

# The impact of parental language ideology and family language policy on language shift and language maintenance: Bilingual perspective

<sup>1</sup>Idaryani\*, <sup>2</sup>Fidyati

<sup>1</sup>Indonesian Language Education, Universitas Malikussaleh, Aceh, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Architecture, Universitas Malikussaleh, Aceh, Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author

Email: idaryani@unimal.ac.id

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## Abstract

*This study aims to investigate parents' language ideology and family language policy (FLP) among Acehnese families that impact on language shift and language maintenance of Acehnese as a heritage language. The participants of the study were 10 female parents from one of the suburbs in Lhokseumawe City, who have young children from 2 years to 15 years old. The study employed a descriptive qualitative method. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The result of the study shows that the majority of parents' belief that Indonesian is significant for their children's education, has resulted in parents prioritizing Indonesian for their children as the dominant language to speak at home. Furthermore, the family language policy adopted by parents has an impact on language shift among Acehnese children to the Indonesian language. Parents are reluctant to speak Acehnese to their children as a mother tongue and tend to abandon their heritage language. There are two significant points that are lost due to the consequence of parents' belief and there the family language policy to choose only Indonesian as a mother tongue to their children; first, it has led their children to grow as monolingual people that somehow is a big loss for the Acehnese children in order to gain various benefits culturally, cognitively, and communicatively from being bilinguals; second, Acehnese is under serious threat as Acehnese children ability in speaking their heritage language keep decreasing. Thus, strong efforts need to be done by all parties for Acehnese language preservation as a part of the unique identity of the Acehnese people.*

**Keywords:** Language shift; language maintenance; family language policy; parental language ideology

## INTRODUCTION

The regulation of the 1945 constitution stipulated that the State's official language is Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language). However, this policy has contributed a negative effect on the existence of indigenous languages in Indonesia. Also, this language planning policy which regulates Bahasa Indonesia as a means of communication at all school levels has caused the Indonesian people to shift their language to the Indonesian language (Ansori,

2019). Although this national policy is conducted based on the purpose of ***Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*** meaning unity in diversity, however, this policy finally threatens the existence of local languages (Arka, 2015). Javanese and Batakese languages are two examples of their speakers once shrank sharply from 1980 to 1990 (Septiyana & Margiansyah, 2018) because the Indonesian language was more favored as a speech community on their daily basis. Furthermore, Arka adds that Indonesian as the official language at all educational levels has exacerbated the existence of local languages, particularly for the local languages with minority speakers. It is because many local languages are still not properly recorded or even absolutely unrecorded both in verbal and written forms if compared to Javanesss, Madura, and Sundanese languages that have been well documented. Javanese Language for example has been available in google search machine.

Several research conducted shows that even some indigenous languages have been extinct due to the massive use of the Indonesian language. The research conducted by Sulistiyarningsih et al., (2017) indicates that some indigenous languages have been extinct in the eastern part of Indonesia. Other studies show that speakers of Javanese and Acehese consider that their heritage languages are 'not cool' not a language for science, technology, or business, and the language for country bumpkin people (Aziz et al., 2016; Nurani, 2015). The factors that cause these languages to be extinct are the speaker feeling embarrassed and are not confident to speak their indigenous language during social interaction (Ansori, 2019). Kayeli and Hukumina from Maluku are the examples of local languages that have extincted, and the Marori language from Merauke, Papua Barat is in the time of extinction because it just remains several speakers (Arka, 2010 as cited in Arka, 2015)

Indonesian has been a favored language and dominantly spoken as a speech community in Lhokseumawe city. In addition to that, nowadays Bahasa Indonesia is considered as the only sufficient language for all internal purposes (Amery, 2019). Therefore, Acehese parents nowadays seem to speak Indonesian dominantly to their children at home. However, this is problematic because when parents speak Indonesian at home meaning that Indonesian which is not a local language is used in the nonformal domain. Consequently, it can jeopardize the usage of Acehese as a local language and depletes its domain particularly at the home domain, the place that is to be the crucial domain for intergenerational transmission of Acehese language. The threat to Acehese as a heritage language seems obvious among Acehese children because parents are favored to raise their children to be monolingual with the Indonesian language as their priority. Alamsyah et al., (2011) in their study in five municipalities in Aceh province namely Banda Aceh, Lhokseumawe City, Aceh Besar, Aceh Jaya, and Aceh Barat, point out the factors that influence the parents to choose Indonesian as the first language to their children at home. Some of those are educational factors, Indonesian higher status as a national language, a dominant spoken language, the language as a symbol of aristocratic community, modern, and cool language.

