

Lampung Language in Bandar Lampung: Still Existing or Disappearing?

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ABSTRACT

The use of language in life greatly influences the way humans communicate and interact with each other. This interaction brings unity to bridge differences. Therefore, language diversity is unique in the field of communication. The important role of communication tools is to contribute to connecting social life. The environment easily influences the use of language in social institutions. This makes the combination of languages used by Indonesian people very unique and diverse. In general, this research aims to determine how big transmigration's influence is on the disappearance of the Lampung language in Bandar Lampung City. This research was conducted to answer problems encountered in the field, using several stages of data collection (1) Interviews with related parties in Bandar Lampung via Zoom meeting, and (2) textual interviews. In data collection, the researchers used various articles related to the topic. The study involved 21 informants, divided into native residents, transmigrants, and Lampung residents with former transmigrant families. The primary data will come from the first group while supporting data will come from the second and third groups. The study concludes that the Lampung language is on the verge of extinction due to migration and globalization, particularly among teenagers, and lacks government or community support.

Keywords: Language Loss, Bandar Lampung, Lampung Language, Government, Transmigrants.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool that helps humans to communicate, express feelings, and assist in various tasks. There are several perspectives on the definition of language itself. Chaer (2003: 30) states language is a verbal communication tool. Previously (1994), Chaer emphasized that language is an arbitrary sound symbol a group of community members uses to interact and identify themselves. According to Tarigan (1989: 4), there are two definitions of language. First, language is a systematic system, possibly also a creative system. Second, a language is a collection of arbitrary symbols or signs.

According to Nababan (1991: 1), language is one of the characteristics that distinguish humans from other creatures. According to Syamsuddin (1986: - 2), language has two meanings. First, language is a tool used to form thoughts and feelings, desires and actions, a tool used to influence and be influenced. Second, language is a clear sign of a good or bad personality, a clear sign of family, and ethnicity, and a clear sign of human personality. According to Sapir in Alwasilah (1990: -7), there are many linguistic limitations, and none are satisfactory. These constraints are (1) human, (2) learned (no instinct), (3) systematic, (4) discretionary (voluntary production), and (5) symbolic. The language used in writing and speaking is one proof of human civilization that can reflect the culture of its users (Mutmainnah, Y., & Hardiyanti, D. 2023). This proves that both factors are crucial in demonstrating the evidence of the culture inherent in its users. The interconnection between these two aspects is equally important in fostering the validation of the existing culture.

Language loss is a crucial issue in certain regions. According to Landweer (1999:1), extinction occurs not because speakers stop speaking, but due to the choices made by the majority of the community in their language use. In this regard, it can be said that Indonesians are less inclined to introduce their regional or mother languages to their children, leading to the disappearance of these languages in subsequent generations. When discussing the number of regional languages in Indonesia, it is important to note that Indonesia, as an archipelago with many ethnic groups, has its unique languages in each region or ethnic group. According to data from the Language Agency of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, Indonesia has about 718 regional languages. This number is predominantly distributed in Eastern Indonesia, with 90 percent of these languages found there. Specifically, there are 428 languages in Papua, 80 in Maluku, 72 in East Nusa Tenggara, and 62 in Sulawesi. This highlights the richness of Indonesia's linguistic diversity (Afrianto, 2022).

The vast number of languages in Indonesia is indeed an advantage, but it also places a significant responsibility on its people to preserve the cultural heritage passed down from their ancestors. According to Masinambouw (1985), language and culture are two elements that are "inherent" to humans. This is because culture is a system that regulates interactions among people, while language is a system that sustains this foundation (via Chaer, 1995: 217-218). Therefore, society must continue to pass on cultural heritage and implement a system of regeneration for future generations. However, the challenges faced are diverse and difficult to overcome, especially considering the rapid development of the times. The advancement of technology and the changing social conditions continuously influence the mindset of the younger generation, who are the nation's future. In this modern era, many aspects of culture are perceived as "old-fashioned." It is not surprising, then, that many young people are gradually abandoning their cultural heritage. Generally,

language is the most fundamental aspect of a culture. This is because all cultural expressions, from dances to traditional ceremonies, use regional languages. Daily conversations are also an indicator of whether a language is being preserved.

This research will focus on Bandar Lampung City, which may be experiencing language loss. The Lampung language comprises two main dialects: Api and Nyow (Afrianto, 2022). Each dialect has unique characteristics, distinct sub-dialects, and a writing system that uses specific characters. This indicates that linguistically, the Lampung language is rich in linguistic elements. Bandar Lampung is one of the cities in the Lampung province with a very high level of transmigration, so it serves as a transit city where many people move from Java and other islands. The cultural mixing occurring there inevitably affects how the community is forced to adapt and communicate with each other. This situation indicates a potential loss of the original language, which may be replaced by other languages or Indonesian.

