THE ATTITUDE OF ROHINGYA TEENAGERS TOWARDS THEIR LANGUAGE

[1]Lonni Nur Iffah Nasution

[1]*STKIP Padang Lawas, Indonesia*

Cross ponding authors' gmail: iffahnasution@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study dealt with language attitude of Rohingya teenagers toward their ethnic language in Medan. A qualitative descriptive research design was applied. The aim of the study was to know the attitudes of Rohingya teenagers towards their ethnic language. The subject of this research was eighteen of the Rohingya teenagers at the age 15-21 years old. The instruments used for this study were observation and interview. The data was analyzed by using interactive models of Miles & Huberman (1984) technique. Based on the data analysis, it was found that Rohingya teenagers realized their language attitude in three ways, i.e: they use Rohingya language at home, they use Rohingya language at religion domain and they use Rohingya language in friendship domain. It was also found that the attitudes of the Rohingya teenagers caused by some reason, i.e: because they are loyal and maintain the Rohingya language, because they are proud and make the Rohingya language as their identity, and because they have awareness of language norms towards Rohingya language.

Keywords: *Language attitude, Rohingya teenagers, descriptive qualitative*

INTRODUCTION

Rohingya people who fled their country for many years live in refugee detention in Medan. They fled from their country due to ethnicity conflict in Rahkine state Myanmar. They are detained in number one immigration detention at Jl. Jamin Ginting precisely at Beraspati hotel. In this detention house there are 144 Rohingyan people they are children, teenagers and adult. Some of the children and teenager are entered to the school. These refugees expected help and reach out from UN which is distributed from IOM and UNHCR. The refugees got meal three times a day, besides they also obtain their daily life's needs.

In detention center the Rohingya people are educated by IOM that provides teachers to teach Rohingya people. Many of them cannot read and write and also illiterate. Having been able to speak and write Bahasa Indonesia, Rohingya people also get additional knowledge namely the skill of English which is regarded beneficial to the Rohingyan future.

Rohingya people in a certain condition get influenced from the multilingual people. Regardless of their domination who live in detention center. Nevertheless Rohingya people tend

to speak another language which is more dominant they are English and Indonesia, because Rohingyan children attend school in Medan and they are good at Indonesian language.

Cultural adaptation of Rohingya people with local people of Medan goes well and there is no serious problem although they experience a cultural shock at their first arrival. Cultural adaption occurs because of several aspects such as language, foods and way of dressing.

One the phenomena found by the researcher in the field is that the Rohingya people have already been able to speak Bahasa Indonesia in communication with the voluntiers, local people and the visiting guests.

SUBTOPIC

Learning a language is closely related to the attitudes towards the languages (Starks & Paltridge 1996). In the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1992) 'language attitudes' are *The attitude which speakers of different languages or language varieties have towards each others' languages or to their own language. Expressions of positive or negative feelings towards a language may reflect impressions of linguistic difficulty or simplicity, ease or difficulty of learning, degree of importance, elegance, social status, etc. Attitudes towards a language may also show what people feel about the speakers of that language*.

Language attitude has been defined as the strong "positive or negative emotions experienced by people when they are faced with a choice between languages in a variety of situations or are learning a language" (Dyers 1998).

People's attitude towards language can be seen from how the language is used. One of the ways to know how a language used in multi ethnic speech by using Fishman's theory (1972) about domains of language use. Fishman propose the concept of domain to describe the behavior of the speakers of language in bilingual community. He describes the behavior of the speakers of language in the community through classifying the domain places.

Based on Fishman (1972) domain is a socio-cultural construct from topics of communication, relationship between communicators, and locales/setting of communication, in accord with the institution of a society and the area of activity of speech community in such a way that individual behavior and social patterns can be distinguish from each other and yet relate to each other. (cited in Marjohan, 1988). Therefore, the languages used by people are influence by many factors.

Fishman (1972) states that the factors which influence the concept of domain are topic, role relation and locale. He says that topic can be a regulator of language use in multilingual settings. For example: someone changes his or her language to interlocutor's language when language when discuss certain topics. Marjohan A. (1988) says that role relation means that languages you are using are determined by the interlocutors you speak with. For example: father speaks to mother, child speaks to mother, and mother speaks to child. He also states that locale means that the place where the conversations take place influence the languages you are using.

