

Local Language: Is it really gone?

Hieronimus Canggung Darong¹, Erna Mena Niman²
{ hieronimusdarong@gmail.com¹, ernaniman79@gmail.com²}

¹⁻²Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng, Indonesia

Abstract. The local language extinction is threatening. Since language is one of the culture's elements, the threat is not only for the local language users but also for the nation's culture. This study set out to investigate the factors that contribute to both language extinction and local language maintenance. The researchers employed a descriptive qualitative design with a phenomenology approach; the data were collected from 30 respondents through interviews. To get more data, observation and documentation studies were done. The research revealed that the local Manggarain language might be preserved through families, churches, and schools. Globalization, migration, intermarriage, and language policy also pose a threat to the existence of the local language in question. Thus, for the sake of existence, users should be encouraged to speak the local languages with the help of government policies.

Keywords: extinction, Manggarain, the local language, factors

1 Introduction

The threat of the extinction of local languages is a matter of concern in the community. The degradation of regional languages has had a severe effect on society. It is seen by behaviours ingrained in modernity and frequently transgressing cultural norms and ethics. This idea is exacerbated by injustice or gender bias (gender bias). This condition is extremely hazardous because it will deplete people's awareness of the values of local wisdom and the equality of their sociocultural lives [1]. In response, it is necessary to do an empirical study of indigenous languages in order to offer a critical discourse and factual recommendations regarding their viability and impact on social life.

Language survival is crucial for the preservation of culture and community identity. As such, this has been highlighted in numerous findings of previous studies. One method of enhancing identity and culture is using language [2]. Meanwhile, from a liberal egalitarian perspective [3], efforts undertaken to ensure language survival must be carefully addressed while paying attention to the features of society's sociocultural life. The community's longevity determines whether a language will survive in a particular community [4]. The same idea was reinforced by [1], who discovered that the original language of society was only kept alive by the elderly or particular groups, which led to the language's extinction. As a result, this calls for an effort or commitment to maintain language in the home, religion, and formal learning instruction [5], [6]. This is necessary to protect the identity and to control the norms, behaviours, and actions of the society [7], [8] including the practice of gender equality in social interactions. At this point, preserving a language is advantageous to preserving a culture

that involves all generations. Therefore, the role of informal and formal education is definitely required.

Along the line of the statement above, one of the local language studies that can be done is a socio-linguistics study. It studies how language is used and affected by the social context, time, place, events, and speech events. The study indeed refers to the realization that language use is tied to more than just following grammatical and syntactic norms. The language used must also align with the user community's social standards, reflected in practical language use.

There have been a lot of local languages. The Manggarain language is one local language that is still spoken today. The Manggarain language has grammatical, syntactic, and morphological rules, just like other local languages. It has a unique, distinctive characteristic making it different from others. More importantly, it adheres to the sociocultural norms of its user through its special pragmatic principles. The indigenous language of Manggarai is genuinely in danger of extinction, despite the fact that it is frequently used [9]. What are the contributing factors to this language phenomenon is a crucial question to deal with. In addition, do all Manggarain individuals disregard the presence of their native tongue?

Such questions are what this study seeks to investigate and find out. The expectation is that an effort would be made to ensure the survival of local languages both at the local government level, where policy is made and at the higher education level, where research is conducted. For students interested in language and linguistics, in particular, this research is also expected to be a source of feedback and teaching materials in the language learning process.

2 Method

The researcher utilized a qualitative design using a phenomenological method to deal with the focus of analysis. The data were gathered through observation, interview, and documentation study. The researcher observed and recorded the pertinent information. Regarding the interview, the respondents were chosen purposively. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 30 Manggaraian natives, including 15 men and 15 women from various educational backgrounds and places of residence. Most of them now reside in the town, while the other half have lived in the village. Five of the respondents were female college students aged 18 to 21. Meanwhile, the rest were senior high school graduates who were above 30, married, and had been raising their kids for over five years.

The researcher conducted a documentation study in addition to observation and interviews to identify or gather data/information relevant to the research focus. In this respect, documentation studies are utilized to round out the information from interviews and observations with additional data. The documentation information was thus in the form of a YouTube video documentary about the use of Manggarain language in the interactions. Subsequently, the researcher used [10] steps to process and analyze the data. All information was supplied at this point and was condensed to meet the needs of the researcher in order to address the research focus. Furthermore, a provisional conclusion was drawn after the facts were evaluated, interpreted, and given meaning. In order to ensure validity, the researchers double-checked the results to confirm the veracity of each piece of information they had collected and to support the proposition this study had developed.

