

Serawai Cultural Identity: Ideality Vs Reality

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Abstract

Language under threat of extinction, one of them is Serawai language in South Bengkulu. This study aims to determine the response and factors that influence the understanding of Serawai language in South Bengkulu society. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method conducted in 6 sub-districts namely Kota Manna, Pasar Manna, Manna, Seginim, Pino Raya, Ulu Manna. The data collection method uses semi-open questionnaires and tests that have been validated by material and media experts. The results obtained from this study are the response of the people of South Bengkulu to Serawai language, namely they are proud to use Serawai language but prefer to use slang, so that the understanding of Serawai language is inversely proportional to the average 97.78% (proud); 10.55% (prefer to use slang). Meanwhile, the factors that influence the level of understanding of Serawai language are the very low frequency of using Serawai language, the influence of globalization and modernity, the lack of government support, and the mixing of Serawai language with other languages. This research produces a product in the form of a pocket book in Serawai language.

Keywords: Cultural Identity, Gaps, Serawai Language

Introduction

Language under threat of extinction. Language is an expression that contains the intention to convey something to other people. According to Chaer (in Diah & Wulandari, 2015), the main function of language is as a means of communication. Suwarna (2002) revealed that language is the main tool for communication in human life, both individually and socially collective. Data from the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2008 noted that Indonesia has approximately 442 languages. Even according to Lewis (2015) in the Summer Institute of Linguistic (SIL), the number of regional languages in Indonesia reaches 742 varieties, which puts Indonesia in second place in the world as a laboratory of language diversity after Papua New Guinea. This shows that 12 percent of the world's languages are in Indonesia, where the 742 varieties of

regional languages that have been described are the ethnic and cultural diversity that exists in Indonesia which directly or indirectly has animated the Indonesian language (Budiwiyanto, 2016, Ethnologue 2015).

Moseley (2010) in the Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger states that there are 12 languages in Indonesia that have become extinct. The language is generally located in the eastern part of Indonesia. The extinct languages include Hukumina, Kayeli, Mapia and Tandia in Papua. Austin and Sallabank (2011) say language extinction is caused by natural disasters (earthquakes, tsunamis, etc.), famine, and disease; war and genocide; open repression, usually in the name of “national unity” or assimilation (including forced resettlement); and economic, political, or cultural domination.

In addition to extinction, there are also languages that are in decline or threatened with extinction. One of them is the Serawai language in Bengkulu. Bengkulu Province consists of nine regencies and one municipality. There are several varieties of regional languages in Bengkulu such as Rejang, Basemah, Krui, and Serawai. Ironically, only Rejang has more than one million speakers.

The Serawai language is mostly used by the Serawai tribe who inhabit eight sub-districts in South Bengkulu Regency. The Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) recorded the total population of South Bengkulu in 2015 at 152,194 people with a population growth rate of 1.2 per year and a population density of 128 per km². There are two major tribes that inhabit South Bengkulu, namely the Serawai Tribe and the Basemah Tribe. The Serawai tribe accounts for 75 percent of the total population or 114,000 people.

The Serawai language is characterized by the dialect used. The Serawai dialect generally has the suffix “-au” or the insert “-gh-” in each word. However, this is not absolute depending on the word to be used. For example, the word “who” in Serawai becomes “siapau”. The Serawai language consists of two types of pronunciation: Smooth Serawai and Rough Serawai, depending on the meaning of the word and who the person is speaking to.

Nowadays, the understanding of Serawai language has decreased. Many people do not know about Serawai language and its meaning. Many words have never been heard again. Serawai language has been modernized or mixed with other languages. The understanding of Serawai language can still be found in the older generation, while many of the younger generation do not understand and are reluctant to use it. If the younger generation is reluctant to use Serawai language, then gradually this language will be lost. When the language as a communication tool is lost, it will also lose the characteristic of the region (Suwarna, 2002).

