

The Maintenance of West Marsela Language in Nura Village

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Abstract

This study examines the preservation of the West Marsela language in Nura Village, Masela District, Southwest Maluku Regency. This study is a post-positivist descriptive qualitative research. The research was carried out from January 23, 2023, until February 23, 2023. This study's data includes verbal expressions in the vocabulary of the West Marsela language, utilized by the inhabitants of Nura Village, Masela District, West Southeast Maluku Regency. The data collection techniques employed included field notes, interviews, and documentation. The researcher serves as the instrument in this study, supported by a job analysis table. The findings of this study suggest that the preservation of the West Marsela language is confined to familial and religious contexts, with minimal utilization among children and adolescents. The percentage data reveals that in the family domain, the maintenance of the West Marsela language is 10% for children, 10% for adolescents, 40% for adults, and 100% for the elderly. In the religious domain, usage is 0% for children, 33% for adolescents, 67% for adults, and 67% for the elderly. The utilization of the West Marsela language among children and adolescents is significantly constrained, as they predominantly employ Ambon Malay.

Keywords: *Language Maintenance; Marsela West Language; Southwest Maluku*



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INTRODUCTION

The local language constitutes the cultural wealth of a society. A regional language epitomizes the essence of a self-sufficient culture. Regional languages encapsulate the wisdom of a society, embedding cultural values within them. Consequently, regional language serves as a reflection of the society of its speakers. The preservation of regional languages has emerged as a significant phenomenon amidst the controversy regarding the transition from native languages. Linguistic maintenance and linguistic shift are two facets of the same phenomenon. They both exist concurrently. The manifestation of these linguistic phenomena results from the aggregate of language choices. Language choice refers to the outcome of a linguistic selection made by a language community or multilingual individuals. The speaker is proficient in multiple languages, enabling them to select the language for speech acts via single language variation, code-switching, and code-mixing (Nurhayati, 2013; Mardikantoro, 2016; Widiyanto, 2016).

Language is crucial in nearly all aspects of life, as an individual's experiences, emotions, and thoughts can only be communicated to others through spoken or written expression (Chaer, 2004; Chaer, 2014a; Chaer, 2014b). People find it difficult to conceive the implications of a world devoid of human language. This indicates that language is a crucial instrument in human existence; therefore, the inhabitants of Nura Village, as speakers of the West Marsela language, must proficiently master the local language, particularly the West Marsela language in Nura Village, Masela District, West Southeast Maluku Regency, to prevent the language from becoming extinct. Initial observations indicate that the Marsela Barat language is nearly extinct due to the inflow of individuals from neighboring villages who are impacting its usage (Nikodemus Wakim). The West Marsela language is utilized by the inhabitants of LTB Village, Uiwili Village, Nura Village, and Lawawang Village. The East Marsela language encompasses Telalora Village, Babiota, and Iblaimumta. The Central Marsela language comprises Marsela Village, Bululora Village, and the Serili language spoken in Serili Village. The West Marsela language, recognized as a living language and essential for communication among the inhabitants of Nura Village, is currently encountering several challenges. As a result, the Western Marsela language is nearly extinct. The inhabitants of Nura Village do not utilize their parents' ethnic language for communication; instead, they employ Ambon Malay, whether conversing with parents or among peers. The usage domain of the West Marsela language has diminished due to the encroachment of Ambon Malay. The researcher is keen to investigate and delineate the extent of West Marsela language usage within the Nura Village population. The primary research topic of this study is: What is the status of West Marsela Language preservation in Nura Village, Masela District, West Southwest Maluku Regency?

According to Sumarsono (in Chaer, 1990), language maintenance can be achieved by a small group of individuals due to various factors, including (1) settlement area. His analysis indicates that if the residential areas of various social groups within the community differ, there will be no impact on the preservation of their language. Tolerant disposition. Sumarsono's analysis indicates that a social group's tolerance within the community persists as they consistently utilize their regional language for communication, despite frequent instances of code-mixing with L2. The Islamic disposition of Sumarsono's research subjects is characterized by a lack of accommodation or adaptability to their surrounding environment. The existence of strong commitment or fidelity to the utilization of L1, employed by that social group within the community. The perpetuation of the L1 transfer attitude over generations.

