

Disenchantment with the Vulnerable Liabuku Language

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ABSTRACT:

In Baubau City, Southeast Sulawesi, there is a dying dialect called Liabuku. Liabuku sub-district is home to just fourteen native speakers of this language. Particularly among younger generations, Liabuku is no longer heard on a daily basis in the sub-district. According to Wolio, Muna, Kulisusu, and adoption in Indonesia, Liabuku is rapidly declining and may soon go extinct. Subsequent languages may eventually supersede Liabuku, leading to its extinction. This prompted the author to investigate the Liabuku language and create a dichotomy regarding it in order to breathe new life into it. To clarify what happened, we employ a qualitative case study approach. According to the study's aims, the researcher used purposive sampling to choose which informants to interview.

KEYWORDS: literature, dialect, bau bau, custom, orator

1. INTRODUCTION:

Research conducted by the Ethnologue Language of Sulawesi has established the great significance of the four languages spoken there: Kaimbulawa, Kulisusu, Pancana, and Tukang Besi. On the other hand, you should be cognizant of the fact that Ciacia, Kamaru, Kodeoha, Kumbewaha, Lasalimu, Moronene, Tolaki, Waru, Wawonii, and Wolio are among the hundreds of endangered languages. The Busoa language family has undergone significant changes, and the fate of Taloki and Liabuku is also a source of concern (1,2). Two languages that are almost extinct are Taloki and Liabuku. The fate of the Liabuku language is bleak, with just fourteen native speakers (3). The Liabuku language is currently spoken exclusively in the Liabuku and Waliabuku sub-districts. The Walibuku sub-district is home to 1,761 people, while the Liabuku sub-district is home to 1,879 people, according to the Baubau City Statistics Bureau. There are 14 native Liabuku speakers out of 3,640 in the two sub-districts, and their average age is 60-70 years (4). Languages with a small speaker base will have problems, says Crystal. Xu and Sheremet'eva (2024) found that languages with fewer than 100 speakers are highly vulnerable to extinction.

Revitalization efforts were essential to prevent the Liabuku language from becoming extinct. Efforts to revitalize the Liabuku language aim to restore its significance. The purpose of language revitalization is to restore a language that is at risk of extinction due to declining usage or a lack of speakers (6). Hinton adds that, in terms of language revitalization, the two primary objectives are (1) increasing the language's accessibility to non-native speakers and (2) equipping native speakers with the skills to effectively utilize the language in various contexts (7). An approach based on community learning can be beneficial for the Liabuku language area. The community's learning environments will be modelled after two or more families, or they will use community centers such as churches and village halls.

If the Liabuku language is to be revived, it must first be polarized. In order to illustrate the community's situation, the author of this qualitative study focuses on traditional leaders, school teachers, and homemakers as groups directly related to the preservation of the Liabuku language. This study aims to investigate the liabuku language at the user level, identifying patterns of development and obstacles to improve our understanding of comprehensive handling strategies.

2. METHODS AND METHODOLOGY:

A qualitative model based on case studies was employed for the research. By delving deeply into one or more particular instances, the author is able to enhance their comprehension of real-life occurrences. The case study approach allows

researchers to investigate a topic by looking at it as a whole, taking into account all of the relevant social, cultural, political, and historical factors (8). Baubau City was selected as a research site due to the author's strong desire to study the vanishing Liabuku language and its speakers, as they are on the verge of extinction.

This qualitative research study employs interview methods to delve into the experiences of informants (9). Purposive sampling, in which participants are intentionally chosen based on predetermined criteria, was one research strategy employed by the author. According to the author, this study should only include individuals who are well-versed in the history of the Liabuku work language, those who speak Liabuku as a first language, and families whose primary language is Liabuku. Key informants who were interviewed in-depth included traditional leaders, educators, and housewives (10,11). The informants were identified by the author using the aforementioned criteria. to a broader community.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Liabuku, like other regional languages, greatly influences the daily lives of its speakers, particularly the elderly. A deep understanding of local traditions and history is evident in everyday language use (13). No matter the setting—at home, in the market, or at a social gathering—people in the Liabuku sub-district speak Liabuku. The elder generation tends to speak Liabuku more frequently than Indonesian or any of the modern languages because of its fluency. The Liabuku language is widely used in many cultural events, including traditional ceremonies, poetry, and folklore. Elders utilize the Liabuku language to teach the younger generation about the community's history, beliefs, and traditions. By continuing to speak their native language, the Liabuku people are able to maintain their unique culture and heritage while also standing out from other ethnic groups.

Modernity, globalization, and social change pose the greatest threat to the Liabuku language and other oral traditions. The younger generation's lack of interest in learning and using regional languages is a significant problem. Liabuku is a language that is being pushed out of use more often due to globalization and the rapid spread of dominant cultures and languages in the sub-district of Baubau City, where it is located. Because national languages are so prevalent in everyday life, schools, and the media, lesser-used languages like Liabuku are on the decline (14).