Around twenty years or thirty years back, the pattern of intergenartional transmission of heritage languages as illustrated by Ewing (2014) in his work was actively applied by parents for Javanese language. Ewing described that

the parents used to speak Javanese at home with their children before school age, and children start learning Indonesian when they were in school. Therefore, the children kept learning Javanese from their parents at home and started learning Indonesian language when they entered the school. However, he highlighted that this pattern has been disturbed nowadays which consequently leads to the language shift from Javanese to Indonesian language among Javanese children. The same scenario has also happened among Acehese families. Previously, Acehese parents actively spoke Acehese at home to their children as a mother tongue and children learned Indonesian outside of their home formally and informally. However, nowadays this pattern has been changed among majority of Acehese families that resulted in language shift among the Acehese young generation. Some studies have raised the issues of language shift among young Acehese people (Al-auwal, 2017; Aziz et al., 2021; Aziz et al., 2016; Hidayati et al., 2020).

Therefore, family language policy (FLP) and parental language ideology among Acehese parents are significant to be explored because these factors determine whether or not, Acehese, the local language, is spoken at home. Acehese parents' ideology on what is good and useful of particular languages that should be spoken at home results in what languages are prioritized by the Acehese parents to speak, how many languages that parents speak to their children, and what the encouragement of parents is made to their children to be successful to master the languages. These factors also determine whether or not the parents prioritize their heritage language to be spoken to their children and allow their children to have contact to their parents' heritage language. Otherwise, the parents allow their children to learn only Indonesian at home which finally leads to language shift among Acehese children as what have been warned in previous studies {Formatting Citation}.

The previous studies have been widely focused on the language shift among young Acehese and Parents' language attitudes toward Acehese language. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by focusing on the issues of parental language ideology and the family language policy of Acehese parents and their implication to language maintenance and language shift toward Acehese language. This study aims to find out the following issue:

1. How many languages do parents speak? and how does it affect parents' language ideology and practice?
2. How does the Family Language Policy (FLP) among the Acehese family impact language shift and language maintenance to Acehese as a heritage language?

This research aims to find out the issues on the parental language ideology and the family language policy among Acehese parents at home and the implication on the use of Acehese language by parents to their children that results in the language shift and language maintenance of Acehese language as a heritage language from bilingual perspective. Therefore, this study is sociolinguistics research. According to Fishman et al. (1986) sociolinguistic is the study that focuses on language behavior, language attitude in society. In addition, Hudson (1996) states that sociolinguistics is research

that defines that sociolinguistics is the study of language about a society that includes the language rules, speech, speakers, and addressee.

### ***The status of heritage languages***

A heritage language is part of the speaker's identity that reflects its speakers' characteristics and the way of their thinking. Further Ansori (2019) explains that in general, a local language is used as a means of interaction and the speaker's identity, the way of thought, entertainment, creativity, and any other purpose outside of formal context. Thus, a heritage language is not used in a formal context such as a government office and educational institution.

Amery (2019) further points out that local languages are also significant and should be recognized because every language is not just a key to individual identity but also a storehouse of knowledge with its genius and specific areas of elaboration. Every language encompasses a specific worldview and cannot be translated into other languages directly. He adds that the maintenance of the language is strongly correlated to the self-esteem, cultural esteem of the speakers, and also its contribution to health and well-being. Furthermore, Amery claimed that when a language dies, we do not only lose the different systems and unique grammatical structure of the language but also the complex way of speaking of the language because every language has its unique way of expression, metaphors, idioms, and proverb that enriches the language. Each language encodes a particular view of the world, a way of life, knowledge of the environment, weather patterns, and medical plants, that have been developed for centuries or thousands of years. Amery (2019) further claimed less attention, less recognition, and those local languages are being treated less valued by their speakers. Therefore, Amery postulated that many things have to be done to preserve the heritage languages. Acehese language is important as an identity marker for cultural identity that embodies the reflected values from the religious region, famous saman dancing, unique cuisine, and traditional wedding ceremony. As one of the Indonesian heritage languages, Acehese language encompasses Acehese culture and transmits its culture from one generation to the next and each language encodes a particular view of the world, a way of life.