This research is based on two main theories. The first is the opinion mentioned by Arie MP Tamba (2008). Tamba explains at least three important

things about the meaning of language in social relations. First, at the simplest level with language humans can communicate with each other. Second, language is the main foundation on which human internal mental images are organized in a process called thinking. Third, language allows humans to be involved in the process of social interaction, social change, and the formation of the direction of the ideals of socio-cultural change. Therefore, language is not only formed and determined but on the contrary is also able to shape and determine social history (Ahmad Mubaligh, 2010).

Second, Austin and Sallabank's (2011) theory of language extinction. He divides them into four main categories, namely: natural disasters (earthquakes, tsunamis, etc.), famine, and disease; war and genocide; open repression, usually in the name of "national unity" or assimilation (including forced resettlement); economic, political, or cultural domination.

The factors leading to extinction may occur simultaneously and it is sometimes difficult to draw a dividing line. The four categories above can be further divided into five most common factors:

- a. Economic factors, for example, rural poverty leading to urbanization.
- b. Cultural domination by the majority community, for example, education and literature that only uses the language of the majority or the state language; as a result, local languages become marginalized.
- c. Political factors, for example, educational policies that ignore or exclude local languages, lack of political recognition or representation, or prohibitions on the use of minority languages in public life.
- d. Historical factors, for example, colonization, boundary disputes, or the rise of one group and its language varieties to political and cultural dominance.
- e. Attitudinal factors, for example, minority languages are associated with poverty and illiteracy and suffering, while majority languages are associated with progress.

Existing research (previously) discusses more about synonyms in the Serawai language (Wati, 2019), Interrogative Sentences in the Serawai Language of the Seluma Community (Joyo, 2020), the use of the Serawai language (Octavi, 2020), and Serawai Malay Language Affixation in Folklore (Herpanus, et al, 2020). This research analyzes the response of South Bengkulu society to Serawai language and the factors that influence the level of understanding of Serawai language in South Bengkulu society. Then the purpose of this research is to know the response of South Bengkulu people to Serawai language and to know the factors that influence the level of understanding of Serawai language in South Bengkulu people.

Methods

This research is qualitative research, which is an approach that produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral data from the subject being observed. The research approach is descriptive, which means that the research aims to describe a particular situation (Moleong, 2012). The subjects in this study were the people of South Bengkulu who were located within the six kecamatan that had been determined. While the sample was determined using stratified sampling technique, which is a way of sampling from a population consisting of strata that have a stratified arrangement. Samples were selected from various age categories, ranging from kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, high school, and adult age (university and general public). Which is then based on the Health Office of the Republic of Indonesia (2009) with a range of age levels, namely the population aged 13-15 years (junior high school), 16-18 years (high school), and 25-65 years (general public) with respondents of each age level totaling 10 people per sub-district with a total of 60 people from each sub-district consisting of junior high school (13-15 years), high school (16-18 years), and the general public (25-65 years). Thus, the total number of respondents was 180 people. This research was conducted in 6 sub-districts, namely Kota Manna sub-district (SMPN 2 South Bengkulu, SMAN 2 South Bengkulu, Ibul Village community), Pasar Manna (SMPN 1 South Bengkulu, SMAN 1 South Bengkulu, Padang Sialang Village community), Manna (SMPN 3 South Bengkulu, SMAN 6 South Bengkulu, Kayu Kunyit community), Seginim (SMPN 7 South Bengkulu, SMAN 7 South Bengkulu, Muara Pulutan and Kota Agung villagers), Pino Raya (SMPN 9 South Bengkulu, SMAN 9 South Bengkulu, Kelutum villagers), and Ulu Manna (SMPN 11 South Bengkulu, SMAN 8 South Bengkulu, Lubuk Tapi and Bandar Agung villagers). The research was conducted over a period of 4 months (April-July).

To obtain valid and actual data, this study used the following data collection methods:

Interview Method

Interviews were conducted with resource persons of the Indonesian language teacher of SMA N 7 South Bengkulu; other resource persons were civil servants of the South Bengkulu Tourism Office; then interviews with resource persons of the South Bengkulu Library and Archives Office and staff of the South Bengkulu Culture Office; then interviews with resource persons as South Bengkulu Traditional Leaders.

