

MAINTAINABILITY OF BAHASA MALAYSIA BY MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN MEDAN

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ABSTRACT

The background of this research was how Malaysian students maintain their Malaysian language in Medan even when they were far from their language domain. When a certain language speaker moved to other area which use different language and interact with them, they tend to adopt that new language. The objectives of this study were to find what factors that induce maintainability of Malaysian language by Malaysian students in Medan, and how is the maintainability of Malaysian language realized by Malaysian students in Medan and also why the maintainability of Malaysian language is the way it does. This research used descriptive research by giving the Malaysian students a questionnaire and interviewing them. There were 21 Malaysian students as informants, 16 men and 5 women. It was found that the maintainability happened because Malaysian students were living in group, so they still use Malaysian language regularly. Even when they were far from Malaysian language domain, they still accessed Malaysian language media such as music, news, TV, radio etc regularly and still active in chatting application with their friends who are still living in Malaysia and use Malaysian language. They realized they maintainability of Malaysian language by joining Malaysian community, where many Malaysian students gather and speak in Malay, they also have good language attitude towards Malaysian language. Those happened because when they lived in a foreign environment they tried to find other Malaysian students to feel like home. That makes them living together with other Malaysian students in group.

Keywords: *language maintainability, malay language, by malaysian students in medan*

ABSTRAK

Latar belakang penelitian ini adalah bagaimana siswa Malaysia mempertahankan bahasa Malaysia mereka di Medan bahkan ketika mereka jauh dari domain bahasa mereka. Ketika seorang penutur bahasa tertentu pindah ke daerah lain yang menggunakan bahasa yang berbeda dan berinteraksi dengan mereka, mereka

cenderung mengadopsi bahasa baru itu. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan faktor-faktor apa yang mendorong pemeliharaan bahasa Malaysia oleh siswa Malaysia di Medan, dan bagaimana kemampuan pemeliharaan bahasa Malaysia direalisasikan oleh siswa Malaysia di Medan dan juga mengapa pemeliharaan bahasa Malaysia adalah cara dilakukannya. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian deskriptif dengan memberikan siswa Malaysia kuesioner dan mewawancarai mereka. Ada 21 siswa Malaysia sebagai informan, 16 pria dan 5 wanita. Ditemukan bahwa pemeliharaan terjadi karena siswa Malaysia tinggal dalam kelompok, sehingga mereka masih menggunakan bahasa Malaysia secara teratur. Bahkan ketika mereka jauh dari domain bahasa Malaysia, mereka masih mengakses media berbahasa Malaysia seperti musik, berita, TV, radio dll secara teratur dan masih aktif dalam aplikasi chatting dengan teman-teman mereka yang masih tinggal di Malaysia dan menggunakan bahasa Malaysia. Mereka menyadari bahwa mereka dapat mempertahankan bahasa Malaysia dengan bergabung dengan komunitas Malaysia, di mana banyak siswa Malaysia berkumpul dan berbicara dalam bahasa Melayu, mereka juga memiliki sikap bahasa yang baik terhadap bahasa Malaysia. Itu terjadi karena ketika mereka tinggal di lingkungan asing mereka berusaha mencari siswa Malaysia lainnya untuk jatuh seperti rumah. Itu membuat mereka hidup bersama dengan siswa Malaysia lainnya dalam kelompok.

Kata kunci: maintainability bahasa, bahasa melayu, oleh pelajar malaysia di medan

INTRODUCTION

The existence of language cannot be separated from human life. According to Holmes (1992), every language represents the temple in which the speaker's soul is his/her devotee. It seems that everything related to human life in the society involves language because it is through the language that interaction among tribes, ethnic groups, and religions can happen. However, language is not always able to maintain by the ethnic group especially in the multilingual societies. People used language as a means of thinking and feeling, as well as a means of expressing thought and feeling in a society. There are thousands of languages used in the world. It is because language is a product of culture, which means that different cultures

many have different cultures may have different languages or different dialects. It is also functioned to show their existence, identity and culture in the society. On the 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) stated that people keep maintaining their language in order to create cultural diversity, keep ethnic identity, enable social adaptability, increasing security for the children psychological, and increase the linguistic sensitively.

The efforts in retaining a language in order not to shift which may possibly cause language endangerment are not easy to do

these days. It is due to the language contact because the high of the mobilization of the people. That's why it is needed such good of strategy to solve it. The strategy is the policy which will be given to the conceptual decision or political decision, to solve the language problem at the national level so that it into daily use and special use language. Daily use language is the language for communication among them for their daily needs while special use language is the one for special needs other than daily need such as talking on a certain event.