### ***Language shift of Acehese language***

Durie (1996, as cited in Al-auwal, 2017) declared that Acehese is a diglossia language because it is only spoken in villages but in the public domain and along with middle-class society Bahasa Indonesia is used as a means of communication to mark the prestige status and social status of the speakers (Al-auwal, 2017).

Language shift happens because of several factors including intermarriage, migration, demographic factor, and attitudes and values of language users (Holmes & Wilson, 2017). Some previous studies indicated the shift from Acehese to the Indonesian language in a speech community among Acehese because of several factors. The study conducted by Idaryani & Fidyati (2021) to 10 female parents in Lhokseumawe City revealed that Acehese parents have shifted to the Indonesian language in both in spoken and written form. They prefer speaking Indonesian language in places considered as "cool

places” such as in cafeterias and supermarkets as a speech community. In written forms, when using media platforms, the parents are more convenient using Indonesian because of efficiency factors and to avoid misunderstanding because the standard writing of Acehnese language is not available in media platforms such as what’s app and Facebook. Furthermore, the study conducted by Hidayati et al. (2020) showed the factors that influenced the shift of Acehnese among young Acehnese generation who resides in Deli Serdang, North Sumatera namely successful and social status factors. Another factor is intermarriage as is shown in the study conducted by Aziz & Daud (2016) toward intermarriage couples in Banda Aceh. The intermarriage couples choose to teach only one language to their children, Indonesian. Therefore, the couple’s attitudes can threaten the existence of a heritage language or language suicide. When the parents stop transmitting their heritage language to their children, their children will not have massive contact with their parents’ heritage language although their parents keep using their local language with their relatives and their friends. Furthermore, the shift of Acehnese Language to Bahasa Indonesia is also due to language preference, habit, and their environment (Ulfa, 2018). According to Ulfa in her study of 30 young Acehnese in Langsa Cit, she reveals that the environmental factor is strongly influenced by the educational background of their friend. The environment factor becomes the most crucial factor among the others that causes the shift of Acehnese language among young people in Langsa City.

### ***Language ideology and family language policy from bilingualism perspective***

Language ideology is someone’s belief whether or not the language should be used (Abtahian & Quinn, 2017). Thus, parental language ideology at home influences family language policy (FLP) to be shaped at home. FLP determines what language is spoken and not spoken. Parental language ideology determines whether the parents raise their children as monolingual, bilingual, or even multilingual. However, for the Indonesian context, it is quite a loss when parents decide not to raise their children to be bilingual because Indonesian children have a big opportunity to be bilingual or multilingual speakers (Muhammad, 2013). If the children are raised as monolingual people, they can lose some benefits as bilinguals because basically Indonesian community is composed of hundred different ethnic groups and hundred local languages. Therefore for Indonesian context, it is the best potency for Indonesian children to grow up as bilingual or even multilingual. She further adds that Acehnese children can acquire Indonesian faster and easier than Acehnese because they are well exposed with Indonesian language formally and informally such as from all media, schools, friends, markets. However, Acehnese parents who previously grew up as bilingual children, decides no longer to speak Acehnese to their children and start speaking Indonesian at home since an early age to their children. This parental language ideology has resulted in discouragement of parents for their children to learn their heritage language. It also prevents the Acehnese children from acquiring their heritage language from their parents, and to gain various advantages from being bilingual.

The advantage of being bilingual cognitively is that bilingual people are more outperformed in an academic matter. Bilinguals also can prevent age-related cognitive decline and postpone the symptoms of dementia. Bilingual is considered a cognitive reserve (Bialystok et al., 2012). Cognitive reserve is the idea that involves stimulating both physical and mental activity to keep the cognitive function healthier. If bilingualism contributes to cognitive reserve, then bilinguals should maintain higher levels of cognitive functioning and cope better with symptoms of dementia than monolinguals who are otherwise equivalent. In addition to that, Baker (2011) adds that being bilingual, people can have advantages cognitively, communicatively, and culturally. Baker postulates several types of raising the children to be bilingual people with different environmental contexts. Those categories are early childhood bilingualism, one person one language, home language is different from the language outside of the home, mix languages type, and delayed introduction of the second language.

