

## **Identification on Balinese Maintenance Factors: A Case Study Conducted to Ten Balinese Families in Singaraja**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This qualitative study aimed at identifying the reasons or the factors (environmental and personal) influencing ten Balinese families to use a certain language as their first language and identifying the number of ten Balinese families who are still using Balinese as their first language. The subjects of the study were ten Balinese families in Singaraja town in Buleleng regency. They were selected randomly. The data collected using the techniques of observation and interview. The obtained data were interpreted and discussed descriptively. From the ten Balinese families, five of them used Balinese as their first language and as their daily conversational tool with the personal factors as the most influencing factor.

*Key terms: Balinese Maintenance Factor, Personal Factor, and Environmental Factor*

### **1. Introduction**

Languages that exist in Indonesia can be classified into three, namely local languages, Indonesian (as the national language), and foreign languages. Local languages are varied and spoken only in certain particular areas of Indonesia. They are used as the local identity which are unique and represent the culture of the areas or the local communities. There are also some foreign languages spoken in Indonesia, such as English, Deutsche, French, Japanese, Arabic, and Chinese. The existence and the development of foreign languages have significant impact on the existence and the development of the local languages themselves, either positive or negative. The positive impacts will not be a matter or problem, but the negative ones should be paid more attention in order not to be a threat for the existence of the local language. The most dangerous impact is the extinction of the local languages which actually need to be maintained through various ways.

One of those ways can be through the establishment of language policy which creates and regulates programs as an effort to maintain the local languages. Local language maintenance requires a big effort to avoid the language from being extinct. Fishman (2010) proposed two

major reasons why language maintenance is important, namely: because of local identity and avoidance from extinction.

Language maintenance can be done in three levels (Fulton, 2011). The first is in the *macro* level in which government takes the responsibilities to establish a policy and program as an effort to maintain the local and national languages. The second is in the *meso* level. It is an effort to maintain a language in the level of institution such as through programs established by educational department. And the third is in the *micro* level, which is done in the scope of family or individual needs.

The starting point to maintain the local language should be in micro level in which individual particularly the user of a local language has an awareness of the importance of his local language to be maintained. Say for example Balinese people nowadays who are very much influenced by the development of tourism and technology. Many of them begin leaving their local language that is Balinese to be used as their mother tongue. Many parents prefer introducing and using other languages such as Bahasa or foreign language such as English to their children. This phenomenon can easily be seen in every regency and area in Bali. Therefore, this present study was conducted to find out factors contributing to the maintenance of Balinese among Balinese people.

## **2. Research Methodology**

This study was a qualitative study in a form of case study whereby it aimed at describing a natural and factual case that became the factors influencing Balinese families in choosing certain language as their children's first language.

The subjects were ten Balinese families in Singaraja town in Buleleng regency in Bali. They were selected randomly as the subjects of this study. Data were collected using observation notes and voice recorder during the interview.

After the data were gathered, as what had been stated previously, they were interpreted and discussed descriptively.

## **3. Findings**

The following table depicts the summary of the research findings. Among 10 families, there as many as 4 families choose Bahasa Indonesia as their main medium of communication

thereby it becomes the mother tongue of their children. The other 6 families prefer speaking Balinese with their children in their daily communication.

The table also shows that both factors: environment and personal factors do not influence the language choice used in the family as both factors appeared in both language choices.

*Table 1. The Summary of the Research Result*

Cases	First Language	Reasons	Factor
F1	Bahasa Indonesia (Bahasa)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They live in the modern community in which Bahasa is used more often than Balinese</li> <li>- They are accustomed to use Bahasa in their office.</li> </ul>	Environment
F2	Bahasa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They lack of ability to speak Balinese.</li> <li>- By introducing Bahasa they expect that their son will be a polite person.</li> </ul>	Personal
F3	Bahasa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They use Bahasa because of the influence of their environment (police dormitory) in which people from other areas of Bali also live.</li> </ul>	Environment
F4	Balinese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They are proud of speaking using Balinese because they are purely Balinese people.</li> <li>- They are shy to use Bahasa Indonesia to communicate each other.</li> </ul>	Personal
F5	Balinese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bahasa is only appropriate to be used by people in higher status and by those who are well educated.</li> </ul>	Personal
F6	Balinese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The language they use to communicate depends on the environment in which they interact with the people.</li> <li>- Balinese is important to maintain Balinese culture as well as morality of her children.</li> </ul>	Environment
F7	Balinese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- She needs Balinese to teach Hindu to her children as Hindu is their religion and Balinese is commonly used in every ritual and ceremony which are based on Hinduism.</li> <li>- She cannot avoid that their environment really influence the language they use in interacting among the people in the same environment or</li> </ul>	Environment as well as personal