In Sumatera, especially in Aceh and Medan, there are a number of Malaysian students who are registered as college students. In Aceh for example, they chose to study at IAIN Ar-Raniry because they want to study theologies field. Not only in Aceh, in Medan (especially in UIN), they are also registered as students in some fields that has relationship with theology. The interesting one is they went to study there in a group. They live in the same dorm and the location not quite far from the campus. Sumarsono (1990) found that the residential areas are one of factors of language maintainability. Even the users are minority, but if they live in the same residential areas, they are able to maintain their physic, economic and culture.

In addition, from one of the lecturer there, the writer got information that sometimes, they still use their native language in classroom when they answer the question. For example when they answer the question, they use their native language that there are some

differences in pronunciation and also meaning. For example “*kami darikumpulanenamakanmembentang kanpresentasekami...*”. In Indonesia, in formal situation such as in school or university, the students should speak Bahasa Indonesia. Even though some words have the same meaning (arbitrer) but there are some words that has the same pronunciation but different meaning such as “senang” (in Bahasa) means difficult in Malay.

Relationships in communication between communities will increase the role of a group of students in the teaching and learning process in a city / region Siahaan V & Silitonga A (2020), Simangunsong, Damanik D & Panjaitan J (2020), Purba D & Sihobing H (2020).

In daily conversation, they still use their own language each other. As Thomas (2004:158) stated that how you talk, along with other kinds of social codes such as how you dress or how you behave, is an important way of displaying who you are; in other words, of indicating your social identity. When a group of people do not maintainability their language anymore, all their kinds of social codes are missing. Identity of a certain culture is showed thorough among others by language use includes the language use in the society.

Based on the phenomenon above, the writer would like to study about language maintenance in Malaysian students who live in Medan especially who study at UIN.

Based on the background of the study, the problems to be

investigated are formulated as follows:

- (1) What factors induce maintainability of the Malaysia language by Malaysian students in Medan?
- (2) How is maintainability of the Malaysia language realized by Malaysian students in Medan?
- (3) Why does the maintainability of Malaysia language remain in the way it does?

In relationship to the problem, the objectives of the study are:

- (1) to describe the factors of Malaysia language maintainability of Malaysian students in Medan.
- (2) to investigate the realizations of Malaysia language maintainability of the Malaysian students in Medan.

to reason of maintainability remains among Malaysian students in Medan.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Language maintainability deals with using a language continuously. It is used in daily conversation in its home town or in the other places. To maintain it, the users choose to live together in the same dorm or same residential areas. It is obvious that the usage of language continuously will affect language maintainability. The phenomenon of this maintainability makes the writer interested about Malay students in UIN of North Sumatera. This phenomenon guides the writer to do the study about language maintainability of Malaysian students.

As some related studies explained that language maintenance relates to

some factors such as intermarriage, often visiting homeland, and also environment. In this case, the maintainability deals with language attitude of using the language. The writer would like to study about them with Malaysian students as the subject. Therefore, she applied three problems of the study that discuss about language maintenance factors, the realization of language maintenance and also explore the cause of this phenomenon.

The data were collected by using questioner and documentation. Questioner will be given to the participant which concern to the language maintenance and language attitude. Meanwhile the documentation will support the questioner and documentation in documentary form. The data were analyzed through ethno linguistic analysis.

The Factors of Language Maintenance

Linguistic research can also be impacted by community opinions about who should be involved in the language itself. Some communities feel that their language is sacred and do not want it to be available to people from the outside. The Pueblo Indians, for example, have restrictions on who can know and use certain parts of the language. Debenport (2009) discusses her work with the Indians of Sandia Pueblo in New Mexico, whose recent decision to start writing down their language, Southern Tiwa, has led to concerns that doing so will make it available to those who should not have access to it. Language maintenance commonly occur in the situation of a

threatened language is supposed to be a minority language. Language maintenance actually is the process of vitalization in a group vernacular as their mother tongue. There is advance of language maintenance that is positive condition for threatened cultural groups.

The maintenance of a language, such as Malay needs the maintenance of speakers. Holmes (2001:63) states briefly that there are some other factors that can maintain a language, they are:

1. By living together and each other frequently. To do such a thing, the speakers of the language use their language as they are similar with their background. A minority group family should live in one place and have their routines together in order to maintain the language.
2. By visiting homeland continuously. Interaction and communication with other family in homeland may increase the children to maintain their local language to their ability in communicating and interacting by using the language in their daily lives.
3. In addition, intra-marriage family help maintain the language of the minority. They are from the same ethnic the same language and they use the language at home in everyday activities.