A crucial element in preserving a language is the allegiance of its supporting community. Such dedication ensures that language advocates will perpetuate their language over generations. Widiyanto Eko asserted that language maintenance can be achieved through various methods, including employing it as a means of communication and a vehicle for cultural expression. According to existing literature, numerous studies have investigated language maintenance; however, no research has yet been undertaken on language maintenance in West Marsela. Several researchers have investigated matters pertaining to language preservation, including Diana Sri (2021) in her study "Betawi Language Maintenance in Kemayoran District." Diana's research findings revealed that the implication scale for the Betawi language operates on a percentage scale with a scalability of 94%. Yohanis Hukubun (2018) undertook a study entitled "Shifting and Maintenance of the Alune Language in Murnaten Village, Taniwel District, West Seram Regency, Ambon". This study sought to investigate the dynamics of the Alune language's preservation and transformation in Murnaten Village through a descriptive qualitative methodology. The research findings

reveal patterns of Alune language usage, Alune language shift, variables influencing Alune language shift, forms of Alune language preservation, and factors and strategies for Alune language preservation.

METHODS

This research is categorized as post-positivist descriptive qualitative research, as it seeks to validate assumptions rather than test hypotheses, aiming to generate data through written or spoken expressions from individuals and observed activities (Moleong, 2010). The study was carried out at Nura Village, Masela District, Southwest Maluku Regency. The physical boundaries are as follows: to the west, Babar Island; to the east, the Tanimbar Islands; to the north, Dawelor Island; and to the south, the Australian Sea. The research was conducted between January 23, 2023, and February 23, 2023.

This study's data include verbal expressions in the vocabulary of the West Marsela language, utilized by the inhabitants of Nura Village, Masela District, Southwest Maluku Regency. The data source for this study is the community of Nura Village, comprising speakers of the Nura language. To acquire pertinent data for the research problem, the researcher identified multiple informants for interviews, specifically: the Village Head (government), Religious Leaders (religious domain), Youth Head (youth sector), Ordinary Community Families (familial context), and children or adolescents in Nura Village. The data collection techniques employed included field notes, interviews, and documentation. The researcher serves as the instrument in this study, supported by a job analysis table. Furthermore, questionnaires were employed to gather data. The outcomes of interviews and direct observation were utilized to enhance the data acquired from the questionnaires. The questionnaire comprises two sections: the first section includes inquiries aimed at collecting personal information from the respondents, including gender, age group, educational attainment, and occupation. The second section comprises inquiries designed to collect information regarding the linguistic selections made by the informants during interactions in particular contexts. Subject to revisions by the researcher and subsequently finalized by expert or supervisor evaluation. The questionnaire results were evaluated by calculating the proportion of responses for each answer option using the formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100$$

P = Percentage number

F = Frequency of responses

N = Number of respondents

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings from the questionnaire distribution and interviews indicate that the preservation of the West Marsela language in Nura Village is severely restricted. This can be substantiated by field research data indicating the extent of WML utilization in the subsequent areas.

Maintenance of West Marsela Language in the Family Domain. Derived from a questionnaire of 20 questions responded by 35 respondents, there are 5 questions pertaining to the family domain, with 5 respondents providing their answers. The aggregated data indicated that WML responses were provided 15 times, while MAL responses were offered 30 times. The results indicate that the prevalence of WML and MAL among child and teenage respondents is 10% for WML, as this demographic only comprehends and utilizes a limited number of commonly employed words in daily interactions with parents and peers. Examples are monamem (already consumed), klaten (let us proceed), wane sesereki (you possess an unappealing visage), among others. Currently, 90% of MLA usage occurs due to the absence of WML heirs implemented by parents for their children and adolescents, leading to a preference for MAL in everyday communication.

The prevalence of WML usage among adult responders is 100%, while MAL usage is nonexistent at 0%. WML is frequently utilized in communications among parents, including fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, and grandparents. Meanwhile, MAL is employed when communicating with children and adolescents who

have not adequately mastered WML. The interview results indicate that WML speakers in Nura Village sustain WML by consistently employing it in all customary processes. WML will also be incorporated as a local content subject in educational institutions and transmitted to the younger generation.