		with other people.	
F8	Balinese	- It is a must for them to be able to speak using higher Balinese due to their caste and because of the needs of communicating among people who have the same level of Balinese caste.	Personal
		- They prefer using Bahasa to Balinese because Balinese sounds less prestigious than Bahasa.	
F9	Bahasa	- Balinese is mostly used by people who have lower social class.	Personal
		- Bahasa is easier to be taught to their daughter.	
F10	Bahasa	- Their first language is Bahasa because they live in police dormitory in which many people from various ethnics live.	Environment

The findings are described based on the observation and interviews results. When the researcher observed the first family (F1), the researcher found the fact that the parents (the father & the mother) were both civil employees and lived in the center of the town that was on Jl. Gajah Mada Singaraja with their three children. They lived in a modern community in which most of the people worked as civil employees and had more modern lifestyle. What is meant by modern lifestyle was that most of them stayed in a house with modern style, had a high sophisticated transportations such as cars and motorcycles. Most of them were also university students so it could be said that they had different ways of thinking compared to those people who just stayed at home, were unemployed and less educated.

In this family, the researcher observed that the parents always used Bahasa or Indonesian when talking to their children. Although they were purely Balinese people but they seldom expressed opinions, ideas and certain expressions in Balinese. Sometimes, they spoke Balinese when they were in a certain situation such as the parents were angry to the children because of their annoying behaviors and when the children got offended by the parents and sometimes fought against each other. The Balinese that they used when they were in these situations is the low variety of Balinese. The low variety of Balinese is often considered rude.

After doing a full day observation in this family, the researcher interviewed the parents. Both parents were very cooperative and were very serious and paid attention to the researcher.

They answered and responded every question seriously and obviously without any hesitation. The researcher asked the father first as the head of the family. The interview was recorded using mini tape recorder, and the result of the interview was transcribed and could be seen in appendix 01. The result of the interview was the father said that they used Bahasa to their children as their first language. Actually, both of them (the parents) were able to speak Balinese whether high or low variety of Balinese. But the reason was that they were more comfortable using Bahasa because they lived in the modern community in which Bahasa was used more often than Balinese. Therefore, to ease their children communicate and interact with their neighbor and in the community they preferred to use Bahasa. Additionally, the mother responded and said that they used Bahasa because they were accustomed to use Bahasa in their office although sometimes they used Balinese but the frequency was less than using Bahasa.

The second family (F2) consisted of the father, the mother and a son. This family lived in Banyuning village, part of Singaraja town. They were a new family of which the father was a civil employee while the mother was a housewife who took care of her son who was one year old and did the house works as her daily job. The parents seemed trying to talk to their son using Bahasa although their son was not able to speak as well as an older child yet. However, the son seemed understand what were being said by his parents which can be seen from his gestures and facial expressions every time his parents talked to him.

The languages that were used among the parents were mostly Bahasa with little Balinese (low variety of Balinese). The interview was done and the result showed that the reasons of why they used Bahasa to their son were first they admitted that they lacked of ability to speak Balinese particularly the high variety of Balinese. They accustomed to speak in the low variety of Balinese. Most of Buleleng (Singaraja) people speak this type of Balinese. They said that they did not want to use this kind of Balinese because it sounded impolite or rude. So, by introducing Bahasa they expected that their son would be a polite person, and they also admitted that it was impossible to introduce high variety of Balinese to their son due to their lack in speaking this type of Balinese.

The third family (F3) lived in Taman Sari area exactly in Asrama Polisi Kampung Tinggi which was also a part of Singaraja town. The family consisted of the father, the mother, and three daughters. The father was a policeman, the mother was a housewife, two of their daughters were university students and the other was a junior high school student. The parents used Bahasa when

talking to their children. While when they spoke to each other (among parents), they used mixed languages; sometimes using Bahasa and sometimes using Balinese. When they were interviewed they admitted that they introduced Bahasa to their children as their children's first language. They said that because they were living in the environment (Police Dormitory) in which policeman and policewoman community lived, they were influenced to speak using Bahasa. It was because the community consisted of not only people from Bali, but also from other areas outside Bali such as Flores, Papua, Java, etc. When the researcher tried to confirm the exact reason whether they were influenced by the father's occupation as a policeman or by the environment in which they lived, the father straightly and obviously stated that they used Bahasa because of the influence of their environment not because of his occupation.

