

## Language Choice in Mixed Families of Different Ethnics in Empus Talu Village

Sediken Tara Munthe<sup>1</sup>, Inge Ayudia<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Islam Kebangsaan Indonesia, Bireuen, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Universitas Samudra, Langsa, Indonesia

E-mail: <sup>1</sup>[Sedikentara14@gmail.com](mailto:Sedikentara14@gmail.com) \*, <sup>2</sup>[ingeayudia@unsam.ac.id](mailto:ingeayudia@unsam.ac.id)

\*Corresponding Author

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### ABSTRACT

This research is entitled "Language choice in mixed ethnic families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency". The formulation of the problem studied is (1) What language is chosen and (2) What factors influence the choice of language in mixed families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency. This research aims to find out what language is chosen in mixed families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency and also to find out what factors influence the choice of language in mixed families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency. The research method used is a qualitative research method. The data source in this research is a mixed family, namely the mother and father have different ethnicities. The family lives in the Empus Talu Village area, Kec. Bebesen, Kab. Central Aceh. The data analysis steps in this research are as follows. (1) Data is grouped based on problem formulation; (2) Classifying data according to the aspects studied; (3) Correcting the results of observation notes; (4) Record all data and carry out re-analysis and convey the results according to the problem in descriptive form; (5) Concluding research results. The language chosen by mixed ethnic families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency is generally Indonesian.

**Keywords:** *Language Selection, Mixed Families*



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### INTRODUCTION

Humans are said to be monodual creatures, namely individual creatures and social creatures. As social creatures, humans relate to other humans. Communication is a way for humans to relate to fellow humans. According to (Hariyanto, 2021), communication always has a specific purpose, some of it is done verbally (face to face) or through mass media such as newspapers, radio, television, or films, and it can also be done through non-mass media, for example, letters, telephones, boards. Announcements, posters, banners, and others. Communication can be defined as the delivery and reception of messages or information between two or more people using verbal (language) and non-verbal symbols. Verbal or oral communication is communication carried out directly between people without using distance, while non-verbal communication is communication carried out indirectly (not face to face).

Verbal symbols (language) are a means of interacting between humans and other humans. According to the KBBI, language is a system of arbitrary sound symbols, which is used by members of a society to collaborate, interact and identify themselves. Language is also good conversation, good behavior, and good manners. The use of language influences the nation's culture in thinking, acting, and behaving. Indonesian society is a multilingual and multicultural society. This is because Indonesia is a country that has a variety of ethnicities and cultures, resulting in linguistic diversity. In bilingual and multilingual societies, both active and passive, people can choose their language according to their needs. The choice of language (language choice) certainly depends on known factors, such as participants, atmosphere, topic, and so on.

Language selection exists because there are more than two languages used by the speaker. The languages mastered include the first language (B1), which is the first language acquired either from the mother or from the family raising the child, and the second language (B2), which is the language acquired and mastered after the first language (B1) which can be acquired. Where have you been? The third language (B3) and so on is the language that is acquired and mastered after obtaining B1 and B2. This is a question for the speaker, which language will be chosen and used in a mixed family?

Mixed families are families that originate from mixed marriages. Mixed marriage itself means a marriage between husband and wife from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Suparji et al., 2023). This kind of family is called a mixed family. From this incident, the question arises, which language variety will be chosen and followed by children? Is it the language used by the mother the language used by the father, or even an external language chosen by the child?

In Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency, there are several mixed families. The mixed families in this village have various tribes, including the Gayo, Acehnese, Javanese, Batak and other tribes. With intermarriage between these tribes, many languages are also spoken in the area.

In a mixed family, children will receive two different languages, namely the language brought by the mother and also the language brought by the father (Muhammad, 2023). This situation will give rise to a sense of the mutual influence of one language with another. This condition greatly influences children to choose the language brought by the mother the language brought by the father or even a language acquired from outside the family. This is what makes researchers interested in researching "language choice in mixed ethnic families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency". Apart from that, there has not been much research on language choice in mixed families.

Based on the background explained in the previous paragraph, the problem formulation in this research is as follows. (1) What language is chosen by mixed families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency? (2) What factors influence the choice of language in mixed families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency?