Liabuku is one of many regional languages that lack comprehensive documentation. The language is in danger of dying out as its native speakers dwindle, and no one has bothered to record it in writing, audio, or video. Only in urban areas can one find Liabuku speakers, and these places have a huge influence on people's lifestyles, transforming their oral traditions into more contemporary cultures that conform to the dominant language. People often downplay the usefulness of oral traditions, such as the Liabuku language, because they seem irrelevant to contemporary life. This is particularly evident when individuals relocate from their native areas, leading to a decline in the usage of the native language (15). Migrants are more inclined to speak the national language, hastening the extinction of regional languages in the communities they leave behind.

Sadly, local language preservation is not always given the priority it deserves by government agencies and educational institutions. Based on the geographic distribution, the limited prevalence of individuals proficient in Liabuku is highlighted by the fact that active speakers are mainly found within the Liabuku sub-district. Language pride has been on the decline, according to the source, because neither the government nor the community has made preservation efforts a top priority. The failure of the federal government and any state or regional agency to intervene in the plight of endangered languages is directly responsible for the extinction of Liabuku and other similar languages.

In the Liabuku subculture, speaking a regional language is seen as a sign of being out of place or old-fashioned, particularly among the younger generation. A fear of seeming antiquated or embarrassed would prevent them from using a language like Liabuku in their daily lives. The use of vernacular languages is often associated with a sense of national pride and a desire to preserve cultural traditions (Figure 3). It seems that all of the informants agree that the low level of Liabuku use in everyday life is caused by people not caring about or proud of the language's preservation. The majority of speakers and listeners of Liabuku are elderly, as is the case with many other regional languages. Two main issues that informants and active speakers of Liabuku try to resolve are the dispersion of speakers and the dwindling number of speakers who are able to keep the language alive. Due to the declining population of native speakers, the language is in grave danger of extinction.

The absence of print media exacerbates the already serious issue of the Liabuku language's polarization. Digital platforms that utilize the language also fall under this category. Regional languages are at risk of oblivion if the media does not actively promote them, despite the media's crucial role in maintaining languages in the public sphere (16). Unfortunately, not all digital devices are compatible with regional languages, despite technology's potential as a preservation tool. Without educational apps, digital dictionaries, or online platforms that make learning and using Liabuku easier, the younger generation may be less interested in doing so in the digital age. Younger generations are

increasingly using the national language due to their belief that it has more practical applications in education and the workplace.

The necessity to maintain the Liabuku language has received very little support from government bodies and academic institutions. People and groups trying to preserve languages like Liabuku frequently face obstacles when there aren't formal policies or programs in place to do so. Many people, particularly younger generations, hold local languages in low regard and consider them archaic and unimportant due to their neglect. They worry about seeming ignorant or embarrassed if they speak Liabuku every day.

Education and media have an impact on Liabuku, just as they do on many other regional languages. Both could be extremely useful in the right hands to help keep languages alive, but they also pose a threat if used inappropriately. The educational system promotes linguistic homogeneity by elevating the national language in official discourse, everyday instruction, and assessments. Local dialects, such as Liabuku, may not be particularly engaging for the younger generation. Teaching children that fluency in a national or international language is essential for academic and occupational success diminishes the value of Liabuku. Educators who want to teach Liabuku to their students need to be native speakers and experts in the best practices for education. A significant barrier to implementing Liabuku in schools is the scarcity of trained educators to do so. Formal education provides little support for Liabuku, but informal education within families and communities can play a far bigger role. Storytelling and singing are traditional ways of passing the language down from parents or other cultural figures to younger generations, but there just aren't enough people to do it.

A number of reasons, such as an educational system that prioritizes the national language and a media environment that seldom promotes local languages like Liabuku, have contributed to their dwindling numbers. Regional languages are increasingly being marginalized, relegated to specialized contexts such as traditional ceremonies or family interactions, and removed from official and public spheres. The further isolation of Liabuku from mainstream media and educational institutions threatens the cultural language's continued decline in communities that depend on it. Children may become disinterested in and ignorant of their own community's history and traditions if they feel disconnected from their cultural origins.

A great deal of traditional rituals, poetry, and practice rely on the Liabuku language. Unfortunately, one of the contexts in which the Liabuku language is used is dwindling due to migration and urbanization, and cultural practices that rely on it are dwindling as well. People are abandoning the oral tradition, a key component of language transmission, in favour of urban centers (17). The declining number of native speakers and the absence of public resources devoted to the Liabuku language have put the language in jeopardy of extinction. Liabuku encompasses long-established social, cultural, and environmental norms and practices. The local wisdom and knowledge that have contributed to the development and maintenance of a community's culture are lost when a language disappears.

4. CONCLUSION:

If the Bajo Tribe wants to improve their educational opportunities and the quality of their education, they must assimilate culturally into the educational system. A major goal of Bajo cultural assimilation in education is to ensure that Bajo children have access to formal education without compromising their cultural identity. Educational quality, future opportunities, and inclusive development can all be improved through effective assimilation in coastal communities. The study's findings suggest that the Bajo Tribe can advocate for their culture by incorporating their traditions into the educational system, which can lead to assimilation. Because of this integration, the Bajo Tribe's human resources will be less vulnerable.

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6. Data Availability:

Data supporting the findings of this study are available upon reasonable request from the corresponding author.

7. Conflict of interest:

The authors declare that the research was conducted without any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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