The Language use in Family Domain

A family consist of father, mother, and children, is an important part in a community. Family is the

basic unit of a community. Communication and interaction is necessary for a family between parents and children. It is also necessary that a family make contact with other family in their community so that a language is still used among them. Yamamoto (2001:7) states that when the minority language speaking parents adhere to the minority language, he/she can 1) provide the child with the maximum quantity of exposure to the language; 2) ensure the child's exposure to the widest range of vocabulary and grammatical structures of the language; 3) allow the language to develop appropriately with age, from simple to complex through natural interactions; 4) detect under developer areas of the language.

Family may have an important role in maintaining a language, there should be natural process to the children learn in language or a vernacular language, such as: Acehness language through the family Holmes (2001:32) clarifies that the use of vernacular language at home is also a go reason for a nuclear extended family to keep using their language at home as this still help to maintain the language. In this case, the parents' attitude is required.

The Language Use in Neighborhood Domain

The other factor concerning with the maintenance of a certain language is the need for communication with the other family, such as: neighborhood. Parent should realized that their language is the vital symbol in a family. As Thomas (2004:158) stated

that how you talk, along with other kinds of social codes such as how you dress or how you behave, is an important way of displaying who you are; in other words, of indicating your social identity. When Malaysian Students in Medan do not use their language anymore, all their kinds of social codes are missing. It is very dangerous if it happens to them. Identity of a certain culture is showed through among others by language use.

The Language Use in Workplace Domain

Communication and interaction between the language users may happen anywhere, especially in their work. As Holmes (2001: 58) stated that obtaining work is the most obvious of a language as the official language, much emphasis on encouraging the people to master a language. One domain of language uses is in workplace. The Acehnese speakers usually use Aceh language with the same ethnic in their work. They use it because they want to share their feelings, opinions, or something. They use Malay language with other language because they reflect any effort to language maintenance or language revitalization. This is such kind of setting of choice of language they used in their workplace.

The choice of what languages are used by the speakers of the same language users reflects any effort of language maintenance of language revitalization. Parents may communicate and interact with their partners in their workplace. Since there are not homogenous use of language in the workplace there will

be sometimes problems in such 'a situation. The majority of a certain ethnic workers dominate the community by their own language. But when a minority language in the workplace can dominate a situation, the speakers of the language may have alternatives in using a language. It depends on the speakers' attitudes towards their own language. If there is positive attitude towards their language, they may dominate the communication with their language, the language whether majority or minority language will become weak. Optionally, there is usually a impartial language in such situation as a medium of communication among different ethnic groups in workplace.

The Effort in Language Maintenance

Language maintenance means the continued use of an indigenous language in a majority language context. The process of language maintenance refers to the retention of language and its transmission over several generations. The scholarship on language maintenance, as Fishman (2000) has studied a variety of language contexts around the world in which speakers of indigenous languages have struggled to preserve their languages. There are some efforts in maintaining a language so that the language will survive longer. It is vital that some languages will possibly be maintained from one generation to another only through one or two individuals in every generation who learn and maintain it.

The efforts in maintaining a language in order not to shift which

may possibly cause language endangerment are not easy to do these days. It is due to the language contact because the high of the mobilization of the people. That's why it is needed such good of strategy to solve it. The strategy is the policy which will be given to the conceptual decision or political decision, to solve the language problem at the national level so that it can be maintained or developed.

The efforts of language maintenance are the process of language revitalization. In language planning the process of language revitalization is normally precedes language revival. It is necessary to make vital a minority language where there has been multilingualism among the language users in the social groups of a community.

Language is a symbol of identity which is used among the group of people. Holmes (2001:67) states that when a group values their distinct identity highly and regards language as an important symbol of that identity. She (2001: 63) also adds where language is considered an important symbol of a minority group's identity, for example, the language is likely to be maintained longer.

The Language Revitalization

Language revitalization relates with the process of giving vitality to the language so that the language becomes vital. Saragih (2010) says that revitalization is the process of giving language vitality which is endangered so that the language is fulfilled with its function for its speakers. When an indigenous

language is in the condition of threatened it is necessary to do the revitalization or maintenance. circumvent the above problems by proposing that children acquire language because of the principles of identification. The children, during this period, identify with mother and, therefore, begin to imitate the vocal behavior of the mother. The third theory proposes that the capacities for language acquisition are structurally present at birth and that maturation of these structures brings about changes in the child's use of language throughout the acquisition period.

