

CIACIA LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE THROUGH ‘HOUSE OF CULTURE’ MODEL

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Abstract

Local language maintenance has been remarkably attended recently following massive extinction of languages for having been rarely used and not transmitted well to younger generation. This paper reports the findings of a study related to a model which is evidently useful to preserve local language use among students with less comprehension to their local language. The developed model employs local short stories as tools for language perseverance by means of project making which requires students' active participation mingling with the language. The study indicates that local culture and tradition like short stories is apparently favorable to support and promote the use of local language among students. Thus, it is highly recommended that local culture and tradition be cultivated and developed to preserve language maintenance and involve language users directly and consciously towards language survival.

Key words: Culture house model, local short stories, language maintenance

Local language maintenance nowadays has been an issue cherishing considerable attention from several related parties. Several attempts have also been undertaken regarding the issue, some of which related to provision of regulation or recommendation by governments to locate specific functions for local language use in society life. Conducting cultural events for some community groups has subsequently been aimed to promote local uniqueness pride including language. However, the decrease in the use of local language among language potential users has been an inevitable fact.

Many factors are assumed to be related to local language extinction; one of which relates with existence of other languages that language users are required to use in social communication. In Indonesia's context, Indonesian language serves a national and formal language such as in educational context. This reveals that school children mostly use the national language at school and only small amount of time is purported for local language use. Even, many students also do not speak mother tongues at home. The present research shows that parents speak local language with adults but not with small children. Among speakers of different local languages tend to use Indonesian language rather than using either one. Local language is beginning to lose function in social interaction and subsequently gives no benefit economically. This condition puts local language down and eventually accounts for the broader use of the national majority language in all aspects of life.

It is a fact that nowadays the use of local language has been very limited. In formal domain such as schools and offices, local languages are hardly ever heard from among the communication of local people. In informal setting as in family and neighborhood, local languages are still used as communication tool; however, the use of Bahasa Indonesia has

also been popular particularly among young generation. Meanwhile, in nonformal setting, for instance, religious or local organization, there has been a mix between the use of local and national languages.

Another factor contributing to extinction process of local language has been for permissive social attitude. Local language speakers tend to be reluctant and doubtful to speak local language in public occasion and choose to play safe by using Indonesian language. This permissive culture explains that in the first place the local language has been marginalized even by its merely speakers. Such an attitude will even diminish the users of local languages. Ferguson (1971) reckons that a language with relatively small speakers will continue to have even smaller speakers along with times. If such a critical issue is not treated with considerate intervention, by no means, local language will go through an inevitable extinction.

Having such condition, it can be implied that local languages have been in an endangered process. The local language is being endangered, externally, by the domination of national language hegemony, and internally by permissive community attitude. In addition, there has not been a permanent government policy which establishes local language as instructional language at school particularly at lower levels.

Why Preserving Local Language?

Some people might think that it should not be a compulsion to preserve a local language particularly when it is going to die. We can just use any language that can fulfil our social needs. While all our communication needs have sufficiently been fulfilled by one other language or two that we speak, it is no longer necessary to be apprehensive with having to use or preserve our local one. Nevertheless, this way of thinking has failed to understand the meaning and function that a given language conveys. It is important to note that a language does not only serve a tool for the speakers to communicate. It, in fact, has more than that. It brings along the status, identity, values, knowledge, and ways of thinking of its speakers. Crystal (2000) asserts that language needs to be maintained as community needs pluralism or diversity, and maintaining language diversity is meant to maintain cultural diversity. He subsequently states that language serves as a tool to express self-identity and of repositories of history, contributes to the amount of human knowledge and appealing to its speakers (Crystal, 2000). Furthermore, Muslim (2013) observes that local language serves to maintain local wisdom values and as a tool for storing and transmitting products of past heredity from generation to generation.

Local language is also related to people behavior. Wardhaugh (1989) claims, “there are several possible relationships between language and society. One is that social structure may either influence or determine linguistic structure and /or behavior”. In this regards, Poedjosoedarmo (in Septiningsih, 2014) observes that the decrease in moral and ethics of some Javanese is highly correlated with decrease of young generation understanding of language status system in Javanese.

Any local language may undergo three conditions either being passed up through naturally, being maintained or being developed. The first is meant that a language is let to pass up through generation without any intervention so as the number of its speakers decreases naturally and it eventually becomes extinct. A local language to be maintained is meant that it will at least have a similar condition as now, a condition that it has experienced decrease since the establishment of the policy to use Indonesian language for the whole

nation, and that its position may be endangered as globalization stream has gradually reaches the whole elements of social civilization of local community.