Semi-Open Questionnaire Method

The semi-open questionnaire method of this research is in the form of questions about the Serawai language, in the form of multiple choices about the understanding of the Serawai language.

Test Method

This research test method is in the form of questions about translating words, short fill in rewriting sentences in Serawai language, and short questions by answering using Serawai language.

Results and discussion

Results

The results obtained in the results of this study are as follows:

Table 1. Recapitulation of Semi Open Questionnaire Results in Kota Manna Sub-district

No	District	Question Aspect	Answer Options		
			Yes	No	Others
1.	Kota Manna Sub-district	Knowing Serawai Language	28	2	
		History of Serawai Language	17	13	
		Know every word in Serawai language	21	10	
		Using Serawai language in daily life	29	1	
		Always use Serawai language in daily life	23	7	
		Use of Serawai language in family life	28	1	1
		Take pride in using the Serawai language	30		
		Prefer to use slang/current language in Serawai language	1	29	
		Serawai language will be replaced by slang/current language	25	14	1
		Many people already use slang/current language	23	6	1

Based on the graph above, it is obtained that the results of a semi-open questionnaire in Kota Manna District say that 28 respondents know Serawai language and know every word as many as 21 respondents and use Serawai language in communication, namely 29 respondents. However, it turns out that as many as 25 respondents said that Serawai language will be replaced by slang / contemporary language then as many as 23 respondents said also that the community has used a lot of slang / contemporary language. So it can be concluded that it turns out that in Kota Manna District the use and understanding of Serawai language has almost been replaced due to lack of awareness, lack of support for using Serawai language, and the widespread digitalization factor.

Table 2. Recapitulation of Semi Open Questionnaire Results in Pasar Manna Sub-district

No	District	Question Aspect	Answer Options		
			Yes	No	Others
1.	Pasar Manna Sub-district	Knowing Serawai Language	21	2	7
		History of Serawai Language	11	18	1
		Know every word in Serawai language	13	10	7
		Using Serawai language in daily life	22	1	7
		Always use Serawai language in daily life	18	5	7
		Use of Serawai language in family life	23	4	3
		Take pride in using the Serawai language	30		
		Prefer to use slang/current language in Serawai language	2	23	5
		Serawai language will be replaced by slang/current language	12	12	6
		Many people already use slang/current language	20	3	7

Then the graph of the results of the semi-open questionnaire in Pasar Manna Subdistrict says that knowing the Serawai language is 21 respondents and knowing every word is 13 respondents and using the Serawai language in communication is 18 respondents. But it turns out that as many as 12 respondents said that Serawai language will be replaced by slang / contemporary language then as many as 20 respondents said also that the community has used a lot of slang / contemporary language. Compared to Kota Manna sub-district, Pasar Manna sub-district turns out that in daily life respondents are less likely to use Serawai language to interact. It is also then that in Pasar Manna sub-district the use and understanding of Serawai language has almost been replaced due to lack of awareness, lack of support to use Serawai language, and the widespread digitalization factor.

Table 3. Recapitulation of Semi-Open Questionnaire Results in Manna Sub-district

No	District	Question Aspect	Answer Options		
			Yes	No	Others
1.	Manna Sub-district	Knowing Serawai Language	27		3
		History of Serawai Language	26	14	
		Know every word in Serawai language	23	3	4
		Using Serawai language in daily life	27	1	2
		Always use Serawai language in daily life	14	3	3
		Use of Serawai language in family life	16	2	2
		Take pride in using the Serawai language	26		4
		Prefer to use slang/current language in Serawai language	5	23	2
		Serawai language will be replaced by slang/current language	17	11	2

No	District	Question Aspect	Answer Options		
			Yes	No	Others
		Many people already use slang/current language	22		8

In the next semi-open questionnaire graph, namely in Manna District, 27 respondents said that they knew Serawai language and knew every word as many as 26 respondents and used Serawai language in communication, namely 23 respondents. But it turns out that as many as 17 respondents said that Serawai language will be replaced by slang / contemporary language then as many as 22 respondents said also that the community has used a lot of slang / contemporary language. When viewed that it turns out that respondents in Manna District know and still use Serawai language in everyday life even though it has begun to fade because of the use of slang or contemporary language.