DATA ANALYSIS

After collecting the data and analyzing it, it were found that Malaysian students were living in group with other Malaysian students, they also had Malaysian students organization and using media (radio, magazine, TV) in Malay language that makes them contacted with Malay language daily and regularly that affected the maintainability of Malay language in Medan.

There were twenty one participants of the questionnaire; there were five females and 16 males. All identified as Malaysian students who study in Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara. That is able to be seen in the table below. Most of the Malaysian students that observed by the researcher was male, because in the boarding house that the researcher observed most of the students were male. The researcher observed all the Malaysian students that lived in that boarding house.

Table 1. Gender and Age

Age Group	Female	Male	Total
18-29	5 (24%)	16 (76%)	21 (100%)

Language Biography

Based on this aspect, all the participants answered that Malaysia is the sole home language in their childhood. Most of them use Malay language and feel comfortable with it. There are also some cases that added, English, Bahasa Indonesia and Arabic as other language that they know, comfortable with and use sometimes. When they asked about the frequency of using Malay now in

Indonesia, they answered in various answer, they are: 57% always, 19% often, 10% half the time, 10% rarely and 4% never. As showed on the table 2.

The answer of most Malaysian students mostly was always. Because all the students who lived in that boarding house were Malay, so they speak Malay frequently.

Table 2 The Frequency Of Speaking Malay

How often they use Malay now	Always	Often	Half the time	Rarely	Never	Total
	12(57%)	4(19%)	2(10%)	2(10%)	1(4%)	21 (100%)

About their proficiency in Malay, either in understanding spoken Malay, speaking Malay, reading

Malay and writing Malay, they answered mostly as very well. Their answer seen as in the table 3.

Table 3 Malay Language Proficiency

Malay language proficiency	Like a native speaker	Very well	Reasonably well	Poorly	Not at all	Total
Understanding Spoken Malay	8 (38%)	13 (62%)	-	-	-	21 (100)
Speak Malay	11 (52%)	10 (48%)	-	-	-	21 (100)
Read Malay	10 (48%)	11 (52%)	-	-	-	21 (100)
Write Malay	8 (38%)	12 (58%)	1 (4%)	-	-	21 (100)

Language Use

In language use, it is acquired to know about the use of language either in their home with their family, with their friends and in the language community. It is about what language(s) that they use, how often they use the language(s), and to whom they speak the language(s).

Language Environment at Home/ In the Family

In their environment at home and in the family, all the Malaysian students that had been observed speak Malay to their grandfathers, grandmothers, fathers, mothers, siblings and spouse or partners. But additionally, sometimes they also use English to speak to their siblings and partners.

Language Used with Friends

The language that Malaysian students use with friends is so

various. All of them has more than 20 Malay speaking friends who live with them or nearby their boarding house. All of them study in UIN-SU. They live in group. It is very rarely for them to share boarding house with Indonesian students. They use Malay language to communicate with their Malay speaking friends, but when they speak with Indonesian the speak Indonesian or trying to speak Indonesian mixed with English, and when they speak with their classmate, they also add Arabic as their tools of communication.

Language in the Community

When the asked whether they belong to any of Malay language or culture-related organization, 3 (14%) answered NO, and 18 (84%) answered YES. As seen on the table 4.

Table 4. Quantity of Malay Students Who Belong To Malay Organization

Do you belong to any of the Malay language or culture-related organization or community groups?	Yes	No
	18 (86%)	3 (14%)

They also gather regularly with their Malaysian student friends. In their gathering they use Malay as their language to speak and mingle with friends.

Language and Media

This is about how regular the Malaysian students accessed media in Malay language. Either it is books, magazines, TV, websites, radio, music and newspaper. The result is as this table 5.

Table 5. Frequency in Using Media In Malay Language

Questions	Always	Often	Half the time	Rarely	Never	Sum
How often do you Read Malay newspaper (online include)	19 (90%)	2 (10%)	-	-	-	21 (100%)

Read Malay book	18 (86%)	3 (14%)	-	-	-	21 (100%)
Read Malay magazine	16 (76%)	5 (24%)	-	-	-	21 (100%)
Listen Malay radio	12 (56%)	5 (24%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	-	21 (100%)
Listen Malay music	21 (100%)	-	-	-	-	21 (100%)
Watch Malay TV channel	6 (28%)	5 (24%)	5 (24%)	5 (24%)	-	21 (100%)
Browse Malay website	19 (90%)	2 (10%)	-	-	-	21 (100%)
Follow Malay chatroom (facebook, twitter, BBM)	21 (100%)	-	-	-	-	21 (100%)

From the result above, it is concluded that even though the Malaysian students lives far from their Malay speaking home land, they still accessed or interact with Malay media regularly.

