Andiani Rezkita Nabu

The Eye of Endangered Languages in North Celebes: A Case Study of Mongondow Tribe’s Multilingualism

Andiani Rezkita Nabu*
Department of Linguistics, Universitas Gadjah Mada,
Bulaksumur, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
*Corresponding Author: icsai@geemail.com

Abstract
North Celebes is a small province in north peninsula Celebes Island, Indonesia. It is located in a unique topography that has numerous ethnic, culture, and indigenous language. In this case, Blust (1951) showed that every tribe in North Celebes has its own indigenous language, which is namely Sangir, Tonsea, Tombulu, Tondano, Totemboan, Tonsawang, Mongondow, Lolak, Ponoasakan, Bantik, Bintauna, and Kaidipang. Due this diversity, North Celebes can be one of a potential conflict area. However, by the presence Indonesian language as a national language, North Celebes is also blessed by the presence of Malay-Manado language as a unifying language among tribes in northern Sulawesi. In order that, this study is intended to investigate the multilingualism in Mongondow tribe, especially in Bolaang Mongondow regency. Then, this study is also attempted the implications of this condition through social and cultural areas. As a descriptive and qualitative study, this study involves questionnaire and interview techniques through Bolaang Mongondow tribe as the object of research. In fact, research on languages in northern Celebes has been done by previous researchers (Wilken & Schwarz, 1869; Adriani, 1925; Dunnebier, 1951; Usup, 1981), but no one has examined the multilingual condition of Bolaang Mongondow tribe as an object of research. In order that, this study found that the use of ethnic language is limited and competitive with other lingua franca in North Celebes. Hence, this study provided a description about language used in Bolaang Mongondow, and their impacts through the development of the indigenous language of Mongondow tribe.

Introduction
North Celebes is a small province in north peninsula Celebes Island, Indonesia. A province with total area about 13.851,64 km² is divided into fifteen regions. It is located in a unique topography such as low land area, mountains, and coastal area. As the result of this uniqueness, North Celebes province has varied indigenous inhabitants. Majority of indigenous tribe in North Celebes is namely Minahasa tribe, Mongondow tribe, Sangihe tribe, Talauld tribe, and Siau tribe. Moreover, North Celebes also has other transmigrant inhabitants who has been resettled in this province for long time ago. Those transmigrant tribe consists of Chinese, Gorontalese, Ternatenese, Balinese, and Javanese. By this condition, each community bring each religion, ethnic, culture, and languages.
Comes to the discussion of indigenous inhabitant in North Celebes, it has at least twelve native tribes who have been developed and settled contiguously for hundred years. Blust (1991) showed that every tribe in North Celebes reflects its own indigenous language, which is namely Sangir, Tonsea, Tombulu, Tondano, Totemboan, Tonsawang, Mongondow, Lolak, Ponosakan, Bantik, Bintauna, and Kaidipang. Besides those indigenous language, language use in North Celebes is also influenced by the transmigrant languages, such as Gorontalo, Javanese, Chinese, and Balinese. Due this diversity, actually North Celebes can be one of a potential conflict area. However, by the presence Indonesian language as a national language, North Celebes is also blessed by the presence of Malay-Manado language as a unifying language among tribes in northern Sulawesi.

Objectives
This study is intended to investigate the multilingualism in Mongondow tribe, especially in Bolaang Mongondow regency. Then, this study is also attempted the implications of this condition through social and cultural areas.

Research Questions
Based on the objectives, the research questions of this research are:
1. How is the condition of Mongondow tribe’s multilingualism?
2. What is the implication of this multilingualism through Mongondow tribe?

Theory
The terminology of multilingualism cannot be separated with bilingualism. Chaer & Agustina (2010) explained that literally the term bilingualism means the use of two languages. Meanwhile, this term can be described as a sociolinguistic view as the use of two or more languages in two different language communities (Mackey cited in Fishman, 1972). In the using of languages, the speaker commonly uses different code base on domain conversation. Fishman (cited in Holmes, 1992) described that there are at least five domains which
determines communication codes, namely family domain, friendship domain, religious domain, and other formal domain (such as mass media, administration).

