

**THE MAINTENANCE OF *CAKAP KARO* IN THE *PERMATA*
COMMUNITY SEMARANG**

Yuni Cristiyani Br Surbakti and Mytha Candria, S.S., M.A., M.A
English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University, Semarang

ABSTRAK

Essai ini disusun untuk mempelajari lebih mendalam tentang pemertahanan Bahasa Karo di komunitas Permata Semarang. Topik yang diambil penulis adalah alasan anggota Permata masih menggunakan Bahasa Karo saat berkumpul atau berkomunikasi dengan sesama etnis Batak Karo di Semarang.

Penulis menggunakan pendekatan sociolinguistik untuk menyusun dan mengolah data yang berupa alasan anggota Permata masih mempertahankan ataupun menggunakan Bahasa Karo saat berkomunikasi dengan teman sebaya ataupun dengan yang lebih tua dari mereka. Sementara metode studi yang digunakan adalah metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan metode observasi, kuisisioner serta interview 45 anggota Permata dari 180 anggota Permata. Sedangkan untuk metode analisis data, penulis menggunakan metode padan, yaitu penulis mencoba memadankan teori yang digunakan dengan data yang dianalisis.

Berdasarkan hasil analisis data, dapat ditarik kesimpulan bahwa ada kepadanan antara teori Sociolinguistik yang digunakan untuk menganalisis data, sehingga rumusan masalah dalam studi ini dapat terjawab dengan hasil analisis. Selain itu, hasil studi juga menunjukkan bahwa empat puluh lima anggota komunitas Permata Semarang masih dan tetap menggunakan Bahasa Karo saat mereka berkomunikasi di gereja atau pun dalam kegiatan Permata.

Kata kunci : sociolinguistics, language maintenance , bahasa Karo, komunitas Permata.

1. Introduction

The people of Indonesia usually use the word *Batak* for the people and languages of North Sumatera. However, the people of North Sumatera actually consist of six different groups who speak six different ethnic languages; the six ethnic groups are *Batak Toba*, *Batak Karo*, *Batak Pakpak*, *Batak Mandailing*, *Batak Simalungun* and *Batak Angkola*. The six ethnic groups of the North Sumatera speak six different languages; therefore, they cannot understand one another. The result is in the decreasing use of local languages, especially among the youths who prefer using *Bahasa Indonesia* in daily communication. *Bahasa* is used by all the six groups because *Bahasa* is understood by everyone in North Sumatera. There have been a number of studies of the

maintenance of *Tobanese*, *Mandailingnese* and *Simalungunese*, but there has not been a study of *Karonese*, *Pakpaknese* and *Angkolanese*. Research on *Tobanese*, for example, was carried out by Yolanda (2001). The percentage of language use in daily communication in Depok is 49,5% *Tobanese* language, 34,74% *Bahasa Indonesia*, 0,33% vernacular and 15,27% local languages. The percentage is taken from twenty five families or fifty respondents. Another study of the maintenance of *Tobanese* language was performed by Rumondang Siahaan (2002). Members of *Batak Toba* speech community in Medan recognize their language as a symbol of their ethnic identity, such recognition does not consistently accompany children speech behavior in their

linguistics activities. Ramlan Damanik (2009) conducted research on the Simalungun language. All groups (adolescent, adult and parents), the percentage of *Simalungun* language preservation is 75% or approximately forty-seven respondents from sixty respondents. The research into *Batak Mandailing* in Medan - Tembung was carried out by Asni Juliana Batu Bara (2012). *Bahasa Mandailing* is only maintained by the old generation. The existence of *Bahasa Mandailing* is only in old generation as parental generation (the second generation) and upwards generation (the first generation). In Semarang, there is a community of young *Karonese* named *Persadan Man Anak Gerejanta (Permata)* that attempts to maintain the use of *Karonese* language or *Cakap Karo*.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 *Karonese* People and Language

Karonese people originally come from *Karo* lands in North Sumatera and a small part of neighboring Aceh. The people of *Karo* consist of five clans; they are *Merga Silima*: Karo-Karo, Tarigan, Sembiring, Perangin–Angin and Ginting. Each clan is further divided into sub–margas, and there are eighty three sub–margas in total. *Batak Karo* people have clans because they are patrilineal.

Karonese language is divided into two basic styles:

1. Plain style, which is used for intimate or informal relationship. It is used by teenagers or university students to communicate each other.

2. High style, which is used to address higher status people with the purpose of showing great respect and formality. It is used by teenagers or members of *Permata* to respect older people.