Maintenance of West Marsela Language in the Government Domain. The data analysis results depicted correspond to a questionnaire of 35 questions answered by 20 respondents. In the governmental sector, four statements have been addressed by four respondents. The subsequent aggregation of the results indicated that WML was utilized 10 times, while MAL was employed 6 times. The data shown in diagram 8 indicates that the utilization of WML and MAL among adult respondents is 62.5% for WML, as WML is predominantly employed in governmental contexts when the marinyo communicates information from the head of state to the population. Furthermore, WML is utilized at meetings between the village chief and traditional elders, as well as during customary events like village Musrembang meetings. Concurrently, MAL is utilized 37.5% of the time. MAL is utilized when certain community members lack a comprehensive understanding of WML. According to the interviews conducted by the researcher with the sources, the village government's attempts to sustain WML involve its use in all contexts, including familial, governmental, and educational settings. This is implemented to enable younger generations to comprehend and excel in WML.

Maintenance of West Marsela Language in the Religi Domain. According to the data analysis presented derived from a questionnaire including 35 questions administered to 20 respondents, 3 questions within the religious sector received responses from 7 participants. The subsequent aggregation of the results produced data indicating WML responses occurred 11 times and MAL responses 19 times. The percentage results depicted in diagram 9 indicate that respondents in the religious sector, namely youngsters, exhibit 0% usage of WML or are non-users of WML. This is due to the fact that children of that age have not yet attained proficiency in WML. Furthermore, there was an absence of an inheritance mechanism in this context. Simultaneously, 33% of adolescents using WML, while the majority of teenage respondents had not yet proficiently learned WML. WML is utilized exclusively during specific occasions, such as ethnic religious activities conducted by a pastor, necessitating written and read communication if the pastor is not a local resident. The use of WML in maturity is 67%, and in old age, it remains at 67%. This is due to the utilization of WML when conversing with other WML speakers. Furthermore, WML is utilized for customary events in the village hall. MAL is utilized only by youngsters, as they have not yet acquired proficiency in WML, resulting in a higher frequency of MAL usage in their communication. Currently, the utilization of MAL is 67% in adults and 33% in the aged population. MAL is utilized by teenagers, adults, and the elderly when communicating with children or adolescents who have not yet acquired proficiency in WML.

The interview results indicate a deficiency in WML mastery among children and adolescents in this area. WML, utilized in the religious sphere, is recognized just by a select group of individuals. Furthermore, there is no succession mechanism for WML for subsequent generations. In this field, the utilization of MAL remains predominant in comparison to WML.

Maintenance of West Marsela Language in the Education Domain. Based on the data analysis results, the graphic is consistent with the questionnaire that was issued, which comprised 35 questions to be answered by 20 respondents. In the religious sector, there are 3 questions to be answered with Yes/No, which were answered by 7 respondents. After that, the responses from these outcomes were combined, resulting in data showing WML answers 2 times and MAL answers 19 times. The proportion of WML retention gained by teens was 10%, which is because most respondents in this age group have not learned WML well. Therefore, students choose to employ MAL in their regular communication, both in teaching and learning circumstances and outside of them (outside of school). Meanwhile, the use of WML among adults is 33%. This is because WML is used while connecting with colleagues teachers during break time. The use of MAL among child speakers is 100%, teenagers 100%, and adults 67%. The use of MAL among children and adolescents in this domain is higher than MAL. This is because they have not yet learned WML, and additionally, WML training has not been established in schools.

Based on the interview results, the efforts made by WML speakers in Nura Village to keep WML alive are by implementing WML learning during local content learning hours. Additionally, WML is being passed down to the younger generation so that the usage of WML among young people continues to increase and does not become extinct.

Basic Vocabulary of West Marsela Language. This section will describe the basic vocabulary of the Marsela language, which is used in various domains of neighborhood, work, and church within social interactions.

Neighboring Domain. From the exchange, 12-year-old Evan invites 20-year-old Kristo to go to the sea to fish. The utterance occurred at home and at sea, with a free translation employing MAL and WML. MAL was used by individuals aged 5-20, but WML was always utilized by those aged 30-90.