Local language needs to be maintained before they become extinct providing the fact that the level of language death all over the world is bigger than its birth (Moeliono, 1981). Javanese language which has the most speakers in Indonesia also has also experienced language extinction up to 4.1 percent (Septiningsih, 2014). Providing such a fact, government regulation which commits to preserve, to cultivate and to develop local languages in order to serve national cultural entities should be taken seriously to guarantee its survival. However, it seems that such a policy is not relatively powerful to break the national language hegemony over the local language in practice. Language shift eventually becomes a pattern and local language is pressed aside by Indonesian language.

Having this in mind, it is of necessity to search for or develop ways in how to preserve local language among the potential language users such as young students at school. For example, in education, there should be the teaching of local language and culture. Local language can be used in elementary school so that small children still have competence in local language in addition to the national language.

Maintaining Local Language in School Setting

Great concern towards local language loss has raised awareness among several parties to develop model for language maintenance. Some local languages such as Javanese language, Balinese language and Palembang language have received considerable attention from government as well as high awareness from concerned parties. Several models are developed to maintain Javanese language including counseling the use of Javanese language in family, developing house of culture in society, inclusion of the language in arts event, implementation of government policy, promoting local wisdom, and language promotion through mass media and electronic (Nurhayati, 2013). Maintaining a local language can also be performed by making language documentation, creating cultural arts work, as well as establishing a single day of the week to speak the language in government setting (Septiningsih, 2014). As for Balinese language is maintained through communication in family, traditional market, religious activities, cultural activities and arts events, as well as government policy regarding inclusion of Balinese character on institution name boards (Merti, 2010). Meanwhile, Palembang language is included in university curriculum to provide teacher human resource to teach local content subject at school (Susilawati, 2010).

In school setting, local language can be maintained by occupying it as language of instruction either to teach subjects like maths, religion, etc. particularly at lower levels. Bowden (2011) states that using mother tongue or local language as instructional language to elementary school children will give better results not only in learning language but also in learning Maths and other sciences. This affirms that local language enables to develop social intelligence of language users. Additionally, Bloomfield (1933) reminds that local language is crucial to be taught to children in order that they behave as his actual environment. Therefore, arts work in local language can be used as teaching materials from which students can learn the language and values conveyed in it.

The present study develops a model to preserve Ciacia language, one of the local languages in Buton. Previous research done by the writers recently shows that the said local language have been endangered since only parents speak the language with other adults speakers. While the existence of small children speakers become an indication of whether a

given language survives, the study indicates a reversed condition that parents only speak Ciacia language to older children or other adults, but not with smaller children. Krauss (1992) classifies a language to be endangered when the language is not learnt by children as mother tongue. Wurm (1998) concurs that a language is potentially endangered when the language is under the pressure of other language and starts to lose younger children speakers.

Ciacia language is no longer a language of communication or instruction between teachers and students or among students, but Indonesian language. The use of the language is only found in the teaching of local content subject, so-called MULOK or 'Muatan Lokal'. Even, the way to teach the language is still in a traditional way where students are assigned to translate Ciacia's words into Indonesian. This way of teaching does not allow the students to use their local language in a real context and an attempt to preserve the language, by no means, grants a better outcome. In addition, the teaching of the local language is intended to teach the alphabet of this endangered minority language with Hangeul (Korean alphabet). It is noted that in 2009 Ciacia language has been established to use Hangeul to preserve the written form of the language based on mutual commitment between the local government of Baubau, Southeast Sulawesi and Korean government. It is, then, compelled to say that the process of preserving the language even experiences a more complicated issue; in one angle the students have to learn the language but in another angle they need more effort to read the alphabet of the language having its written form not in Latin but in a new form.

Having the aforementioned condition of the language use, the present study develops a model which is aimed to maintain the use of the language in the school as a central domain in language maintenance. The model developed is the making of 'house of culture' which is integrated with the MULOK lesson through which the students are taught the way to make creativities or creative works relating to their local language such as making/translating local stories or folktales. These creative works are to be presented to the class and to be displayed on classroom walls or in a cultural exhibition conducted in the school.

METHOD

The study occupied research and development design which was aimed to develop a model for local language maintenance to be implemented in school domain. The design was developed by firstly identifying and analysing students' state regarding ability and readiness to receive instructional model of language maintenance. Having such information, grade five elementary school students were determined as subjects to whom the proposed model was to be tried out.

The designed model was so-called 'house of culture' and is implemented in a 'MULOK' lesson, a lesson in particular designed for local content needs. The model was developed with a project-based concept which requires active participation of students to produce a product (in this study, local stories and translation). Instructional procedure was prepared for teachers to use. The model involves participation of students, teachers and parents.