**Methodology**

As a descriptive qualitative study, it is only aimed to describe the multilingualism of Mongondow tribe and its implication descriptively. In order, this study did not involve a quantitative measurement in analyzing the data. This method elaborated three basic phase such as data collecting, data analyzing, and data presenting (Sudaryanto, 2015 pp. 6-8).

In providing the data, the researcher did an interviewing method and questionnaire technique. Then, the participant was forty-eight 18-22 years old population of Mongondow tribe. The choice of participants was intended to find out the picture of Mongondow tribe’s multilingualism in present day. Afterwards, the data was analyzing qualitatively by considering some conditions and facts in the real life. By this analysis, the researcher did a deeper analyzing through the result of questionnaire to find out the implication of multilingualism in Mongondow tribe. Therefore, the result of this study was presented in informal and formal method. In this case, informal method means that the researcher will present the findings in words, sentences, or verbal. Meanwhile, the formal method will support the informal method by providing some tables, figures, or pictures.

**Literature Review**

The preliminary study of language in north Sulawesi started in 1868. In this case, Wilken & Schwarz (cited in Schouten, 1981) was dealing with the variation of many north Sulawesi’s indigenous language such as Mongondow and other Minahasan language. Other study through indigenous language in North Sulawesi was made by Adriani (1925). Adriani (cited in Schouten, 1981) explained that there are ten spoken language in Minahasa, North Celebes. The languages are Tombulu, Tonsea, Toulour, Totemoan, and Tonsawang. Afterwards, study about some indigenous language in North Celebes was developed together with the spread of religion in North Celebes. This development, in addition, was represented by the emerge of bible translation in many North Celebes languages. Due this translation work, study about phonology, morphology, and grammar in North Celebes indigenous languages became clearly.

On the other side, study about Mongondow language as a native language of Mongondow tribe was well-undeveloped. Even though some researcher has been studied this language, but it still has poor quantity and poor quality. Dunnebier (1951) in his book entitled ‘Bolaang Mongondowsch-Nederlandsch Woordenboek’ described morphology and basic syntax of Mongondow language. This study also became a fundamental study for later research in Mongondow language. Other study through Mongondow language has been done by Usup (1981) in his book entitled ‘Morfologi dan Sintaksis Bahasa Mongondow’. Based on this book, Usup (1981) explained the morphology and syntax system of Mongondow language comprehensively.

**Findings**

**Mongondow Tribe and Mongondow Language**

Mongondow tribe or known as Bolaang Mongondow tribe is one of majority native tribe in North Celebes. It settled in the area of Bolaang Mongondow regency, Kotamobagu regency, Bolaang Mongondow timur regency, and even Minahasa and Gorontalo. Mongondow tribe has a native language, which is called as Mongondow language.
Mongondow language is an Austronesian language who has been spoken by 230,000 speakers (Ethnologue, 2000). Beside becoming a first language in Mongondow tribe, this language also become a second language in other North Celebes area, such as Lolak and Minahasa. In addition, Mongondow language has three general dialects such as Lolayan, Dumoga, and Passi (Ethnologue, 2017). On the other side, this language has been developed from a bible translation (Dunnebier, 1923) and other publication from Wilken and Schwarz (1869; 1891 cited in Schouten, 1981), and Dunnebier (1911; 1917; 1929; 1951 cited in Schouten, 1981).

Genealogically, Mongondow language is a part of Malay-Polynesian language. This language is included in The Greater Central Philippine sub-group, especially in Gorontalo-Mongondow micro-group (Blust, 1991). In addition, Zorc (cited in Lobel, 2015) showed that Mongondow language is a typically language in a group of language in North Celebes, Gorontalo, and Central Celebes. This language was not categorized in the group of Minahasan language, because Blust (1991) found that Mongondow language related to Maranao (Danaw) 35.4%, Tagalog (Central Philippine) 31.8%, Sangir (North Celebes) 25.1%, and Tondano 20.1%.