Further, the study conducted by Seo (2021) on a Korean family highlighted that parents' strong belief that their children can benefit from being able to speak English for their children, encourage their children by speaking and practicing English with their children at home. Therefore, the interconnectedness of what parents' beliefs determine the parents' support on language use at home that results in acquiring the language successfully. His study shows that parents believe that English status as an international language is important therefore, parents prioritize their children to speak English at home and Korean outside the house. Likewise, parents' belief that the Indonesian language should be the priority language to be learned for their children and their concerns that their children are not able to speak Indonesian very well, has resulted in the language choice of the parents toward Indonesian before their indigenous languages. Parents are worried that using their heritage language as a mother tongue to their children can hamper their children in school time (Abtahian & Quinn, 2017).

Family language policy (FLP) is crucial factor that determines of what language the parents speak to their children and support their children to speak the particular language at home domain. Family language policy consists of three components namely language ideology, practice, and management. Ong (2021) defines language policy as a language planning that is used in the family domain by family member. In addition to that, Baker (2011) defines parents' language policy as " a private language planning" that influences the parents' choice of what language the children speak at home. Family language policy determines the efforts and the behavior of parents in language use at home that finally shapes the children to be monolinguals or bilinguals. Furthermore, Hollebeke et al., (2020) underlined that FLP is a paramount factor in organizing language use in a family domain.

The study was conducted by Ong (2021) on four Chinese single mothers in Penang, Malaysia in speaking either their heritage language or dominant language at home, and how the role of mothers in language shift and language maintenance to their heritage language. It reveals that two mothers encourage to speak their heritage language to their children for emotional attachment to their family. However, two other mothers feel the socioeconomic and educational

pressure in maintaining their heritage language which leads the language shift to the dominant language with their children such as Mandarin and English. Ong also outlines that preserving heritage language is challenging to the mothers if speaking the dominant language is a necessity.

## **METHOD**

The design of this research is descriptive qualitative to explore the issue of parents' language ideology, the family language policy among Acehnese family, and its implication on language shift and language maintenance of Acehnese as a heritage language. Qualitative research aims to understand the meaning of an individual or group phenomena toward social or human problems (Creswell, 2014 p.32). According to Hale & Napier (2013) in qualitative methods, the researcher needs to explore, interpret, and describe the quality and characteristics of the concept. Therefore, descriptive qualitative is employed in this study because the data is primarily presented in the form of words obtained from the in-depth interview excerpts as primary data. The data is analyzed based on the conceptual framework of FLP, parental language ideology, and language shift and maintenance.

### **Participants**

There are ten female parents from one of the suburbs in Lhokseumawe City involved in this study. All participants were selected by using purposive sampling. The participants are parents who are Acehnese native speakers. All participants were born, raised, and live in Lhokseumawe. The parents have children aged from 2 to 15 years old. Participants' ages are from 25 to 47 years old and the participants are from endogamy married couples. Thus, the intermarriage family was excluded in this research. The Respondents were coded as follows:

*In.45.P1 (participant's initial, participant's age, participant number).*

### **Instruments**

The instrument of this research is an in-depth semi-structured interview. The data was collected by visiting the participants one by one to their homes. The interview was conducted after the agreements were acquired. The session of interviews was recorded by the voice recorder tool. The interview questions consisted of five questions and each of interview lasted from 8 to 15 minutes. The process of interviews was conducted by using the Acehnese language.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The result of the study shows that all participants are bilingual parents because they can speak both Acehnese and Indonesian fluently. This result of the study is different from Alamsyah et al. (2011) work who found that some parents were not fluent enough in speaking Indonesian and feeling not confident to speak Indonesian.