According to Tanner (1967) there are factors of choice to be setting in locale. The factors are content or topic, social distance and motivational factors. In social distance, there are two dimensions: vertical and horizontal dimensions. The vertical dimensions means that the languages use are determined by relative position of someone that is compared with others. Marjohana (1988) stated that you have to respects someone who is above you in terms of status, age or marital status. The horizontal dimensions refer to the relative coleseness of someone with others. You tend to use a low code if you speak to someone who is closet you in terms of degree of friendship, sex, ethnic background, religious background or educational background. Someone has motivational factors when he or she is interested to speak with the interlocutors or interested about the topics even manipulative.

Domains (Fishman, 1971; Lieberson, 1980) are defined as total interactional contexts of communication, such as the home, work, school, etc. whereas a language might be maintained in some domains, it may be displaced. According to Ferguson (1968), for example, people in bi dialectal or multi dialectal society use two or more languages for internal communication. Usually, one language is used to support and express one set of behavior, attitudes and values, whereas another is used for different behavior, attitudes and values.

Human communication is a complex social process and this process is doubly complicated by bilingualism. Factors like age, sex, ethnicity, education, topic, setting, role relationship, may all come to affect the code choice. Fishman (1965) thinks that the people, the situation, the function and the topic of interaction are the most important.

Dorian (1981) in Shin Yuang 2005 stated that the use of certain language associated with home, religion and work domains. She also found that the age and identity of interlocutor outweighed almost all other domain factors in making code choices.

According to Fishman (2001) the language use is analyzed through five domains, they are: family, friendship, religion, education and employment domains. Each domain has its own roles, such as; participants, setting, and topic. The participants of the domains of language use are those who involve in the conversation; the setting of the domains of language use is the time and place where the language is use; and the topic of language use is about what issue being talk.

As consequent, Crystal (2000) defines language attitude as the "feelings people have about their own language or the language of others". These two definitions do not cover other aspects of language attitude.

In addition, Garrett (2010) defined language attitudes based on the general disposition to react favorably or unfavorably to a class of objects. He concluded that an attitude is an evaluative orientation to a social object of some sort, whether it is a language, or a new government policy, etc. In other words, language attitudes are distinguished from other attitudes through their object. Therefore, language can be considered an object being seen as favorable or unfavorable. Subsequently, language attitudes reflect tendencies to evaluate languages favorably or unfavorably (Baker, 1992).

Howover, Richards et. al. (1992) catered for the missing elements in the first two definitions when they defined language attitude as attitudes which speakers of different languages or language varieties have towards each other's languages or to their own language. According to them, expressions of positive or negative feelings towards a language may reflect impressions of linguistic difficulty or simplicity, easy or difficulty of learning, degree of importance, elegance, and social status. They also stated that language attitude studies could be categorized thus: (a) those that explore general attitudes toward language and language skills (b) those that explore stereotyped impressions toward language, their speakers, and their functions and (c) those that focus on applied concerns (language choice and usage, and language learning).

Therefore, different language related objects were explored as representatives of language attitudes. However, there could be various possible relations among the attitudes toward these diverse objects. These attitudes might be identical, strongly correlated, might overlap to a certain extent or might not even be associated. There could be cases when a favorable attitude toward a language coexists with an unfavorable attitude toward its speakers or vice-versa. One can positively value a language, but hold a negative attitude toward learning it, or, on the contrary, one may hold a negative attitude toward a language, but consider that

learning that language is important (Edwards, 1985). Even more, the attitudes toward different objects could influence each other. For instance, attitude towards a language might arise from, or be influenced by, attitude towards the people who spoke that language.

Related to above explanations, Garvin & Mathiot (1968) classified the characteristic language attitude, namely:

1. Language Loyalty

Language loyalty is an attitude that encourages the speakers of language to maintain their language viability from the adverse impact of foreign language. In other words, it desire of the speakers to maintain and sustain a language, even if it necessary to prevent the interference from foreign language. The loyalty of speakers to use and maintain the language indicates the positive attitude of the speaker.

2. Language Pride

Language pride is an attitude that encourage a person or group of people to make the language as a symbol of personal identity or as their group identity, and it can also distinguish them from the others groups. The pride of the speakers to use their language indicates the positive attitude of speaker, but if the speakers are not longer proud or shy to use their language, they are already included as people who gave negative attitude toward the language.