Table 1. Conversation that Take Place at Home and at Sea

Malay Ambon Language	Indonesia Language	West Marsela Language
Evan: <i>Mari katong pi ka lau</i>	Evan: Let's go to the sea.	A: <i>ipo kla ulor</i> B: <i>Mip klaten</i>
Kristo: <i>Io mari katong pi</i>	Kristo: Let's go.	A: <i>Mlyernu in tawruk</i>
Evan: <i>Ose dapa ikang banyak sadiki</i>	Evan: Did you catch a lot of fish or a little?	B: <i>lyernu la mone</i> -
Kristo: <i>Beta dapa sadiki sa</i>	Kristo: I can do a little.	

Work Domain. The following exchange takes place between a teacher and a pupil who are in a classroom. The teacher asked the pupils how they were doing and asked a student who needed to go to the lavatory.

Table 2. Conversation between Teacher and Student

Malay Ambon Language	Indonesia Language	West Marsela Language
Teacher: <i>Ana-ana apa kabar?</i>	Teacher: How are the children?	Teacher: <i>Oyan onter lume?</i>
Students: <i>Kabar bae pak</i>	Students: Good news, sir	Students: <i>Peslon olyer</i>
Teacher: <i>Niken mau pi ka mana?</i>	Teacher: Where does Niken want to go?	Teacher: <i>Niken mle lome?</i>
Students: <i>Mau ka Wc pak</i>	Students: I need to go to the restroom, sir.	Students: <i>Oww mla Wc olyer</i>

Church Domain. In the West Marsela language in Nura Village, within the church domain, there is a hymn in Hymn No. 7 of the Indonesian Protestant Church that was adapted from Indonesian to West Marsela. This song is usually sung during Sunday services (ethnic services).

West Marsela Language	Indonesia Language
<i>Kwaire tewlye mukromte Kweeke kwarlah laani Liye nyerononlah mukromte Mipo knuukii</i>	Give thanks to the Lord, call upon His name, sing to the Lord, and sing psalms.
Reef:	Reef:
<i>Klarulki mukromtela ramte Klaruki nunne laani Yeperpo oli oniyer Wyewkerlah mooru</i>	Praise the Lord, my soul, praise His name. I will sing to the Lord all my life.
<i>Ramno otareki mukrom Meenyeer po mnuulki ow Owta nmenoo tlee plolle Nemoye neemkay</i>	My heart is ready, O Lord, to sing and praise, for you are good, faithful, and true.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings on the maintenance of the West Marsela language in Nura Village, it can be inferred that the residents of Nura Village utilize two languages in their everyday communication: West Marsela and Ambon Malay. However, in daily interactions, MAL is the more dominant language utilized compared to WML, which is only used at particular times, and its speakers are likewise only a small portion of the Nura Village community. This is owing to the absence of inheritance from parents to the next generation, making the process of sustaining WML very minimal. Additionally, just a small minority of

native WML speakers in Nura Village still comprehend and utilize WML in daily interactions with other WML speakers. The maintenance of WML in the familial and religious spheres is relatively limited for children and teenagers. This can be seen in the percentage figures from the data obtained, where in the family domain, the process of maintaining the West Marsela language for children aged 10%, adolescents 10%, adults 40%, and the elderly 100%, while in the religious domain, children aged 0%, adolescents 33%, adults 67%, and the elderly 67%. The use of the West Marsela language for children and adolescents is extremely modest because they are more dominant in utilizing Ambon Malay.

In the neighborhood and education domains, children and adolescents do not engage in any language maintenance process at all. This may be seen in the percentage statistics obtained, which are: for the neighborhood domain, children aged 0%, teenagers aged 0%, and adults 40%. While for the education domain, children aged 0%, teenagers 0%, and adults 33%, suggesting the maintenance process only occurs in adulthood, although in tiny numbers. In the area of government, the process of its preservation is quite significant and this only occurs among adult speakers, with a rate of 62.5%. The preservation of WML in Nura village can be done by parents teaching WML to their children so they can communicate in WML, utilizing WML for daily communication in the community, and during worship events, especially in the worship liturgy that has been determined to employ local ethnic languages. Nura village should also make this one of the ways to preserve WML and make WML a local content subject in schools so that through this local content learning, students and teachers in schools can also use and preserve WML.

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