Participants started speaking Acehnese previously from their parents before school age. All of them learned Acehnese at home from an early age. Afterward, they started learning Indonesian when going to school (the school period of participants were varied depending on the participants' ages ranging

from the oldest one 47 to the youngest one 25 years old). However, all parents declared the same statement that they did not have language barrier issues due to Indonesian language competence when going to school because their teachers taught them the school subjects in both languages: Indonesian and Acehnese. E refers to the excerpt of the interview. The following are the excerpts from the participants:

E1. "Manduem ibu guru asai geupyan ureong Aceh, miseu watei SD ngeon SMP geujampue-jampue meututoe bahasa Indonesia ngoen Aceh watei geujelaskan pelajaran bak i kula, jadi ya hana masalah watei bak ikula adak galoem jeut that bahasa Indonesia" Ti.45.P2

(All my teachers at SD and SMP mix between Indonesian and Acehnese when explaining the subjects so I have no issue in understanding the courses in my school although My Indonesian was not yet fluent)

E2. "Guru loeng watei geumeungajar geupake ban dua bahasa. Karena aneuk mit na lei yang galoem jeut bahasa Indonesia. Jadi guru geujampu2 watei geuterangkan pelajaran." In.47.P1

(My teachers were using two languages when teaching us. It is because many children were not able to speak Indonesian therefore, they mixed both Indonesian and Acehnese languages while explaining the subject).

Although the parents are bilingual, the result of the study reveals that seven of the participants speak Indonesian as their priority language for their children at home. Therefore, the participants' experience as bilinguals who were raised with Acehnese as their mother tongue at home and Indonesian as their second language does not influence their belief and language practice to their children at home. On contrary, their belief is that Acehnese is less important to be spoken for their children as the first language. The study also construes that although parents admitted that they have no difficulty when studying at school if they speak Acehnese as their first language, parents still considered that Indonesian should be learned first by their children before Acehnese due to their reasons for educational purposes. Moreover, three parents further admitted that they do not speak Acehnese to their children because they consider that Acehnese is spoken for old-fashioned and bumpkin country people. Here are two excerpts from participants:

E3. Iloeng meututoe Bahasa Indonesia dari ubiet jadi watei jimeututoe Bahasa Indonesia beik meujampoe logat ngoen Bahasa Aceh. Nyak beik jipeukhem lei ngoen watei jak ikula lagei yang loeng alami awai."Ba.32.P3

(I speak Indonesian to my daughter from an early age so that her Indonesian can be dialect free from Acehnese and that she is not bullied by her friends at school).

E4. "Miseu leong sering that Bahasa Indonesia keu aneuk loeng. Ayah jieh yang sabei geumeututoe Bahasa Aceh, aleih pakeon. Padahai nyoe koen jameun lei meunan. Uroeng mandoem lei pakek Bahasa Indonesia. Bahasa Aceh jeut jimeurunoe keudroe bak pak nek jieh. Koen na uroeng-uroeng tuha yang meututoe Bahasa Aceh." Ma.27.P5

(I most of the time Speak Indonesian to my daughter. Her father prefers Acehnese, I do not know why. The time has changed you know. Most people speak

Indonesian now. Our children can speak Acehnese from their grandfather. They're still old people Speak Acehnese.)

This study is in line with the study conducted by Alamsyah et al., (2011) that some of the factors that parents choose Indonesian as the first language in their home is because parents consider Indonesian is as a 'cool' and modern language. Therefore, the result of the study shows that Indonesian is favored by parents is not only due to educational pressure but also due to negative beliefs of parents who considered that Acehnese is out-of-dated, the language that is spoken for old-fashioned and rustic people. Therefore, parents' belief that parents should speak Indonesian to their children from since an early age to neutralize the Acehnese dialect on their children. Parents feel embarrassed when their children speak Indonesian but it is intertwined with the Acehnese language.

### ***The impact of family language policy among acehese family on language maintenance and language shift of the Acehnese***

Almost all of the participants decide that they use Indonesian dominantly as their first choice to their children, and stop giving contact to their children at an early age. Their reason is Indonesian is an important language for their children's education. The following is the interview excerpt from one of the participants:

E5. "Iloeng meututoe Bahasa Indonesia aju ngoen aneuk karena perulei watei ijak sikula. Jadi dari lhee i droeu aneuk long, yang nomor dua yang jet Bahasa Aceh, leubeih lancar dari sodari jieh dua dro laen, jieut keudreo dari lua bak ngoen jieh." Li.35.P4.

(I speak Indonesian to my children because Indonesian is much more important for them when they go to school. from the three children I have, my son number two is more fluent than his two other siblings. He learned it from his friend outside of the house).

The parents expect that their children learn Acehnese outside their home. Some parents admitted that they are concerned about educational issues that may be faced by their children at school time and the parents are also worried the lack of Indonesian competence of their children can be a hindrance for their children to study at school. Therefore, the majority of participants decide Indonesian as the only language spoken to their children for an early age.