The problem statements outlined in this research are as follows: (1) To what extent is the likelihood of the Lampung language disappearing in Bandar Lampung? (2) What are the appropriate solutions to prevent language loss in Bandar Lampung? (3) What is the potential for the Lampung language to vanish? (4) How significant is the influence of transmigration on the potential loss of the Lampung language? The general objective of this research is to determine the extent to which transmigration impacts the threatened preservation of the Lampung language. Specifically, this research aims to explain and describe (1) the potential for language loss in the Lampung language and (2) the process of language shift in Bandar Lampung towards Indonesian and the regional languages brought by migrants. We hope that this research will have a positive impact and benefit sociolinguistics scholars, especially those studying language loss, which could threaten the existence of many regional languages in Indonesia. Another benefit we hope to provide through this research is to motivate and inspire students who wish to conduct research in this field.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative methodology. This method aims to provide a detailed description of the issue through interviews or field observations, utilizing data collected via interviews and questionnaires. The subjects of this research are informants from Bandar Lampung. The research is conducted through several stages of data collection, which include interviewing informants and analyzing the data. Additionally, it involves examining code-switching in the language used by the residents of Bandar Lampung.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

We are sampling residents who live in the city of Bandar Lampung. There are three groups of informants that we will use as data sources. The first group consists of native Bandar Lampung residents, who will provide the primary data. The second group comprises transmigrants who have moved to Bandar Lampung and settled there. The third group consists of Lampung-born residents whose families were originally transmigrants. The second and third groups will provide supporting data for this research.

These three perspectives will provide more detailed and comprehensive data on the linguistic condition of the Lampung language in Bandar Lampung. We conducted interview sessions by posing several questions focused on the potential loss of the Lampung language in Bandar Lampung due to the influx of migrants. The data we collect will be divided and elaborated into the following points:

1. Daily Language Use

Based on the data obtained from our informants, the language used for daily communication is predominantly Indonesian. Six out of seven individuals from the first group of informants stated that they mostly use Indonesian, with minimal use of the Lampung language. Their proficiency in the Lampung language is not strong; they can understand it when others speak it around them, but they are not proficient in using it for communication themselves.

From the data and linguistic conditions presented, it can be concluded that the use and transmission of the Lampung language among its community have declined. This suggests that even the parents of the first group of informants have been influenced by the presence of transmigrants in Bandar Lampung, resulting in a situation where the use of the Lampung language within their homes is not dominant. This is evidenced by the linguistic proficiency of the first group of informants, who are not skilled in using the Lampung language.

Based on the information provided by the second group of informants, it is reported that they use a combination of Lampung and Javanese languages in their daily communication. Five out of seven informants indicated that they use Indonesian for 60% of their communication and Javanese for 40%, while the remaining nearly 100% use Indonesian. One significant factor contributing to the use of Javanese is the predominant use of this language by sellers in the market for conducting trade. This suggests that the informants frequently engage in buying and selling activities in markets where Javanese is the lingua franca. We conclude that, on average, informants from the second group often engage in market transactions where Javanese is commonly used. Another factor influencing their language use is their familial background from Java, resulting in Javanese being their mother tongue. The proficiency of these

informants in the Lampung language is also limited, as they are accustomed to daily communication in Indonesian and Javanese.

The third group of informants provided information that in their daily lives, 3 out of 7 predominantly use Javanese, and the remaining 4 predominantly use Indonesian. This is influenced by their families originating from outside of Lampung, even though they were born in Lampung. They also mentioned that they often interact with people or friends who speak Javanese/Indonesian, leading to minimal use of the Lampung language. In fact, 5 out of 7 informants stated that they can hardly speak Lampung at all, and the remaining few can only understand it to a limited extent. This demonstrates that the use of the Lampung language in Bandar Lampung is very low.

2. Efforts to Learn and Understand the Lampung Language

The factor of efforts to learn and understand the Lampung language is crucial data for us. We want to assess the extent of efforts made by transmigrants in Bandar Lampung to learn the Lampung language. We did not gather data from the first group of informants because they are native residents of Bandar Lampung, and whether or not they make efforts to learn the Lampung language does not affect the research data we need. The third group of informants remains part of our research from this perspective as supporting data. This is because we observe that, in terms of language proficiency and usage habits, the third group of informants closely resembles pure transmigrants or the second group of informants.

Further data indicates that 5 out of 7 informants from the second group mentioned that they have made efforts to learn the Lampung language, while the remaining 2 have not made any effort at all. Their efforts include practicing it and asking their friends about Lampung vocabulary. Most of them also expressed that the Lampung language has a complex style, pronunciation, and even script, which they find challenging. From this data, we can conclude that there are difficulties in understanding the linguistic complexity faced by transmigrants. Turning to the third group of informants, all of them mentioned that they have not made any personal efforts to learn and understand the Lampung language. The only exposure to Lampung language learning they had was during elementary school lessons. Both sets of data from the second and third groups indicate a lack of awareness and initiative among transmigrant communities to learn and understand the Lampung language.