Table 4. Recapitulation of Semi-Open Questionnaire Results in Pino Raya Sub-district

No	District	Question Aspect	Answer Options		
			Yes	No	Others
1.	Pino Raya Sub-district	Knowing Serawai Language	28	2	
		History of Serawai Language	12	18	
		Know every word in Serawai language	18	11	1
		Using Serawai language in daily life	28	1	1
		Always use Serawai language in daily life	27	2	1
		Use of Serawai language in family life	26	1	3
		Take pride in using the Serawai language	30		
		Prefer to use slang/current language in Serawai language	6	23	1
		Serawai language will be replaced by slang/current language	20	9	1
		Many people already use slang/current language	27	3	

In the next semi-open questionnaire graph, namely in Pino Raya District, 28 respondents said that they knew Serawai language and knew every word as many as 12 respondents and used Serawai language in communication, namely 18 respondents. But it turns out that as many as 20 respondents said that Serawai language will be replaced by slang / contemporary language then as many as 27 respondents said also that the community has used a lot of slang / contemporary language. So, it can be concluded that although respondents know every word of the Serawai language, respondents rarely use Serawai language in interacting in everyday life. It is also the same that because of the use of slang or contemporary language that exists and appears among respondents. Interestingly, even though Pino Raya sub-district is one of the sub-districts located in the edge of the city which should be used by the respondents.

Table 5. Recapitulation of Semi Open Questionnaire Results in Seginim Sub-district

No	District	Question Aspect	Answer Options		
			Yes	No	Others
1.	Seginim Sub-district	Knowing Serawai Language	29	1	
		History of Serawai Language	12	18	
		Know every word in Serawai language	17	10	3
		Using Serawai language in daily life	26	4	
		Always use Serawai language in daily life	22	7	1
		Use of Serawai language in family life	26	4	
		Take pride in using the Serawai language	30		
		Prefer to use slang/current language in Serawai language	4	25	1
		Serawai language will be replaced by slang/current language	21	9	
		Many people already use slang/current language	25	4	1

Then in the next semi-open questionnaire graph, namely in Seginim District, there were 29 respondents who stated that they knew Serawai language and knew every word, 12 respondents and used Serawai language in communicating, namely 17 respondents. However, it turns out that 21 respondents said that Serawai language would be replaced by slang/contemporary language, then 25 respondents also said that people already use a lot of slang/contemporary language. So, it can be said that this is the same as Pino Raya District, where Seginim District is also one of the sub-districts located on the edge of the city which should be used as a place for the respondents.

Table 6. Recapitulation of Semi Open Questionnaire Results in Ulu Manna Sub-district

No	District	Question Aspect	Answer Options		
			Yes	No	Others
1.	Ulu Manna Sub-district	Knowing Serawai Language	27	3	
		History of Serawai Language	15	15	
		Know every word in Serawai language	18	8	4
		Using Serawai language in daily life	28	1	1
		Always use Serawai language in daily life	28	2	
		Use of Serawai language in family life	25	5	
		Take pride in using the Serawai language	28	2	
		Prefer to use slang/current language in Serawai language	5	25	
		Serawai language will be replaced by	4	14	2

No	District	Question Aspect	Answer Options		
			Yes	No	Others
		slang/current language			
		Many people already use slang/current language	12	5	3

Then in the graph of the results of the last semi-open questionnaire in Ulu Manna District, it was stated that 27 respondents knew the Serawai language, and 15 respondents knew every word and 18 respondents used the Serawai language in communicating. However, it turns out that 4 respondents said that Serawai language would be replaced by slang/contemporary language, then 12 respondents also said that people already use a lot of slang/contemporary language. It can be concluded that in Ulu Manna District, respondents still know the words in Serawai language even though some respondents rarely use Serawai language in everyday life. Then, in Ulu Manna District, respondents also said that Serawai language would not be replaced even if there was slang or contemporary language, because Serawai language is a regional language identity owned by the people of South Bengkulu, so this is also unique compared to the results in other districts.