Because Indonesian is a medium of instruction at all educational levels, parents decide to speak Indonesian to their children as their first language at home. The parents intend to anticipate the hindrance that their children may face at school. Although most of the parents admitted that they also teach Acehnese to their children however this is not used in a balanced way and Acehnese is just spoken occasionally and becomes the last priority. The way of parents in teaching their heritage language is like they teach a foreign language. The study shows that children are encouraged to speak Indonesian and are less supported in using Acehnese. The following are the excerpts from the interviews:

E.6 "Ilong yoew loeng miseu entuek aneuk loeng hanjeut Bahasa Indonesian, jieh payah jieh watei i jak sikula."

(I am so worried that if I first speak Acehnese to my children they will not be able to communicate appropriately in Indonesian when they go to school.) In.47.P1

E.7 “ Iloeng peruenoe bahasa Aceh entuek mantoeng watei ka lancar Bahasa Indonesia, watei umu peut thoen”

(I will speak Acehnese to her if she is already fluent in Indonesian. I will speak Acehnese later after she is four years old). Ba.32.P3

The parents prioritize Indonesian to speak to their children before school age; however, most parents are not concerned when their children are not able to speak Acehnese fluently. Even some of the participants admitted that they keep speaking Indonesian dominantly to their teenage children when the teenager has been well competent in speaking Indonesian without paying attention to their children's skill of Acehnese.

However, two other participants choose Acehnese as their top priority to speak to their children because they believe that their children can speak Indonesian sooner or later outside of the house. So, the parents decided to speak Acehnese as a means of communication with their children at home. They favored Acehnese as the first language to their children because they considered that Indonesian can be easily learned by their children outside of their home. One participant who has two daughters admits that her children do not face any difficulty in school and her daughters can adapt well during teaching-learning sessions. Her daughters can speak the Indonesian language very well although without having learned it from her at home from the very beginning. Furthermore, another participants who also has one daughter and one son also stated that her daughter whose age is three years old is learning Indonesian by herself by watching tv program. This is in line with the result of study conducted by Muhammad (2013) that Acehnese children are easily exposed to Indonesian language from many resources and they can learn Indonesian faster than Acehnese. Another participant also stated that their children started speaking Indonesian intensively at school and dominantly use Acehnese at home from an early age. Subsequently, she also admitted that their children face no issue with the language barrier at school and her children can adapt well to the subjects in school. The following are the excerpts of interviews from two participants:

E.8 “Awaknyoe dua bandum bahasa Aceh jimeututoe, dudoe jeut keudroe watei ka dijak sikula, dimeuruno bak ngoen ngoen bak sikula, hana cit masalaha sapue, adak pelajaran jieh pih jeut diikuti, hana masalah sapu.”Ti.45.P2

(They are two, my daughter speaks Acehnese from a small one but they never face difficulty at school and they can understand the subject in school).

E9. “Loeng peugah bahasa Aceh ngoen aneuk mit. Jeut keudroe jieh Bahasa Indonesianyan dari jinonton film bak tivi mantoeng aneuk mit ka juet jieh”. Ya.25.P6

(I speak Acehnese to my daughter. She can learn Indonesian by herself from tv program)

When the participants were asked, "Do you speak both Indonesian and Acehnese to your children at the same time,?" Most parents responded that they speak Indonesian, the only one language dominantly and expect that their

children learn Acehnese from other resources such as tv programs, youtube, or neighbors around their house. The following is the excerpt from the interviews:

E10. "I speak just Indonesian first to my children because it is more important than Acehnese. They can speak Acehnese later outside of the house. They can learn it from the outside of the house because we live along with the Acehnese community."Ba.32.P3

### **Discussion**

The study indicates the language choice of the parents of participants were made subconsciously and spontaneously. However, it is contrary to the participants themselves. Even the participants are bilingual and were able to learn Indonesian fluently outside of their home, it does not influence the participants' belief that their children also can learn Indonesian fluently outside of their home. Instead of speaking Acehnese to their children early, parents believe that Indonesian should be the priority language and important to be spoken but parents seem not to be concerned if their children cannot speak Acehnese.

Parents feeling pressure has resulted in language policy in their home to stop speaking Acehnese to their children and put Indonesian as the only language spoken to their children has triggered the language shift among Acehnese children to Indonesian.