Language Attitude

This language attitude is about the attitude of Malaysian students toward their Malay

language. Based on the questionnaire, they have a good attitude toward Malay language. They think that to be accepted in Malay community is crucial and identify them as Malaysian also crucial.

Here are also some of Malaysian students' agreement about Malay and English language in Indonesia:

Table 6. Attitude towards Malay Language

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Sum
For a person with Malay roots, it is important to be able to speak Malay	21 (100%)	-	-	-	-	21(100%)
Malay is essential to fully participate in Malaysian community life	21 (100%)	-	-	-	-	21(100%)
Children should learn both Malay and English at the same time	21 (100%)	-	-	-	-	21(100%)
Speaking Malay can help someone to be economically beneficial	18 (86%)	3 (14%)	-	-	-	21(100%)
Using both Malay and English language is not difficult	18 (86%)	3 (14)	-	-	-	21(100%)
It is a waste of time to keep Malay language in Indonesia alive	-	-	-	-	21 (100%)	21(100%)

I feel sorry for Malaysian who doesn't know Malay	20 (95%)	1 (5%)	-	-	-	21(100%)
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All of them have a very good attitude toward Malay language and English. They value Malay language and feel sorry for Malaysian who can not speak Malay.

Additional Question

When they were asked what other ways or activities that can improve their Malay they answers mostly by hanging out with friends or gathering, and other answers are: attend Malay class, watching Malay movie, watching Malay TV, speaking Malay consistently and so on.

When they asked about what government should do to improve the opportunity to retain Malay in Indonesia, they answered mostly by making Malay organization, and also provide Malay book and making Indonesian Malaysian programs.

When they asked about what other organization to improve the opportunities to maintain Malay in Indonesia they answered, embassy of Malaysia, or other organization that unite them.

FINDINGS

From the data analysis, it was found that there are some factors related to Malay students' maintainability, they are:

1. Factors that affect Malay language maintaining in Medan are: Living with other Malaysian students in group. Based on the observation of the researcher, the Malaysian students in Medan lived in a certain dorm house

and lived together, keeping speaking Malay in their communication. It happened because they lived in the same dorm house with other Malaysian students. So they spoke Malay daily, having organization to maintain their language and cultural traditions. Based on the questionnaire, it was found that they did have Malay students' organization. Using media in Malay language that covered reading books, magazines, listening Malay radio, Malay music, television. It was found in the questionnaire that they accessed Malay language media daily and frequently, that makes them still contacted frequently with Malay language, Using social network. The Malay students used social network such as Facebook, BBM, Instagram and Twitter in their daily lives, and still contacted with their family and Malaysian friends who still lived in Malaysia.

2. The maintainability occurred in their daily conversation among Malaysian speaker, in their cultural organization, and also in social media.
3. The maintainability happened because Malaysian students feel nervous to live in Indonesia alone, so they live together with other Malaysian students to ease their nerve in facing different culture, language and social. Unconsciously that makes them

maintain Malay language, and tradition, by speaking Malay everyday and gathering with other Malaysian student

DISCUSSION

Malaysian students in Islamic State University use their own language in their daily life. It is also often used when they interact with their Indonesian friends even answer the question in classroom. Therefore, it is important to understand that language shift or maintenance “occur as a result of choices made by individuals in a speech community in accordance with their own motivations, expectations and goals which they may or may not share with other members” (Coulmas, 2005, p. 168).

Language use is determined by a set of demographic, social and cultural factors (Pendakur 1990). When studying language maintenance and shift, it is important to detect external pressures which result in choice of language, determine how well a minority language is learned at the community and define the influence of the majority group on the minority language preservation (Weinreich, 1964). Thus, Pendakur (1990, p. 5) suggests that at issue “then are the social and demographic attributes in a society or group which cause a language to be maintained or dropped in favor of another”. From the result of data about language maintenance.

CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the data, some conclusions were drawn as the following.

- (1) Some factors that affect in language maintaining of Malay students are living in group with other Malaysian students in boarding house that make them speak Malay in their communication, having organization to maintain their language and cultural traditions, using media in Malay language that covered reading books, magazines, listening Malay radio, Malay music, television and using social network regularly.
- (2) The maintainability occurred in their daily conversation among Malaysian speaker, in their cultural organization, and also in social media.
- (3) The maintainability happened because Malaysian students feel nervous to live in Indonesia alone, so they live together with other Malaysian students to ease their nerve in facing different culture, language and social. Unconsciously that makes them maintain Malay language, and tradition, by speaking Malay everyday and gathering with other Malaysian students.

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