Discussion

Interview conducted with Mr. Rusli Haryanto, S. Pd as the Indonesian language teacher of SMAN 7 South Bengkulu, he argued that the people of South Bengkulu still use Serawai language if the interlocutor is still of the same origin. Then, an interview conducted with an ASN from the South Bengkulu Tourism Office named Anriyanzah S. IP, M. Si, he said that Serawai is the daily language or the main language of the people of South Bengkulu, but it is rarely applied in social life. Then, an interview conducted with Mr. Tasmin (Staff of the South Bengkulu Library and Archives Office) explained that the local government's response was still lacking in promoting the Serawai language, a dictionary of the Serawai language let alone a pocketbook of the Serawai language did not yet exist, and the reality is that people have less and less understanding of their own local language. While Mr. Erlian Joni (staff of the South Bengkulu Culture Office) said that the lack of government efforts to support the improvement of understanding of Serawai language. The last interview activity conducted with the Serawai Tribe Customary Holder, Mr. Armanuddin Durhan, he said the government's role to improve the Serawai language by publishing the Serawai Language Dictionary.

Lewis et al., (2015) argued that there are two dimensions in characterizing language threat, namely the number of speakers who use the language as well as the number and nature of the use or function of the language. the number and nature of the use or function of language use. A language is said to be threatened when fewer and fewer people recognize the language and, therefore, it is and,

therefore, it is never used or taught to their children. their children. In addition, a language is categorized as endangered if language is used less and less in daily activities so that it loses its social or communicative function. The smaller the realm of language use in society tends to affect language users' perceptions of the appropriateness of perception of the suitability of language use in a broader function. Language diversity is a pillar of cultural diversity. Therefore, the extinction of a language also means the loss of cultural wealth. Tradition, memory, and ways of thinking and expressing, which are an invaluable heritage for achieving a better future. invaluable heritage to achieve a better future, will also be lost. Some ecological linguists, using critical discourse analysis, have found that between culture, language, and that there is a correlation between culture, language, and biodiversity. The analysis reveals that linguistic practices show an exploitative attitude towards the natural environment. exploitative attitude towards the natural environment. Therefore, they claim that the extinction of the natural environment is partly caused by language. However, what is more distressing is when speakers of a language lose their language. Language is often considered a symbol of tribal identity or national identity. So, when someone loses his language, it means he has lost his ethnic identity or national identity (Budiwiyanto, A, 2016).

The Serawai language which is the identity of the people of South Bengkulu regency will also experience the same thing, one day it can experience extinction. This can be seen from the number of speakers who currently only number no more than 114,000 people, where only the older generation really still understands about the Serawai language, while the younger generation began to not understand the language that characterizes the people of South Bengkulu, this is because the younger generation began to be reluctant to use the Serawai language in everyday life, even this Serawai native language began to be modified and mixed with other languages. The distinctive characteristics of the Serawai language, which is thick with the dialect of the suffix "-au" and the insertion of "-gh-" in the words, is an icon that must be maintained, taught, and still used in daily communication in South Bengkulu. If, one day, the older generation in South Bengkulu who really understand the Serawai language, then the Serawai language will automatically disappear. will automatically disappear.

The initial trial was conducted on several communities in South Bengkulu regency with various age levels. The trial experiment was conducted by giving some questions related to the meaning of words contained in the Serawai language. From the results of this initial observation, it was obtained that the respondents showed a lack of understanding of the meanings of words contained in the Serawai language, this was evidenced by the number of questions that were not answered by the respondents. To analyze the level of understanding of the Serawai language, a test was given to the sample that had been determined. The following are the results of the test analysis of the level of

understanding of the Serawai language of the people of South Bengkulu at various age levels.