3 Results and Discussion

The following table highlights the findings obtained from the observation, interviews, and documents. In this respect, the researcher obtained three themes and eight codes, and thirty-eight excerpts.

Table 1. Theme, code, and Excerpts

Theme(s)	Code(s)	Sample of the excerpt(s)
Language use and usage	Having insufficient Knowledge of local language use and usage	I need to learn about the rule of Manggarai. What I know is that the interlocutor responds and understands my words. "...My partners sometimes laugh at me. My words probably out of rule and context
	Language Existence	Positive Thinking "Manggarain language is good. It helps me to communicate with others. It also elaborates more on our discourse. Negative Thinking "...I am not sure my Manggarai language is perfect. I always use the Indonesian language with my friends, even in the family. The Indonesian language is more dominant. So "...I do not care at all. I use it. All I know is that having many partners in my social life—no matter the Manggarain language, Indonesian language or other languages.
Obstacles, Challenges, opportunities	condition	My parents always use the Indonesian language at home. My friends at school also use Indonesian as we talk. Only some use the Manggarain language.
	Marriage	"...But, that is the fact. The cross-marriage is probably bad, or it does not support me using the Manggarain language. My father is not a native of Manggarai.
	Job	I have been there since 2017. Five years. Now, I am here with my parents. My family moved there since my father was accepted for the job. So, I, therefore, have to adapt the language I use.
	Education	"...However, I learn the Manggarain language at schools. It is hard sometimes. However, as a student, I have to learn it. I always join the worship in the Mangarain language.

The data have been narratively portrayed to highlight the common and are essential to the findings mentioned above. Sample extracts from the participants support the narrative of this study. The participants mixed the pronouns "I" and "we" to allude to their individual or group identities. Based on the findings, there are some essential points regarding the existence of the local-Manggarain language. First, only ten respondents considered the importance of the Manggarain language. The use of their native language (Manggarain) was an effort to preserve their culture alive and a way to bring the family together. However, they mixed it with the national language or other ethnic dialect styles or blended it into some English words.

AB: *Saya selalu menggunakan bahasa Manggarai dengan teman dan orang di lingkungan saya. Itu sangat penting karena warisan leluhur dan bagian dari*

budaya. Anak-anak saya didik supaya bisa bahasa Manggarai...walaupun saya tetap berharap supaya mereka juga bisa bahasa lain seperti bahasa Inggris atau dialek bahasa lain karena yah..memang dunia sekarang kan begitu ya...tapi Bahasa Manggarai itu penting yak kan?

(Speaking to my friends and neighbours, I always use the Manggarain language. As a component of the Manggarain culture and the heritage of my forefathers, it is very significant. My kids are learning the Manggarain language. Although learning foreign languages or other dialects is expected for them as part of modern communication requirements, the Manggarain language is still significant)

The extract supported previous studies saying that it is essential for people to preserve their local cultural heritage in order for their children to understand their ancestry. As such, the local language is an essential component of this [11-16]. While they still wished for their children to learn national and international languages and integrate cultures into their lives, most parents felt embarrassed if they failed to regenerate their culture in their kids. Even though they did not want their children to pick up certain English cultural traits, they were happy to have both cultures in their children. As a result, raising their children is of significant importance. Most parents believed maintaining the local language was crucial to maintaining family and relative harmony. It was the only way their children could communicate with all their relatives, especially their grandparents, who were dispersed throughout the globe. Even more than in the pre-communication and pre-technology era, parents made a considerable effort and dedication to teaching their children the local language.

Additionally, the analysis shows that cultural perspectives, non-linguistic behaviour, and language proficiency all play a role in maintaining the local (Manggarain) language. This idea confirms earlier findings that the variables under consideration always compete with one another and interact with global norms, ethics, conduct, and manner [14], [17], [18]. Manggarain people are shown to be maintained through some domains that promote heritage language practices. These include religious rituals, schools, families, and cultural ceremonies.