3. The Use of Bandar Lampung Language in Bandar Lampung City

All three groups of informants conveyed that the usage level of the Lampung language in Bandar Lampung is very low and minimal. All 7 informants from the first group stated that the reason for this is that not everyone in Bandar Lampung understands the meaning of the Lampung language itself. This results in a scarcity of people who communicate using the Lampung language.

Statements from all informants in the second and third groups also support this, indicating that the people of Bandar Lampung predominantly use Indonesian in their daily conversations. They rarely hear people around them speaking Lampung in their everyday lives.

Another piece of data we gathered from the second group, who are pure transmigrants, is that 2 out of 7 informants were surprised by a phenomenon where they were addressed in Javanese shortly after settling in Bandar Lampung. This can be seen as an ironic phenomenon. How so? When we visit a new area, the first thing that comes to mind is usually the use of the local language by the residents, which is different from our native language. This phenomenon is the opposite of what would typically be expected.

4. Factors in the Loss of the Lampung Language

The presence of transmigrants can indeed influence the decline of the Lampung language in Bandar Lampung. According to our 7 informants from Lampung, transmigrants often communicate using their native regional languages. This trend begins to diminish the spread of the Lampung language itself. The main reason is that many migrants do not understand the Lampung language, which could potentially overshadow the authenticity of the region. Furthermore, native Lampung people themselves are less inclined to use their native language in daily life and prefer to use Indonesian instead. Interestingly, many Lampung people are more proficient in Javanese and use it for communication purposes.

This interaction has led the Lampung community to adapt their language usage to Indonesian, gradually making it a habit. However, this trend could potentially change if native Lampung people choose to use the Lampung language more consistently. Through such efforts, there is a possibility that the Lampung language may not disappear from its original place. Migration is not the sole factor influencing the decline of the Lampung language in Bandar Lampung. There are many other factors at play, such as the influence of the majority language, the linguistic abilities of individuals (being bilingual or trilingual), globalization, inter-ethnic marriages, and the lack of transmission of native languages to the current generation (Mei Rosana, 2021).

5. Steps to preserve the Lampung language

The information we gathered from the first group of informants indicates that there has been no significant effort or intervention from the community up to this point. The only opportunity for people to learn the Lampung language is through school lessons, but these are minimally applied in everyday life. One of our informants mentioned that Lampung language instruction starts from elementary school up to senior high school. However, according to our informants, this alone is insufficient for the community to master the Lampung

language. Moreover, if learning the Lampung language does not become a regular practice, its use will gradually diminish.

Our informants agree that the Lampung language is one of the languages whose population is nearly extinct, with many people in Bandar Lampung hardly using it anymore. They also mentioned that the provincial government of Lampung consistently strives to preserve local languages, particularly the Lampung language, by encouraging its use among the community. Based on the data we have gathered, the Provincial Government of Lampung also endeavors to enhance the pride of Lampung residents in their local language by involving the entire ecosystem, including families, schools, and the community. Local languages are a valuable cultural heritage for the Lampung and Indonesian society. The existence of these languages must be continually safeguarded and preserved together.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted, it can be concluded that the Lampung language in Bandar Lampung is in a vulnerable state towards extinction. The number of Lampung language speakers in Bandar Lampung is decreasing, especially among the younger generation. This trend is attributed to population migration from other areas and the increasing influence of globalization, which marginalizes the Lampung language in daily life. One of the reasons for this is the lack of support from both the government and the community to preserve the Lampung language. However, there are still several other factors that can support the preservation of the Lampung language in Bandar Lampung, notably education. Lampung language has already been included as a local subject in schools in Bandar Lampung. This is certainly an important effort in instilling knowledge about the Lampung language among the people of Bandar Lampung from an early age. Furthermore, there is a need for continuous improvement in the language curriculum that can be implemented through higher levels of education.

In efforts to prevent the extinction of the Lampung language in Bandar Lampung, there is a need for more intensive and sustainable conservation measures. These efforts can be pursued through various means, including enhancing the role of the government. The government itself should provide greater support for the preservation of the Lampung language, encompassing policy initiatives, budget allocations, and raising awareness among the public.

The growth of community awareness is also something that needs to be cultivated among the people. They need to become more conscious of the importance of preserving the Lampung language. This can be achieved through various activities such as education, campaigns, and collaborations among communities. Conservation efforts for the Lampung language in Bandar Lampung should be undertaken collectively by the government, the community, and stakeholders. Through comprehensive and sustainable

efforts, the Lampung language is expected to maintain its existence and remain a crucial part of Lampung's culture.

Local languages are crucial for cultural preservation. This is influenced by the necessity of using local languages in various cultural activities, such as performing arts and traditional ceremonies. Without the regeneration of native language speakers, it can be ensured that the culture in those areas will slowly face extinction as well.

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