3. Awareness of the language norms

Awareness of the language norms is an attitude that encourages the use of language carefully, corrective, polite, a descent by the speakers. It encourages the speakers of language to use the language in accordance with applicable norms. The language awarness was reflected in the responsibility, attitude, and feeling of having a language that raises the willingness to foster and develop the language. Awareess of language is an important factor in determining the use of language.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in qualitative research design in order to describe language attitudes of Rohingya people towards their languages. Qualitative research describes and interprets what it is concerning with condition or relationship that exist, opinion that are held, processes that are going on, effect that are evident, or trends that are developing. Qualitative design attempts to describe what is going on and what data shows. The data of this research were

the utterances, the utterances are words, phrase, sentences and clause, and this research focus on sentences of Rohingya teenagers in Medan, while the source of the data of this research were eighteen Rohingya teenagers with the range age 15-21 years old.

RESULT/FINDING

The Rohingya teenagers realized their attitude towards their ethnic language in some ways. They use Rohingya language at home, they use Rohingya language at religion domain, and they use Rohingya language in friendship domain.

Overall, the language attitude of the Rohingya teeangers towards their ethnic language in Medan shown in the table below.

No	Language attitude indicators	Positive attitude	Negative attitude
		Participants	Participants
1.	Use Rohingya language at home	1,2,3,6,7,8,9,10,11,12, 13,14,15,17,18	4,5,16
2.	Use Rohingya language at religion domain	1,2,6,8,17,18	3,4,5,7,9,10,11,12, 13,14,15,16
3.	Use Rohingya language in friendship domain	6,8,9,17,18	1,2,3,4,57,10,11,12 ,13,14,15,16

DISCUSSION

After analyzing the data, there are some points that are considered as the importants ones to be discussed. Based on the findings in this research, the Rohingya teenagers have a positive and negative attitudes towards their ethnic language. It is what Chalak & Kassain (2010) state about language attitude. They argue that someone's attitude towards a particular might be either positive or negative.

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According to Holmes (2001) the language use realized in five domains: family, religion, education, and employment domains. Having analyzed the data, it was found that the Rohingya teenagers realized their attitudes towards their ethnic language in three domains only: family domain (at home), friendship domain and religion domain. It means not all of the Rohingya teenagers use Rohingya language in all domain of language use. As Holmes (2001) states that positive attitudes support efforts to use the language in a variety of domains, but it is not exactly happen to the Rohingya teenagers in Medan. Not all the Rohingya teenagers use Rohingya language in the public areas because they live in Indonesian area, not all the Rohingya teenagers use Rohingya language at home because they want to master the other language, not all the Rohingya teenagers use Rohingya language in friendship because they live among people who are not the Rohingya people.

According to Holmes (2001) the effort of nucleus family in using their vernacular language could help the language maintain. It was in line with the statement of Holmes about effort of family to help maintaining the vernacular language. Based on the data analysis, the teenagers of Rohingya always use Rohingya language as medium of communication at home with their family. The use Rohingya language at home has significant role in maintaining Rohingya language since the member of family or children can hear the language from their parents and the children can practice it.

Positive attitude shown by the respondents is a sort of their respect to rohingya language as their identity. The respondents feel proud to be Rohingya people, as another ethnic who proud to be their ethnic, interview with respondents support this reason, and this perception helps Rohingya people maintain their vernaculer. Holmes (2001) states that ethno linguistics also related to the attitudes of th language user to their language. When their language is seen as an important symbol of ethnic identity, it will be maintained longer.

However, positive attitude shown by Rohingya teenagers is limited to some domain namely family domain. In other words, the respondents also show negative attitudes towards Rohingya language. In the data analysis it was found that respondents show negative attitudes especially when they communicate with others in friendship domain and religion domain. They prefer using Indonesian language to be easily interacting with their friends. It is similar with Holmes (2001:52) said that there ia a pressure from the wider society to speak the dominant language. The use of the dominant languages regards them as a sign of successful assimilation in

the new environment. Morever, they speak Indonesian language with their friends. They use Indonesian language because in their surrounding the dominant language used is Indonesian langauge. In order to be easily in communication among them, so, they "get on" in the society with friends by using Indonesian language.

Due to the negative attitude thay have towards Rohingya language, it meant that the repondents don't use the Rohingya language in their daily interaction and their language is replace by another. Morever, indonesian language is national language and official language which used as a lingua franca among ethnis in order to communicate and to understand each other. So, the pressure from Indonesian language to Rohingya language seems to be unavoidable, as Sneddon (2003) states that the pressure of Indonesian is very great and leads to their endargerment.

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