Regarding the cultural rites, gender, age, and social role hierarchies are used in a specific micro-interaction to support the maintenance of the Manggarain-local language. The existence of the Manggarain-local language is still quite promising, even if it is used by the elderly and those who live in villages. Observation has shown that the language used by men differs from that used by women. Talking with them should be polite, soft, and tender. It is constructed so that culture plays an essential role in its usage. Men approach women to differ in their language since they prefer to revere them and see them as weak creatures. In the interim, age and social role hierarchies are other contexts in which to employ the local language in question. Like gender, the culture of a particular group within the community also plays a role in developing the local language. This is consistent with [19-23]. These researchers said that it is important to respect those who are older and in a higher position while using language. Deviating from such consideration is considered disrespectful and goes against the culture of the Manggarain people.

Concerning religious practices, the local language is still used. This occurs as two dominant factors. First, the religious institution is a controller. In this regard, it is more likely that people's spiritual lives are derived from religion [24], [25]. In addition to personal efforts, religious organizations play a crucial role in daily life. Religion-related policies can help to keep the local language alive. For example, Inculturation is encouraged in Catholic worship. It is done according to custom as well as using the people's local language. Hinduism in Bali is

closely tied to the local culture, and its rituals undoubtedly make use of the local language. As such, literacy skills are the focus to worship.

In addition to the domains in question, schools and families have a significant role in maintaining the Manggarai-local language. The data revealed that the two most frequently mentioned given by the locals for keeping up their local language were their children's education at home and school. Similar to how culture and religion played a major part in preserving children's oral performance in the previous section, these two domains require teachers and parents to place a strong emphasis on literacy skills, including reading and writing. This is consistent with [26], who discovered that teaching children the local language at school turns it into a supporting course. Children can participate in various activities to improve their understanding of the local language. In the meantime, as the children go back home, their parents still interact with them using their L1.

In the meantime, the rest ignored the role of the local language in their lives. In this context, there is a central issue raised regarding the reasons, namely the language change. Language aspects such as phonetics, morphology, semantics, syntactic structure, and others have changed. This happens for various reasons, including economy, to achieve communication objectives more efficiently and effectively, language contact, and cultural environment. The types could include lexical, phonetic, phonological, spelling, semantic, and pragmatic modifications. Data from observation and interviews confirmed some additional facts supporting the factors in question.

First is the existence of the majority language. In this sense, a community speaks two languages. Such two languages coexist in harmony. When one language is spoken more often than another, the other one may go unnoticed and eventually become extinct (words and phrases). The existence of the Indonesian language competes with the Manggarai language as the local language.

Additionally, language policies that emphasize using the national language for communication significantly impact the survival of local languages. The Indonesian language has been treated as a formal language for far too long. In the context of the socio-political aspect, this is quite problematic. In this respect, it can unite all Indonesian people in their communication. Since there are so many regional languages spoken in Indonesia (742) Ethnologue; Language of The World (2005), speaking Indonesian is the only means to communicate [27]. Local languages would yet suffer indirectly as a result of the policy.

The second is globalization. Western trends now influence young people in Manggarai. Regardless of the fashion, they switch (code-switch) and combine (code-mix) their utterances due to linguistic changes. Additionally, their local languages need to be respected. It frequently occurs in relatively young generations. One of the causes is their perception that the local language could be more elegant and tacky. While this is happening, a different language—like English or Indonesian—is valued more highly than the language used locally.

In addition to the influence of western culture, living in a multiethnic community is another factor that contributes to linguistic changes. As such; it results from immigration and intermarriage. Many Indonesians are forced to relocate to different areas to find jobs and get married. They coexist in the new location with locals and residents from other areas. As a result, individuals frequently practice bilingualism or even multilingualism, which impacts how frequently they speak their local languages.

BB: Bapa saya dari Flores Tengah (Ende). Kami menggunakan Bahasa Manggarai dan Bahasa Ende. Kami juga berkomunikasi dengan Bahasa Indonesia. Yah..banyak kosa kata bahasa Manggarai yang tidak saya pahami.

(My father is from Ende. In my family, we speak Endenese and Manggarain, respectively. In addition, we speak Indonesian. Sadly, many Manggarain words have been lost).

Additionally, the local language is now extinct due to the need for English competence in applying for jobs. Everyone must now deal with the English language because it is now widely used and more attentive. Indonesians put much effort into learning the target language. The local language, meanwhile, is regarded as uncompetitive.

