Medan Deli, Medan

Tembung, Medan Belawan, Medan Labuhan and Medan Marelan sub distric (BPS,2000). Based on the data above, the most populated place which are lived by Karonese namely Medan Tuntungan, Medan Selayang and Medan Johor sub distric. All Karonese have been living in these area for long time ago. They immigrate from Berastagi, Kabanjahe, Deliserdang and Langkat for many reason such as working, trading, studying or many other things.

In these place, they socialized with many people who are from other ethnics. In case, a man from Karonese is looking for a non karonese woman or a Karonese woman is looking for a non karonese man then they got married with. We classified their family into intermarriage families because they are different ethnic and culture.

According to Holmes (1992:29), "People may select a particular variety of code because it makes it easier to discuss a particular topic, regardless of where they are speaking". Therefore, the members of the multiethnic speech communities have to decide on what language to use when they are in different domains. At home, people often discuss work or school, for instance, using the language associated with those domains, rather than the language of the family domain. When people from different ethnicity share more than one language, the question of the appropriate choice of language arises because different speech communities have a range of linguistic variation. In these cases, a speaker must choose which set of variants to use with in a single language in any given situation.

Therefore, when we consider within language variation to be a kind of language choice problems, then language choice is possible for monolingual speakers as well as bilinguals (Romaine,1994,181). Certain social factors such as the participants, domain, the function and the topic of the interaction, social distance, the status relationship between people, features of the setting and the dimension of formality turn out to be important in

accounting for language choice in many different of kinds of speech communities (Holmes,1992).

This thesis is a study of language shift and maintenance in mixed marriages in Karonese families. Broadly the goals of this thesis are as follows: firstly, to assess the degree of language shift in Karonese families; Secondly, to know the phenomenon of language shift or maintenance that occurs in mixed – marriages in Karonese families. Karonese man has significance influenced language shift than the women who are from Karonese. Thirdly, in presenting these results; to contribute to the area of language shift and maintenance.

Language shift (LS) and language maintenance (LM) in mixed – marriages in Karonese that occurs in their daily conversation. I will consider what motivates the perceived processes of language shift from Karonese as first language (L1) to another ethnics languages as L1 in a relatively short time. I will attempt to determine what the characterising features of such a process of language shift may be. I found the families especially mixed – marriages families speak one's ethnic language or Bahasa Indonesia to their family's member. They have some reasons why they chose one ethnics language or Bahasa Indonesia as their united communication in their family. The first reason, the couples do not use their ethnics languages to communicate with their family's members at home. They use Indonesia language in their communication at home. Second, one of the couples do not know how to say well or pronounce their ethnics languages. For instance, the man from Karonese (KM) married with the woman from Nias (NW). His wife do not know well how to speak Karo languages so the couple deal with Indonesian language as their language. The third, they used one ethnics language to communicate. For example, when they lived in Karonese environment father is from Karonese and mother is from Nias (NW). Because of father do not know how to speak Nias and the mother can speak Karo, they agree to speak Karo language at home. This situation explained that Karo language can be maintain. Another case, father is

from Karonese and mother is from Nias. Mother do not know how to speak Karo but both of them know Indonesian language so they agreed to speak Indonesian language.

### **1.2. Problem of the Study**

Based on the previous background the problems are formulated as the following :

1. What factors of Karonese of mixed – marriages families that language shift occurs?
2. What effects of language Shift in Karonese occurs in mixed – marriages families?
3. What factors would the Karonese do to maintain Karo Language in mixed – marriage families?

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

In relation to the previous problems the objectives of the study are:

1. To know the Factors of Karonese of mixed – marriages families that language shift occurs.
2. To know the effects of language shift in Karonese in mixed – marriages families.
3. To see what factors would the Karonese do to maintain Karo language in mixed – marriages families.

### **1.4. The Scope of the study**

A study on language shift and language maintenance in intermarriage families in Kwala Bekala should be very interesting and it is closely related to language planning.

In intermarriage families, the writer only took 4 groups of families which is the most popular in that place. They are Karonese and Tobanese; Karonese and Niasnese; Karonese and Javanese; Karonese and Pakpaknese.

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

After conducting this study, it is hoped significantly relevant to theoretically and practical aspects. Theoretically, this research finding hoped to be useful for the next researcher who will do an in depth research dealing about language maintenance and shift or any research about Karo language. Practically, since this research focuses on Karo language which is directly connected to the culture and existence, it is hoped to be useful for all Karonese to realize that it is important to maintain their language in order to keep the existence of their ethnic group.