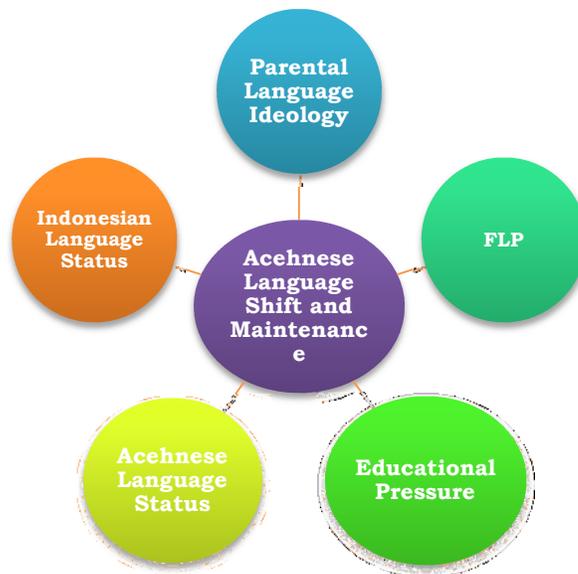


Figure1. The illustration results of the study

Acehnese children do not only acquire massive input in the Indonesian language informally such as media or pre-school environment but also at home, the domain that should be crucial for heritage language maintenance. Thus, Acehnese children are getting less and less opportunity to have contact with Acehnese, particularly at home domain although according to the national

language policy that Indonesian is not necessarily to be spoken outside of the school. Consequently, language shifts happen gradually not only among young Acehnese but also among Acehnese children. This finding is in line with two previous studies conducted by Aziz et al. (2021) and Ismail et al., (2021) confirming that Acehnese children's speaking ability in their heritage has been decreased.

Furthermore, parents are worried that their children can not speak Indonesian well has caused the parents to abandon their heritage language by deciding not to expose their children to Acehnese language a mother tongue to their children. However, the parents stop speaking Acehnese due to educational pressure is exaggerated because participants once experienced that they were able to speak Indonesian fluently outside of their home when Indonesian were not dominantly used as today. Although their children are not exposed to Indonesian earlier, their children are still able to learn Indonesian faster compared to the Acehnese language as has been stated by Muhammad (2013). Nowadays with the massive use of Indonesian in almost all domains (all media, books, tv programs, and so forth), children can have contact intensively with the Indonesian language compared to twenty or thirty years back when the parents were still children.

In terms of Acehnese parents that are reluctance to speak Acehnese to their children because of feeling embarrassed if their children in speaking the Indonesian language is intertwined with Acehnese, reflect parents' belief on Acehnese is a language for lower class and uneducated people instead of considering that Acehnese is a valuable marker of their unique identity and do not any longer consider Acehnese language as an important cultural identity to their children. This has caused parents to discourage their children to speak Acehnese from an early age and make the children lose contact to Acehnese language as a mother tongue. Parents do not want Acehnese language reflects cultural self-esteem on their children. This is red alarming considering that Acehnese is only spoken language and is still not well documented, and the way of Acehnese parents treat their heritage language as an embarrassing, old fashion language, and the language for uneducated people can cause Acehnese language as one among other heritage languages to be extinct as what Ansori (2019) has warned in his study that some languages in the eastern part of Indonesian become extinct is because their speaker feels embarrassed and ashamed to speak their heritage languages. Amery (2019) describes that the self-esteem and cultural esteem of the speakers is strongly correlated to their heritage language maintenance. Therefore, the policy of among Acehnese parents to stop speaking Acehnese to their children at home because of parents feeling embarrassed can result in language shift among Acehnese children that children is getting less and less contact with Acehnese amidst the massive exposure and dominant use of Indonesian language.

Furthermore, the family domain as the prominent place for Acehnese language preservation for the young Acehnese generation does not appropriately occur. The pattern of Acehnese language maintenance as suggested by Ewing (2014) has been changed nowadays. It is expected that in the next twenty years from now these children are not able to speak Acehnese fluently when they grow up as the teenagers that put Acehnese as one of the moribund languages. These

children as they grow up to be the parents tend to raise their children as monolingual and lose their heritage language. Thus, Acehese is expected to be extinct in the near time.