2.2 Language Maintenance

Language maintenance is a situation when a speech community can maintain or continue using their language from generation to generation although there are conditions that can affect them to shift to another language (Peter Trudgill, 1978: 144). According to Donald Winford (2003:144), language maintenance refers to the preservation by a speech community of its native language from generation to generation. Preservation implies that the language changes only by small

degrees in the short run owing to internal developments and/ or (limited) contact with other languages. Bernard Spolsky (1998) argues that language maintenance is a situation where speakers continue to use a language even when there is a new language available.

There are factors language maintenance: were language is considered an important symbol of a minority group's identity, for example, the language is likely to be maintained longer. If families from a minority group live near each other and see each other frequently, this also helps them maintain their language. Another factor which may contribute to language maintenance is the degree and frequency of contact with the homeland." (Janet Holmes, 2001:63). Large number of speaker, Concentration of

living, Identity and Pride of culture, Better economic condition. (Donald Winford).

3. Research Method

This research is descriptive qualitative because in the research I describe the maintenance of *Karonese* language among the young people of the *Permata* community.

The population of this research is the members of *Permata* Semarang, i.e. one hundred eighty (180) people. There are university students and employers. The sampling method that I used in this research is purposive sampling. The sample of this research is forty five people that I chose purposive.

4. The Result and Discussion

4.1 The *Permata* Community in Semarang

The community of young *Karonese* is named *Persadan Man Anak*

Gerejanta (Permata). It was established on 12 September 1948 in *Gereja Batak Karo Protestan (GBKP)* Semarang. The purposes of *Permata* community are to gather *Karonese* people, especially young *Karonese* living Semarang, to maintain the relation between *Karonese* people in Semarang and North Sumatera, to maintain the identity of *Karonese* people.

Permata has a big role in encouraging their members to learn *Cakap Karo*. The community teaches and services the members how to speak *Karonese* appropriately, e.g. when the members of *Permata* are studying Bible, senior members or alumni of *Permata* teach the juniors or new member how to speak *Cakap Karo*. During new student admission, the senior members of *Permata* always speak *Cakap Karo* to new

Karonese students. The members of *Permata* also celebrate traditional *Karonese* events, such as *Pesta Tahunan*, during the event, the members of *Permata* have to use *Cakap Karo*.

4.2 Language Background of *Karonese* people in *Permata* community Semarang

Based on the data, there are twenty seven respondents learn *Cakap Karo* when they are two until fifteen years old and eighteen members learn it when they are sixteen years old until now. There are forty four respondents said that the parents learn *Cakap Karo* for them and four respondents study *Cakap Karo* from their environment, e.g. church, school. The impact of this situation make new members cannot use *Cakap Karo* to communicate with *Karonese* people because they

cannot respond the conversation. There are forty two respondents who get *Cakap Karo* from their environment in church because *Karonese* people use *Cakap Karo* in the church and three respondents do not get *Cakap Karo* by environment.

The parents use *Cakap Karo* when they communicate with *Karonese* people in home. *Cakap Karo* is used by the members to respect older people. The forty two respondents use *Cakap Karo* when they communicate with their family in home; three respondents do not use *Cakap Karo* because the parents do not learn *Cakap Karo* for them. There are twenty eight respondents of *Karonese* people who are active *Cakap Karo* because they are prefer use *Cakap Karo* than other language. The new members of *Permata* still use *Cakap Karo* because the new

language available needs to learn more. Seventeen respondents are passive *Cakap Karo* because they cannot speak *Cakap Karo*.

4.3 Reasons of the Language Maintenance of *Cakap Karo*

The reasons of the language maintenance of *Cakap Karo* are identity, user, environment and culture. Forty-four percent respondents said that they maintain *Cakap Karo* because of identity. Twenty-nine percent respondents keep on using *Cakap Karo* because of identity, culture, user and environment (mixed reasons). Eighteen percent respondents maintain *Cakap Karo* because of users. Seven percent respondents said that they maintain *Cakap Karo* because of environment, and two percent respondents told me that

using *Cakap Karo* is part of their culture.

Forty-four percent respondents said that they continue to speak *Cakap Karo* because of identity. According to Janet Holmes (2001:63), language is considered as an important symbol of a minority group's identity. People who have the same ethnic have to keep on using the language in daily conversation. They want *Cakap Karo* or *Karonese* language continues to exist, so the identity of *Karonese* people can be maintained for the next generation.