Based on the problem formulation above, the objectives of this research are as follows. (1) Find out what language is chosen by mixed families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency. (2) Find out what factors influence the choice of language in mixed families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency.

The results of this research are expected to be useful as follows. (1) Theoretical benefits, the results of this research are expected to contribute to the field of Indonesian language education. (2) practical benefits, the results of this research are expected to be a source of information for students in conducting further research and for the community to better understand and also provide insight into language choices in mixed families.

## **METHODS**

The approach used in this research is qualitative. According to (Abdussamad, 2021), qualitative research is an approach to conducting research that is oriented towards natural phenomena or symptoms. Qualitative research is basic and naturalistic and cannot be carried out in the laboratory but in the field. Therefore, this kind of research is often called naturalistic inquiry, or field study.

A qualitative approach is a study method or research method for a problem that is not designed using statistical procedures. According to (Fiantika, 2022), qualitative research is research intended to understand certain phenomena. This phenomenon can be something experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perception, motivation, action and so on which are holistically described in the form of words that describe the conditions as they are.

### **Data source**

The data source in this research is a mixed family with different ethnicities (father, mother, and children). The family lives in the Empus Talu Village area, Kec. Bebesen, Kab. Central Aceh. Based on (Mahsun, 2017) opinion, the criteria for determining informants are as follows. 1) Male and female; 2) Have a strong memory; 3) Children who can already speak; 4) Can speak Indonesian; 5) Physically and spiritually healthy.

### **Data collection technique**

The data collection technique in this research is using listening techniques and interview techniques. The listening technique is carried out by paying attention to language choices in mixed families. The listening technique was also used to obtain the desired data, the researcher listened when the informant communicated with other informants. The interview technique is a technique carried out through interviews between researchers and informants. According to (Mahsun, 2017), the interview technique is one of the methods used in the data provision stage which is carried out by researchers having conversations or contact with speakers as sources. This interview technique is also carried out by the researcher having a conversation with the informant, the researcher asking questions to get the information needed.

### **Data analysis**

After data collection is complete, the researcher will analyze the data. Next, the researcher will look for the dominant language mixture used by the informant. Data analysis in this research began while data collection was in progress. This means that researchers process and analyze the data that has been collected so that there is no accumulation of data. The data analysis steps in this research are as follows. (1) Data is grouped based on problem formulation; (2) Classifying data according to the aspects studied; (3) Correcting the results of observation notes; (4) Record all data and carry out re-analysis and present the results according to the problem in descriptive form; (5) Concluding research results.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

Based on the research conducted, the data that researchers found in mixed families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency includes the choice of language used in the family and the factors behind mixed families in choosing the language used for the communication process are as described as following.

### **Language choice by mixed families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency.**

Empus Talu Village is a diverse village, consisting of various tribes. The tribes that inhabit this village include the Gayo, Acehese, Javanese, and others (Saldina & Suhandono, 2023). This situation often creates a family consisting of a father and mother from different

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ethnicities, which is called a mixed family. The choice of language by mixed families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency can be seen as follows.

#### **(1) Gayo-Javanese family**

In a Gayo-Javanese family, the husband is Gayo and the wife is Javanese. They choose Indonesian in their daily communication. This family sometimes inserts the Gayo language when communicating. This is due to teaching Gayo vocabulary to his wife and children. The core language used by these people in everyday life is Indonesian.

Communication between father and son in this family uses Indonesian, sometimes the father inserts Gayo and even switches the language from Indonesian to Gayo. In contrast to Mother, the language used in communicating with children is only Indonesian, without inserting any Javanese at all. This family consists of a father, a mother, and 2 children.

##### **Data 1**

Family A “Gayo-Javanese”

Conversation topic: General

Time: Monday, December 4, 2023, 10:00 WIB

Location: Home

Child 2: Where is Mom's comb?

Mother: There, on the front table.

Child 2: No mom.

Mother: Ask brother.

Child 1: Look again, this morning you were there or near the glass.