The parents' policy to expect their children to speak Acehese outside of their home is very ironic along with the massive use of Indonesian language among Acehese people as Alamsyah et al., (2011) point out in their study that Indonesian becomes the dominant language use by Acehese. Unfortunately, Acehese parents' ideology on how important Indonesian has resulted in treating Indonesian as if it is like a foreign language that is difficult to have contact with their children and their children should be learned intensively at home. However, in reality, Acehese language is no longer dominantly used by Acehese people and it is rare to be exposed to Acehese children in non-formal context both in spoken and written form. Apparently, parents expect their children to learn the Acehese themselves outside of the house although in reality, the Acehese language starts losing its speakers and its domain, and the resources in Acehese verbally and written forms are scares for their children. This kind of policy among Acehese parents is the worst scenario for Acehese language maintenance because the majority of Acehese parents consciously abandon their heritage language amid the phenomena that Acehese children are getting difficult to have contact with.

Furthermore, parents' policy to speak only one language to their children at home is another big loss. The dominant use of Indonesian by parents at home and the exaggerated feeling of educational pressure among parents has resulted in the family language policy of among Acehese parents which contributes negative impact on Acehese language preservation. The policy to raise their children as monolingual and ignored the opportunity and advantages of their children for being bilingual or even multilingual people is deeply regrettable. Thus two prominent points are lost due to parents' ideology and their family language policy; first, the shift of Acehese language among Acehese children which put the position of Acehese on a serious threat, and the loss of opportunity for Acehese children to be bilinguals.

Furthermore, it is suggested that parents have some choices for child-rearing of being bilingual. Based on the theory postulated by Baker (2005), parents can start to raise their children to be bilingual from an early age. Parents can speak both Indonesian and Acehese at the same time. The OPOL (one parent one language) strategy is effective and seems more successful. However, for parents who are not worried about their children's competence in Indonesian, parents keep speaking Acehese at home, and children are expected to learn Indonesian outside of the house either formally such as in school, or informally such as from their neighborhood or from television program. Another alternative method as suggested Baker (2011) is that parents can mix Acehese and Indonesian at the same time at home. Parents speak both Acehese and Indonesian in a balance way. The last option is that parents can delay introducing Indonesian to their children from an early age because of the Indonesian status as an educational language and are dominantly used in an educational environment and government offices. Besides, Indonesian language resources are easy to access and its materials are available either in spoken or in written forms. On the contrary, Acehese as a heritage language

is underdocumented and only spoken language to the speakers that cause Acehese children are not easy to have contact with. Thus, parents first should introduce the Acehese language first to their children. This aims to give a strong foundation in Acehese to their children among the dominant use of the Indonesian language.

The limitation of this study is that the data was gathered only one month and without any observation. The data was only based on in-depth interviews on the parents as the participants in this research. Therefore, in future, Acehese teenagers should be involved to investigate the language barriers issues at school among Acehese teenagers. Further research is needed to investigate the bilingual issue and family language policy among Acehese families and the effectiveness of local content at schools that impacts on Acehese language maintenance.

## **CONCLUSION**

The status of the Indonesian language as the official language at the educational level has resulted in the dominant use of Indonesian in almost all domains. The policy that requires Indonesian as a medium of instruction from basic school to university level has given the consequences that Acehese parents (mothers) are reluctant to speak their vernacular language to the children at home because they believe that it causes detrimental consequences for their children when school age. Consequently, this situation shapes the family language policy among the parents to raise their children as monolingual people by only speaking one language, Indonesian. Parents' belief that Indonesian is the only most important language for their children has caused two major losses for Acehese children, namely, losing an opportunity to be bilingual people and gain various benefits from being bilingual people, and children also lose their heritage language as part of their cultural identity. Another consequence is that Acehese children start shifting from their heritage language to Indonesian which indicates the position of Acehese in serious threat due to parents tend to associate their heritage language as the old-fashioned language and not for educated and high-class people.

Therefore, strong effort needs to be done by parents and by all parties especially by Acehese governments to give wider space on the use of Acehese in a variety of domains and Acehese language should not be abandoned but should be out-front as a valuable self-esteem identity for Acehese children, alongside with the Indonesian language. All this can not be realized without having a good awareness of Acehese parents and the proactive involvement of policy decision-makers at all levels in the Aceh province.

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