Moreover, this language is still categorized as an endangered language. Based on data from Ethnologue (2000), the EGIDS (Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption) level of Mongondow language is 7 (shifting). In the case, this level means that the speaker of
Mongondow language is only childbearing community, while there is no revitalization outer the circle.

**Multilingualism of Mongondow Tribe**

Based on the data from participants, the researcher found that there are four language that used by Mongondow tribe. In this case, those language are Mongondow language, Malay-Manado language, Indonesian language, and other foreign language (such as English or Arabic). However, those languages are not spoken every day and every condition. Generally, every language will use appropriately with the domain. The data of language use by the participants can be seen in table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Mongondow</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malay-Manado</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>Mongondow</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malay-Manado</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Mongondow</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malay-Manado</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>51.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Mongondow</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malay-Manado</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other Formal Domain</td>
<td>Mongondow</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malay-Manado</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>81.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above showed that around 62 – 77 % speaker use Malay-Manado language in family and friendship domain. Meanwhile, Mongondow language is only used by 33.3% speaker in family domain and 8.3% in friendship domain. Moreover, some formal domain such as religion, education, and others mostly used Indonesian language. Based on the data, it can be concluded that Mongondow tribe’s language used is more varied. However, they use Malay-Manado more often than Mongondow language, their own indigenous language.
Discussions

Implication of Multilingualism in Social and Culture

Mongondow tribe as a multilingual tribe can be seen in the previous data. It cannot be denied that this multilingual condition will provide the impact in social and cultural side. In addition, the impact will never be positive persistently, but sometimes it impacts negatively.

To begin with, the multilingualism can be a positive impact if we perceive it by social side. In this case, it happens when Mongondow tribe does not only use its native language but also Malay-Manado language. In addition, Malay-Manado language can be used in homogenous and heterogenous community in North Celebes. In order that, Malay-Manado language appears as a unifying language between tribes in North Celebes. Due this condition, tribes in North Celebes will felt emotionally closeness through Malay-Manado language. As a result, the conflict between ethnic, tribe, religion, and community in North Celebes will not happen continuity. North Celebes as a minimum conflict area has been also approved by Indonesian citizen. It is proved by Kompas Gramedia Award 2018 as the most tolerance province in Indonesia.

Despite the fact that multilingualism brings a good impact in social area, multilingualism also brings negative impact for cultural side. Furthermore, this negative impact relates to speaker attitudes to indigenous language, and the extinction of indigenous language and culture. As a multilingual community, the native of a language will tend to speak same language with another speaker. In other words, Mongondow speaker do not tend to use Mongondow language, but Malay-Manado language for communicating with non Mongondow speaker. Consequently, Malay-Manado language will be judged as a more superior language than Mongondow language. This speaker attitudes toward language can give some influences through language vitality.

On the other side, according to the data from Ethnologue (2000), the vitality of Mongondow language is in the level of endangered. This condition actually has result to the multilingual condition, speaker attitudes toward language, and the quantity and quality of indigenous language study. Hence, if the negative impact of multilingualism cannot be overcome then the existence of indigenous language will be threatened.

Limitations

To begin with, this study was limited by the quantity and quality of participants. In this case, this study only involved forty-eight of 18-22 Mongondow tribe participants. In order that the consideration value of North Celebes multilingualism cannot be seen effortlessly. Furthermore, the variety of participants age cannot be also seen in this study. This study only focused on young participants, without considering old participants.

Secondly, this study only became a preliminary study for reading the sociocultural matters through language. In addition, this study involves more researcher intuition as a native. It was actually as a result of minimal data found.

Recommendations

As a qualitative study, this research should contain clear methodology and participants. This research also can be more interesting by adding varied types of participants. Furthermore, the research can use more and varied participants based on their age, jobs, or tribe.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the use of ethnic language especially Mongondow language, is limited and competitive with Malay-Manado language in North Celebes. Hence, this study provided a description about language used in Bolaang Mongondow, and their impacts through the development of the indigenous language of Mongondow tribe.
Acknowledgement

This work was fully supported by Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP) and Universitas Gadjah Mada.

References