The data above explains the conversation process at family A's house between mother, child 2, and child 1. At that time, child 2 asked his mother where the comb was and child 1 also answered. Child 2 used Indonesian in the conversation process, and mother and child 1 also responded using Indonesian.

##### **Data 2**

Conversation topic: General

Time: Monday, December 4, 2023, 10:25 WIB

Location: Home

Child 1: Sir, where are the Honda keys?

Where are you going, father?

Child 1: Want to buy flour, my mother told me to buy it.

Child 2: Sis, Tia (child 2) is coming too!

Father: Boh! Areh-areh mah Honda, buy a routine to sleep on a pe!

(yes! Slowly ride a motorbike, buy bread and coffee powder too)

Child 1: Oh sir.

The conversation above occurred a few minutes later after the previous conversation. Child 1 asked his father where the motorbike keys were. Dad answered using Gayo's language. The conversation took place in two languages, the child used Indonesian and the father answered using Gayo. It can be seen that father and child 1 use two languages in the family. Meanwhile, mother and child 2 only use 1 language, namely Indonesian.

Based on interviews conducted with informants, it was found that this father from the Gayo tribe mastered two languages, namely Gayo and Indonesian. Furthermore, the language chosen to communicate with the mother is not only Indonesian but also Gayo. This situation was not a problem, because the Javanese mother was able to understand the Gayo language, but could not pronounce the Gayo words. Then, the language used by the father when

communicating with his children is Indonesian and Gayo. In contrast to mothers, the language used when communicating with their children is only Indonesian.

## **(2) Gayo-Aceh family**

In a Gayo-Aceh family, the husband is Gayo and the wife is Acehnese. They choose the Gayo language in everyday communication. This family sometimes inserts Indonesian when communicating. This is because it is to teach Indonesian vocabulary to their children. The core language used by these people in everyday life is Gayo. This family consists of a father, mother and 3 children.

Data 1

Family B "Gayo-Aceh"

Conversation topic: General

Time: Monday, December 5 2023, 16:00 WIB

Location: Home

Dad : Win! Now let's start taking care of my little sister! (Win! Come here with that little sister too!)

Child 1: Boh yeah, snap. (yeah, just a moment)

Child 2: Hana is mele, right? (what happened?)

Mother : Ara mele, it's important! (if you want to, it's important!)

The data above explains the conversation process at family B's house between father, mother and their two children. At that time, the father called his two children and the mother also spoke using Gayo.

Based on interviews conducted with informants, it was found that this father from the Gayo tribe used Gayo language in everyday conversations. However, sometimes they use Indonesian. Furthermore, the language my father chose to communicate with his mother was not only Gayo, but also Indonesian. This situation was not a problem, because the mother who came from the Acehnese tribe was able to understand the language and spoke Gayo too. Then, the language used by the father when communicating with his children is also Gayo.

## **Factors underlying the choice of language by mixed families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency.**

In general, mixed families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency communicate in Indonesian. This condition is caused by the people living in the village consisting of several tribes. Therefore, they choose Indonesian to make it easier to communicate. Some of them also still understand other regional languages, especially Gayo, which is the regional language. This is because the environment and social interactions of the community cannot be separated from the Gayo customs and culture that exist there.

After carrying out the observation and interview process with mixed families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency, researchers found several factors behind the mixed family's choice of language. These factors include the following.

### **(1) Residential and School Environment**

The choice of language in mixed families is influenced by the environment in which they live (Yanti et al., 2022). If the surrounding environment uses Indonesian more often, then the mixed family will also be influenced to use Indonesian in communicating. Like family A (Gayo-Javanese), the environment where they live is an environment where the majority of people speak Indonesian. This is because the people who live in this environment consist of various or various ethnicities. Thus, Indonesians were chosen to unify communication between them. Not

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only the living environment, but the school environment also greatly influences language choice. The school community generally speaks Indonesian. Therefore, the living environment and school determine the choice of language used by mixed families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency.