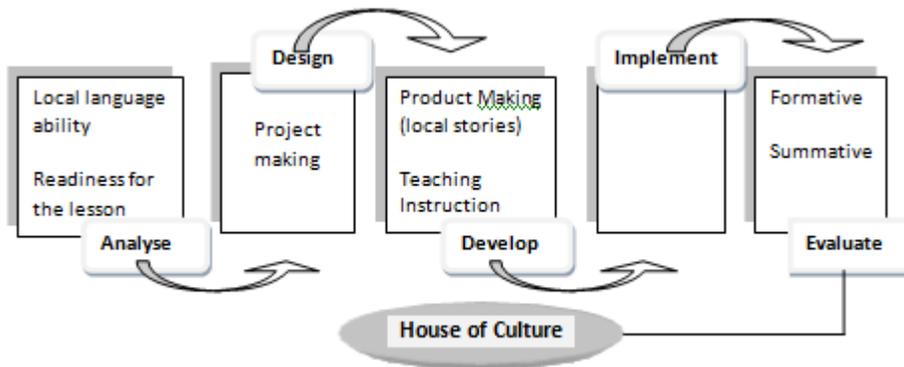
The data of this study included information of the extent to which the model is applicable to subjects and was collected by means of observation, documentation and note taking. The interview was also conducted to seek for information regarding teachers' and students' participation in undertaking the model. The data were analyzed to identify strengths and weaknesses as well as supporting factors and obstacles during model implementation. Having the analysis, the model was revised in more applicable steps. The model was re-

implemented for a final observation and assessed of its prone to develop students' local language ability, interest and motivation, and pride to their local identity.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

'House of Culture' Model

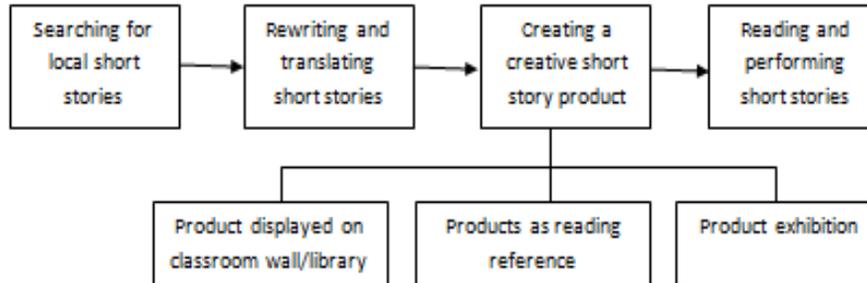
Model for preserving Ciacia language is so-called 'House of Culture.' The model comprises steps or procedures to promote local language use in the school in order to assist students to learn and use their local language in an authentic way. The model is made systematically aimed to preserve the use of the language among elementary school children. Since the model is to be developed for educational setting, it is developed through three general processes including identifying, developing and evaluating. The first process refers to the identification of the students' access or present ability towards the language and their readiness to follow the lesson. The second process is meant to design a systematic and applicable model to meet the students' needs and possible solution so as the students enhance their capability to understand and use the language in a pleasurable mode. The last process regards with the evaluation of the tried-out model which is done by assessing its strengths and weaknesses as well as providing needed revision. The process is presented as in graph 1. Graph 1. Process of Developing House of Culture Model



Given the graph, the model of language maintenance is developed from analyzing the students' local language ability and their readiness to follow the lesson. The research done by the writer shows that in school domain Ciacia language is less maintained in category. This reveals that the students hardly ever speak the language both in their communication with among classmates or with teachers. They seem to have passive repertoires of the language that they could only decode the meaning of interaction. The present study required them to make a written version of existing traditional stories and this activity is sound for their language ability and readiness. The next step is to make a design which is a project-based activity requiring the students to make a product of local short stories. The design is then developed into teaching instruction and product making steps which are then implemented. The last step is to evaluate the whole process in formative and summative formats.

Having tried out the model and done evaluation, the present study finally comes up with a revised and applicable model as shown in graph 2. The graph portrays continuing steps performed by students as a class activity in a 'MULOK' lesson.

Graph 2. House of Culture Model



The above model presents four main instructional steps which should respectively be performed as indicated by the arrow lines. The first step is that the students are assigned to search for local stories of Ciacia tribe or society. This could involve parents or teachers participation to share the local stories found in the community. Teachers could also prepare short stories for students to choose. The second step is that the students rewrite the stories and translate them into Indonesian language. When it is correctly done, they put it down in a creative product where they could include pictures or use various fonts to varnish the short story product into an attractive creation. The last step requires the students to read or perform the short stories in front of the class. They can plainly read or act it out to make the stories vivid. This story telling session could be followed by questioning and answering to build up students' ability to use the local language at real time.