The fourth family (F4) was a big family which consisted of the father, the mother, five daughters, and two sons. They lived in Banyuning village. The father was a teacher and the mother was a tailor. Some of their children were civil employees and some were university students and senior high school students. During the observation, the researcher seldom met the father because besides as a teacher of an elementary school, he was also one of the elderly (*Ketua RT*) in the village. Although he was a teacher and was one of the important elderly in the village, he spoke using low variety of Balinese when talking to his wife and his children. The researcher observed that occasionally, the father talked with his guests who asked for his signature to make an identity card (KTP). In this situation, the father spoke using high variety of Balinese. All the family members spoke using low variety of Balinese to each other.

The result of the interview made it clear that the language used as their first language was Balinese. The father as the head of the family wisely explained the reasons why they used Balinese. He stated that Balinese was a language heritage by their ancestors and had to be maintained. He stated that he tried to teach their children to be proud of being Balinese particularly being Buleleng people. He added that although Buleleng people mostly spoke low variety of Balinese and sometimes were considered rude or impolite, they were not as what was stereotyped. The way the Buleleng people spoke is something historical. When the researcher tried to confirm about the influence of the environment toward the language that they had chosen as their first language, the father clearly responded that they were not influenced by their environment. Although they lived in a modern community and many of their neighbors spoke Bahasa, they kept speaking using Balinese. They were proud speaking using Balinese.

The fifth family (F5) was also a big family which consisted of the father, the mother, three daughters and four sons. They lived in Penglatan village. The father was a farmer and the mother was a vegetable seller in a traditional market in Singaraja. Their children were about 21 to 2 years old. The researcher found that the parents and their children spoke Balinese to each other with Penglatan accent and dialect. The researcher never heard any other language than Balinese spoken by all members of the family.

The researcher could not interview the father as the head of the family. It was because the father was not at his house. So, the researcher interviewed the mother. She said that she preferred to use Balinese as their first language. She admitted that they (all members of the family) were shy to use Bahasa to communicate with each other. She added that Bahasa is only appropriate to be used by people in higher status and by those who are well educated. She said that her husband was only a farmer and they were not rich people, so they felt that Balinese was more suitable for them rather than Bahasa.

The sixth family (F6) lived in Banyuning village. The family consisted of the father who was a policeman, the mother who was a housewife, and three daughters who respectively were a policewoman, a bank officer, and a university student. They often used Balinese as well as Bahasa. During the observation, the researcher felt difficult to predict their first language. It seemed that the use of both languages by the family was balance. During the interview, the father was not at home; hence only the mother was interviewed and accompanied by one of her daughters who was a policewoman. The mother clarified that she and her husband always introduced Balinese to their children at the first time, so, Balinese was their first language as well as their mother tongue.

The researcher asked a question of why they sometimes used Bahasa and sometimes used Balinese to communicate among the members of the family. The mother could not tell the reasons to the researcher clearly, but fortunately, her daughter helped her by explaining the reason clearly to the researcher. She said that they were influenced by the people they interacted with. Further, she clarified that when they interacted with their neighbors or people in their environment in Banyuning, they often used Balinese. It is because the community in which they lived consisted of people from low to middle social status who mostly spoke low variety of Balinese. However, when they were in the place in which they were working or studying, they used Bahasa to communicate because the people surrounded them mostly spoke in Bahasa.

Therefore she confirmed and clarified that the language they used to communicate depended on the environment in which they interacted with other people.

The seventh Family (F7) lived in Banyuasri sub-district. The family consisted of a single parent (mother), a son and a daughter. The mother has become a single parent (divorced) since a year ago. She is a civil employee in Social Department. During the observation, the researcher noticed that the language that they used to communicate to each other was Balinese; however the language often switched to Bahasa.

The researcher used Bahasa when conducting the interview. The researcher interviewed the mother asking what her children's mother tongue or the first language was. Firstly, she was confuse and seemed did not understand the question because the term '*bahasa ibu*' (*mother tongue*) was a new term for her. Due to this situation, the researcher explained the term as clear as possible until she really understood the meaning of the term. After explaining the term, finally, she confirmed that their mother tongue and first language is Balinese. The next question was given to her that it is about the reason of why she introduced Balinese as their mother tongue and as the language that firstly introduced to her children. She explained that she realized that they are all Balinese people, purely Balinese people. She said that Balinese is important to maintained Balinese culture as well as morality of her children. She explained to the researcher that she needs Balinese to teach Hindu to her children as their religion which is related to Balinese culture which is applied to every rituals and ceremony based on Hinduism.