## **(2) Facilitate communication**

Regional languages are languages that must be preserved. However, using regional languages is not always an option, especially in mixed families (Sugianto, 2018). In mixed families, because the father and mother are from different ethnicities, they rarely use the regional language at home. This causes children to be less proficient or less able to understand the regional language of both their father and mother. Therefore, Indonesian was chosen to facilitate communication in daily life in the family. However, many mixed families also use their respective regional languages when communicating, especially Gayo.

## **(3) Parents do not pass on regional language to children**

Regional languages that are not taught by parents mean that children can only speak Indonesian. Basically regional languages are not taught because only fathers or mothers understand the language, so the language is rarely used. Because of the rare use of this language, fathers or mothers who use regional languages forget to teach their regional language to their children.

## **(4) Mastery of the same language**

Fathers and mothers from mixed families who are able to master the same language choose that language to use in daily communication, such as family B (Gayo-Aceh). Since father and mother master the same regional language, the language used in communication is not only Indonesian but also regional languages as well. Likewise in communicating with children, parents also use regional languages, for example in family B (Gayo-Aceh).

## **(5) Language Habits**

Another cause in choosing the language used in mixed families is habitual factors (Nurfadila et al., 2019). Families who have been accustomed to using Indonesian from the start choose Indonesian for the communication process within the family. Like in family A (Gayo-Javanese). Likewise, if the family is used to using the regional language, then from the start they have used the regional language to communicate within the family. For example, family B (Gayo-Aceh) has used the regional language (Gayo) from the start, so the choice/habit of using language has been ingrained in them and is used in everyday life to communicate within the family.

## **(6) Mastery of different languages**

Mastery of different languages is also one of the factors behind the choice of language in mixed families. A mixed family is a family where the father and mother come from different ethnic groups. Mixed families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency have fathers and mothers of different ethnicities. Family conditions like this require them to choose Indonesian as a means of communication between them. They chose Indonesian to pass on to their children.

## **(7) Motivation**

The lack of motivation of both parents, both mother and father, to teach regional languages to their children and also the lack of motivation of children to find out and want to learn their parents' regional language is the basis for choosing Indonesian in the family (Maemonah, 2021). If the motivation is there, there is no reason not to be able to speak and communicate using regional languages. What is happening now is that parents do not want to pass on regional languages to their children, so that speakers of regional languages will continue to decrease and this will lead to the extinction of a language in people's lives.

### **Discussion**

Language choice is common among bilingual and multilingual societies. They must choose which language to use from the two or more languages they master. In mixed families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency, the language often used is Indonesian. The choice of regional language as a means of daily communication by mixed families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency is quite large. Therefore, even though Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency has many mixed families, the use of regional languages is quite widely used, especially the regional language, namely Gayo.

Based on facts found through observations and interviews, the choice of language in mixed families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency can be explained as follows.

#### **(1) Gayo-Javanese family**

The languages chosen by family A (Gayo-Javanese) to communicate at home are Indonesian and the regional language (Gayo). My father uses Indonesian when communicating with his children and wife, but sometimes he also uses Gayo. Meanwhile, mothers use Indonesian when communicating with their children. Their fellow children also use Indonesian. Apart from that, my father used Gayo when guests who spoke Gayo came. Likewise, with mother, also uses Javanese when there are guests who speak Javanese.

#### **(2) Gayo-Aceh family**

In their daily lives, the family that is intertwined between the Gayo and Acehese tribes (family B) uses the Gayo language as the main tool for communicating both inside and outside the home. The reason was that my father, as a member of the Gayo tribe, felt obliged to teach the regional language, especially the language he mastered, to both his wife and children. Therefore, his wife and children can also use the Gayo language well. Not only using Gayo and Indonesian, fathers and mothers can also use Acehese. If a mother uses Acehese when communicating with the father, father can understand and communicate well. This family can be said to be multilingual because it masters 3 languages at once, even though their children do not master one of these languages, namely Acehese. For confidential conversations in front of their children, both parents use Acehese.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that the choice of language in mixed ethnic families in Empus Talu Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency generally uses Indonesian. Even so, parents still use regional languages when communicating with their children and also speak regional languages when guests come who speak the same language. However, with the awareness of both parents, there are also parents who require that regional languages must also be taught and used in everyday life, so that extinction does not occur.

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