The other three boxes downward denote extended activities which utilize the products to build local cultural context around students' environment in the school. The activities include displaying the creative products of short stories on the classroom wall or filing them in school library. The products could also be used by teachers as students' reading references, for example, to identify particular words or phrases meaning etc. In addition, the school could hold a cultural exhibition to display the many products having been produced, for instance, every one school year. Such activities promote local language recognition among the other students in the school and enhance students' interest to understand and use the language. Eventually, the use of local language and activities to preserve the local language become a pattern.

Below is an example of traditional stories produced by the students. The story below represents the first part of the story and its translation in Indonesian language.

PERITA LA MANDO-MANDO

Baolan 1

Bhabhaha oula-oulano La Mando-Mando, amano no hangka i labuntuu noboki mowineno i ka'ana tanga cano no bhabhawa. Ghatu nomule i ka'ana no la nomolingumo, olamo nakumonle lalano ka'anano. Hawite hake la no pihogha-hoghamo i kunino hopali. Cia namolengo la no plindongomo suagha, "O, mal mila i wuta dh'a ama". Amano no po umbha'e "pohende'e i ka'ana ane mal mila". Po'oli amano La Mando-Mando no hendemi i ka'ana. Noghato i ka'ana no pikoja-kojamo mal milano ka'ana. Ghatu no molengo soghondo dane'e mila lumalano i lala noghoro aso milano ka'ana. "malimo lokainle aso taka milonga ghumatono wukou". Hawite

Terjemahan

Awal mula cerita La Mando-Mando, ayahnya pergi ke hutan, meninggalkan istrinya yang sementara mengandung. Ketika dia hendak pulang kerumahnya, dia kesasar. Dia tidak tau jalan kerumahnya. Jadi dia hanya duduk saja di bawah pohon beringin. Tidak lama kemudian, dia mendengar suara, "O, ada orang ditanah, ayah". "kalau ada orang, suruh dia naik kerumah". Lalu ayah La Mando-Mando naik ke rumah. Di dalam rumah dia bercanda dengan orang rumah. Ketika larut malam, ada yang lewat di jalan, memanggil orang dirumah, "mari kita pergi melihat orang yang baru melahirkan". Tapi orang rumah menjawab,

Promoting Students' Engagement with Local Language: Model Benefits

Generally speaking, the model is implemented to promote students' engagement with the local language. This engagement takes place during product making process through which the students undergo a real connection with their local language. In the process of rewriting and translating local short stories, the students develop their ability towards the language. For example, they learn to understand the plot and theme of the story while understanding the whole story. The translating process benefits the students to understand the meaning of individual words or phrases. Reading or retelling the stories compels the students to have a lot of preparation and increase students' self confidence to use the language. Moreover, giving and asking questions during story's presentation have also triggered them to use the language as naturally as possible.

In particular, the model encourages students' individual attitude towards the model. Firstly, during project activities, the students become more enthusiastic as shown by their frequently asked questions to teacher and among classmates; and by their sharing of classroom activities with families at home. Secondly, the activities allow the students' long term memory to function more effectively since they directly practice to use newly learnt words in real life. By this, vocabulary learnt from the story will be stored in the long term memory. This process concurs with a saying, teach me I will forget and involve me and I will remember. Thirdly, the students become more confident in encoding and practicing newly learnt words or phrases without any doubt of casual classroom formality as indicated by high frequency of students' talk using both local and Indonesian languages. Last but not least, the teaching becomes more variative since the students develop varied ways in understanding and comprehending the lesson.

Other benefits are related to nurturant effect of the model implementation. Having worked on with the language, the students build their awareness on the importance of the local language in their life. For example, they realize how local language has functioned to restore past heredity from generation to generation. The fact that the local story is kept until recently, it is the local language to play a role. Without maintaining it, local people way of life and thinking will have lost along with its extinction. In addition, they begin to understand the uniqueness of their local language which serves their self-identity. Having this awareness in mind, they develop eagerness and motivation to complete the product.

CONCLUSION

A local language which notably has less speakers nowadays continues to be endangered when it is not well transmitted to its younger generation. Maintaining the use of the local language among its potential speakers requires a various and real attempt from different concerned parties. Developing a model of language maintenance constitutes one of the many ways to preserve its use. A particular model functions effectively on a given condition having it been firstly analyzed, developed and evaluated to observe its practicality and appropriateness. The present study has developed a model which is so-called 'house of culture' which involves school children, passive speakers of a local language, in a project to produce a traditional short story product. Being engaging with the local language naturally during product making process, they perceive the connection between learning in the school and real world context. This activity urges them to understand their local language in an appealing and fun way. They firmly believe that working on something with local language increases their curiosity and desire to learn more. They also develop their pride on the uniqueness of their local language; thus, they build their awareness of their local language maintenance. Eventually, a committed action among concerned parties such as teachers and students is highly required so as the local language, in this case Ciacia language, becomes language of interaction not only among parents or old people but also is well understood and proudly used by younger generation.

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