AA: "*...anak anak kami harus bisa bahasa Inggris. Yah..terpaksa mereka harus dilatih sejak dini. Kami sebagai orang tua harus melakukan itu supaya mereka bisa bersaing.*

(The kids should be proficient in English. Therefore, it is essential to start teaching them English sooner. We ought to do it.

To date, the local language extinction still requires considerable attention. The factors mentioned include the influence of the dominant language, bilingualism or multilingualism, globalization, migration, interethnic marriage (intermarriage), a lack of appreciation for regional languages or a lack of intensity in their use, the impact of economic factors, and language policies, appear to be responsible for language loss or extinction. Cultural assets that are incredibly precious to the country may only be recovered if efforts are made to conserve them. Then, such language extinction tends to "bury" the cultural values.

As a result, intelligent efforts should be made to foresee or halt the occurrence of language extinction. Speakers' loyalty to specific community ethnic to use their local languages is compulsory. Although globalization has increased drastically and influenced them day by day, they should keep it high by using it proudly in their daily interactions. As a result, the efforts in question look overblown, despite the fact that globalization plagues us. However, if the government pays attention, it might be accomplished. The policies should encourage such initiatives to conserve the country's linguistic and cultural assets. Given the effects of globalization, it is crucial to demand that speakers or communities should be able to speak three languages at once, namely: national language as the language of unity, English as the international language, and their ethnic language; by doing so, the local language and the local culture might never be lost. Finally, in addition to speaker loyalty and government regulations, studies from numerous angles and even revitalization attempts for local language preservation may need to be taken more seriously. The young generation should be taught the local languages so that valuable cultural values can be applied to improve future living.

4 Conclusion

Although the Manggarain-local language is still used in daily interactions, extinction is still possible. A specific community's cultural values may be buried due to numerous factors. However, as long as people "pay attention" to always speaking the local languages in their daily contacts, the factors in question can be reduced. Additionally, there needs to be clarity in how language policies are implemented while considering the existence of local languages. If not, the culture will vanish once a local language is lost.

This study was constrained in specific ways. Further studies can research local language maintenance using questionnaires to get deeper data, as this study relied on interviews and observation. Additionally, this study was purely linguistic in nature. Further study might be carried out from different angles, such as gender bias in the use of the local language at a particular speech event, combined with different research designs. As such, the studies would be more intriguing.

References

- [1] A. Bissoonauth, "Language shift and maintenance in multilingual Mauritius: the case of Indian ancestral languages," *J. Multi. and Multi. Dev.*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 421-434, 2011, doi: 10.1080/01434632.2011.586463.
- [2] H. K. Tong and L. H. Cheung, "Cultural identity and language: a proposed framework for cultural globalization and glocalization," *J. Multi. and Multi. Dev.*, vol. 32, no.1, pp. 55-69, 2011, doi: 10.1080/01434632.2010.527344.
- [3] H. Lewis, "Language maintenance: a liberal- egalitarian approach," *J. Multi. and Multi. Dev.*, vol. 34, no.7, pp. 672-689, 2013, doi: 10.1080/01434632.2013.797985.
- [4] A. Urzu and E. Gomez, "Home style Puerto Rican: a study of language maintenance and use in New England," *J. Multi. and Multi. Dev.*, vol. 29, no.6, pp. 449-467, 2008, doi: 10.1080/01434630802147999.
- [5] G. Mejía, "Language usage and culture maintenance: a study of Spanish-speaking immigrant mothers in Australia," *J. Multi. and Multi. Dev.*, vol. 37, no.1, pp. 23-39, 2016, doi: 10.1080/01434632.2015.1029931.
- [6] B. T. Sari, A. Chasiotis, and F. J. R. Vijver, "Parental culture maintenance, bilingualism, identity, and well-being in Javanese, Batak, and Chinese adolescents in Indonesia," *J. Multi. and Multi. Dev.*, vol. 39, no.10, pp. 1-15, 2018, doi: 10.1080/01434632.2018.1449847.
- [7] A. K. Nguyen, "Space and time in Vietnamese heritage language maintenance," *J. Multi. and Multi. Dev.*, pp. 1-14, 2020, doi: 10.1080/01434632.2020.1744614.
- [8] L. Petti, C. Trillo, and B. N. Makore, "Cultural heritage and sustainable development targets: a possible harmonization? insights from the European perspective," *Sustainability J.*, vol. 12, pp. 1–24, 2020, doi: 10.3390/su12030926.
- [9] Y. S. Lon, *Hukum perkawinan sakramental dalam gereja katolik*. Yogyakarta: P.T Kanisius, 2009.
- [10] M. B. Miles and A. M. Huberman, *Qualitative data analysis*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications. 1994.
- [11] M. L. Barrios, and E. V. de Debat, "Global vs local: does it matter? ," *In S. Garton & K. Graves, International perspectives on materials in EFL*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2014.
- [12] L. M. Bauto, "Sociocultural Sociocultural values as community local wisdom Katoba Muna in the development of learning materials," *Historia J.*, vol.14, no. 2 pp. 195-218, 2013.
- [13] H. C. Darong, Y. H. Jem, and E. M. Niman, "Character building: the insertion of local culture values in teaching and learning," *J. Humanit. Soc. Stud.*, vol. 05, no. 03, pp. 252–260, 2021.
- [14] R. B. H. Goh, "The anatomy of Singlish: globalization, multiculturalism and the construction of the 'local' in Singapore," *J. Multi. and Multi. Dev.*, vol. 37, no. 8, pp. 748–758, 2016, doi: 10.1080/01434632.2015.1133628.
- [15] Y. S. Mahmud, "The representation of local culture in Indonesian EFL textbooks: rationales and implications," *Indones. EFL J.*, vol.5, no. 2, pp. 61–72, 2019, doi: 10.25134/ieflj.v5i2.1727.
- [16] S. Suswandari, "Incorporating beliefs, values and local wisdom of Betawi culture in a character-based education through a design-based research," *Eur. J. Contemp. Educ.*,

- vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 574–585, 2017, doi: 10.13187/ejced.2017.3.574.
- [17] R. Mungmachon, “Knowledge and local wisdom: community treasure,” *Int. J. Humanit. Soc. Sci.*, vol. 2, no. 13, pp. 174-181, 2012.
- [18] P. Vranic, V. Nikolic, S. Milutinovic, and J. D. Velimirovic, “Local sustainable development: a knowledge base for adaptation planning,” *Eur. Plan. Stud.*, vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 502-525, 2018, doi: 10.1080/09654313.2017.1420144.
- [19] H. C. Darong, “Pragmatic strategy of Indonesian English teachers in questioning,” *J. English Lang. Teach. Linguist.*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 145-162, 2020, doi: 10.21462/jeltl.v5i2.398.
- [20] H. C. Darong, A. E. Kadarisman, and Y. Basthomi, “Politeness markers in teachers’ request in classroom interactions,” *Nobel, J. Lit. Lang. Teach.*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2020, doi: 10.15642/NOBEL.2020.11.2.217-233.
- [21] J. Holmes, “Politeness, power and provocation: how humor functions in the workplace,” *Discourse Stud.*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 159–185, 2000, doi: 10.1177/1461445600002002002.
- [22] N. Nashruddin, F. A. Alam, and A. Harun, “Moral values found in linguistic politeness patterns of Bugis society,” *Edumaspul - J. Pendidik.*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 132-141, 2020.
- [23] D. Stukan, “Sociopragmatic failure: struggling with cross-cultural differences in communication,” *Open J. Anthropol. Stud.*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 27-36, 2018.
- [24] Y. S. Lon, and F. Widyawati, “Customary law before religion and state laws regarding marriage in Manggarai, eastern Indonesia,” *Indones. Law J.*, vol.9, no. 1, pp. 93-110, 2021, doi: 10.15408/jch.v9i1.16510.
- [25] Y. S. Lon, “Belis dan hari perkawinan: perempuan dalam budaya Manggarai, Flores, in *The first International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities*,” 2016, pp. 1055–1070. Jakarta: IPSK-LIPI.
- [26] S. Wilian, “Pemertahanan bahasa dan kestabilan kedwibahasaan pada penutur bahasa Sasak di Lombok,” *Linguistik Indones.*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 23-39, 2010.
- [27] F. H. Tondo, “Kepunahan bahasa-bahasa daerah: faktor penyebab dan implikasi etnolinguistik,” *Masy. Dan Budaya*, vol.11, no. 2, pp. 277-296, 2009.