An additional question was given by the researcher because the researcher thought that this question was needed to collect data that is significant. The question was about why they sometime switch the language into Bahasa. The answer given by the subject (in this case was the mother) was really satisfying. She clearly answered that it was because the people in their surroundings or their home environment communicate mostly using Bahasa. She cannot avoid that it was really influencing the language they used in interacting whether among them or with other people.

The eighth family (F8) consists of father, mother, and a daughter. They live in Seririt sub-district. They have a higher caste than other families that become the subjects of the study. The father is a civil employee, the mother is a housewife, and the daughter is elementary school student. During the observation, the researcher observed that they communicated each other using high Balinese varieties. The interview was done between the researcher and the father. The

researcher asked the first question that was about the language that the parents firstly introduced to their daughter, and he shortly answer that they used Balinese as their daughter first language and mother tongue because they are Balinese people. The interview continued and had the result that they use Balinese because they are *menak people* (people have a high caste in Bali). Further he added that although they live in modern environment in which the people mostly use low variety of Balinese and Bahasa, they would not use those languages to communicate among the family members. He said that it is a must for them to be able to speak using the higher Balinese variety due to the caste and because of the needs of communicating among people who have the same level of Balinese caste.

The ninth family (F9) consists of father who is an elementary teacher, mother who is a housewife and their two years old daughter. They live in Penarukan area in Singaraja Town. The parents communicated each other mostly using Bahasa and less switching into Balinese. When they talked to their daughter, they used Bahasa. The researcher conducted the interview with the father and the mother. The father said that although they are Balinese people, but they prefer using Bahasa to Balinese because Balinese sounds less prestigious than Bahasa. The mother added that Balinese is mostly used by people who have lower social class. They said that Bahasa is easier to be taught to their daughter.

The tenth family (F10) consists of father, mother, three sons and a daughter. They live in a police dormitory in Kubutambahan. The father is a policeman and the mother is a housewife. The observation result showed that they used Bahasa to communicate each other. The interview was done between the researcher and the father and the result was that their first language is Bahasa because they live in police dormitory in which many people from various ethnics lived. Therefore they use Bahasa to ease them to communicate and interact with those people.

#### **4. Discussion**

Every family has different case in terms of the language that the parents introduced firstly to their children and the factor which took significant role and mostly influenced the parents to use and introduce a certain language to their children. In this discussion, the researcher would discuss the research results in every case as follows; however, it is preceded by the summary of the research result in the form of table.

In the case of F1, F3, and F10 the first language and the language that was used to communicate among the family members is Bahasa. The reasons were categorized as environmental factor that mostly influenced them to choose Bahasa rather than Balinese although they are Balinese people. In the case of F2 and F9, the language that they used as their first language and as a medium to interact or communicate was the same as in the case F1, F3, and F10. However, the reasons were categorized as personal factor because in the case of F2 for instance, it is related to the competence or ability of the users of the language and in the case of F9; it is related to personal judgment or assumption toward Balinese language itself.

In the case of F6 and F7, the first language and the language that was used to communicate by the subjects was Balinese and the reasons were categorized as environmental factor. Meanwhile, in the case of F4, F5, F7 and F8, the Balinese was still being used by the subjects but the reasons tended to be categorized as personal factor.

From the ten subjects of the study, five of them were using Bahasa as their first language and as a means for their communication and five of the ten subjects were still using Balinese. It could clearly be said that only 50% of the subjects that still maintain Balinese to be used as their mother tongue both because of environmental and personal factors but the most influencing is the personal factor. It is very dangerous for the existence of Balinese language itself because the users of Balinese in this case are Balinese people begin to leave their mother tongue. It is unknown how long Balinese can exist. It is not impossible that if Balinese people do not realize the importance of their mother tongue and do not do something to maintain it, the Balinese language could extinct.

## **5. Conclusion**

Based on the discussion of the research result, it can be concluded that 50% of Balinese people use Bahasa as their first language and the language that they used to communicate among the family members. The factor that was mostly influencing them to use Bahasa was the personal factor rather than environmental factor. The study found that only 50% of Balinese family under the study still used Balinese and were mostly influenced by the personal factor rather than environmental factor.

It needs to pay more attention on the existence of Balinese language that begins to be threat by the existence of other languages. Balinese people should begin to think how to maintain their mother tongue as the language heritage by their ancestor and as their local identity.

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