The second reason respondents maintain *Karonese* language is that of identity, culture, user and environment (mixed reasons). User is the people using one or more languages to communicate. *Karonese* people use *Cakap Karo* only for *Karonese* people, but they use

Bahasa to communicate with different ethnics. The members of *Permata* still use high style to communicate older people and plain style is used to communicate with the members of *Permata*.

Culture is the characteristics of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion and social habits.

Karonese people use *Cakap Karo* when they were attending the events of *Permata*, e.g. Celebrating Christmas, *Mbengket Rumah Baru* (*memasuki rumah baru*).

Environment relates to the fact that people live near each other. They use *Cakap Karo* when they live nearby, and they use *Cakap Karo* to communicate with other *Karonese* people because they are comfortable using it.

Respondent 40 said that environment and user are factors maintenance of *Cakap Karo* because she uses *Cakap Karo* only in the church or *Permata* community to respect the older people. Respondent 40 said that she used *Cakap Karo* in *Gereja Batak Karo Protestan (GBKP)* to show respect to the older people.

In a community where several groups of speakers speaking different language live, the group with more speakers or users has better possibility to maintain their language (Donald Winford, 2003:144). The number of *Karonese* in Semarang is quite small. There are only about eight hundred people who live in Semarang, only one hundred eighty people who join the *Permata* community. However, the language can be maintained because the users

use *Cakap Karo* when they communicate with one another. Respondent 14, 17, 32 and 38 said that *Cakap Karo* is the main language they use with other *Karonese* people. They use *Cakap Karo* to show respect to other *Karonese* people and to maintain *Cakap Karo*.

Based on Donald Winford (2003:144), a group of language speakers may succeed in maintaining their language if the language is considered to be closely related to culture. When language and culture are related, the users believe that the language is an important cultural identity. Two percent respondents maintain *Cakap Karo* because of culture. *Karonese* people use *Cakap Karo* when they have similar cultural activities in the *Permata* community. For example, respondent 26 said that

his activities in the *Permata* community are of his *Karonese* culture.

Along with Donald Winford (2003:145), other factors of language maintenance relates to the concentration of living. Families from a minority group live near each other and see each other frequently. This helps to maintain their language. Seven percent respondents maintain *Cakap Karo* because of environment. Respondent 18 use *Cakap Karo* when she is in the *Permata* community, which is strongly influenced by *Karonese* language and tradition. This has encouraged them to also use *Karonese* language or *Cakap Karo*. Respondent 15 and 39 share a boarding house, which enables them to use *Cakap Karo* in daily communication.

5. Conclusions

The essay focuses on the maintenance of *Cakap Karo* in the *Permata* community, Semarang. Its main purpose is to find out the factors that support *Cakap Karo* maintenance in the community.

There are four factors that affect the *Karonese* to maintain their language, i.e. identity, culture, user and environment. The more dominant factors are identity and mixed reasons (identity, user, culture and environment).

6. REFERENCES

Arikunto, Suharsimi. 1998. *Prosedur Penelitian Suatu Pendekatan Praktek*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.

Batu Bara, Asni Juliana. 2012. *The Maintenance of Bahasa Mandailing in Medan – Tembung*. 2 April 2014. (<http://digilib.unimed.ac.id/the-maintenance-of-bahasa-mandailing-in-medan--tebung-23851.html>)

Damanik, Ramlan. 2009. *Pemertahana n Bahasa Simalungun di Kabupaten Simalungun*. 2 April 2014.

(<http://repository.usu.ac.id/bitstream/123456789/5668/3/09E01969.pdf.txt>)

Holmes, Janet. 1992. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. New York & London: Longman.

Moleong, J.Lexy. 2007. *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya Bandung.

Siahaan, Rumondang. 2002. *Kajian Kasus Tentang Tingkat Pemertahanan Bahasa pada Masyarakat Batak Toba di Medan Berdasarkan Perilaku Pilih Bahasa*. 2 April 2014.

(<http://core.kmi.open.ac.uk/display/15391447>).

Spolsky, Bernard. 1998. *Sociolinguistics: Introduction to Language Study*. Canada: Oxford University Press.

Trudgill, Peter. 1978. *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction*. Great Britain: Pelican Books.

Winford, Donald. 2003. *An Introduction to Contact Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Yolanda. 2001. *Faktor Pemertahanan Bahasa Daerah Batak Toba di Depok*. 2 April 2014. (<http://lib.ui.ac.id/file?file=pdf/abstrak-20156181.pdf>)