1. South Bengkulu Community Response to Serawai Language

Based on the result of the research, there are various responses of the community towards Serawai language which include knowledge about Serawai language, the use of Serawai language in daily life, pride in using Serawai language and whether the respondents prefer to use the current language or Serawai language. The most response is proud of Serawai language by 97.78%. Then the community response to the use of Serawai language in daily life and who knows about Serawai language is 88.88% and the last is 82.22% do not like to use slang / contemporary language. However, as many as 10.55% of respondents prefer to use slang/current language, which means that in general the people of South Bengkulu know Serawai language but in reality, the understanding of Serawai language of the people of South Bengkulu is not directly proportional to the results of their general knowledge of Serawai language. Below is a graph to clarify these findings.

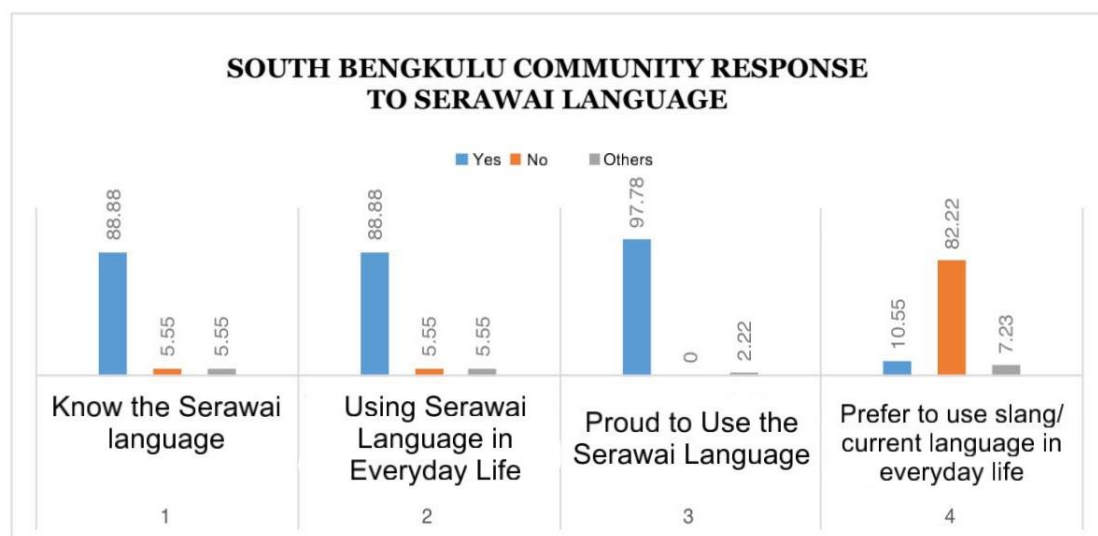


Figure 1. Graph of South Bengkulu Community Response to Serawai Language

The description above justifies Arie MP Tamba's statement that language can shape the social history of a society. When Serawai people are reluctant to use their language as part of their identity, what happens is that the community loses its authenticity. The community will lose their cultural identity which is reflected in the lack of use of local language as a means of communication.

Furthermore, the condition of people who are reluctant to use slang, but do not understand their local language, is a symptom that the community's mindset is far from the meaning of cultural identity. As Arie MP Tamba said, language is an internal mental picture of a society. When people are no longer

willing to use their local language as a means of communication, then there is something wrong within themselves and the social system of the community. This can be a serious problem if the community continues to let and increasingly abandon local languages as part of everyday life.

2. Factors Affecting the Level of Understanding of Serawai Language in South Bengkulu Community

This research shows several factors that cause the low understanding of Serawai language which strengthens Austin and Sallabank's theory (2011). First, the low understanding of Serawai language is caused by the decreasing frequency of using Serawai language in communication, because the people of South Bengkulu are starting to be reluctant to use Serawai language. For example, in the family, nowadays many parents and their children when communicating use Indonesian, no longer with Serawai language which is the native language of South Bengkulu region.

This is the cultural condition in Austin and Sallabank's (2011) language that affects language fullness. The reluctance of the community to use Serawai language is a sign that the superiority of the state language. The state language often shifts the local language which makes people reluctant to use the language. The use of state language which is more frequent than local language becomes one of the signs of the fading of local language, in this case Serawai language.

Secondly, according to the traditional leaders, the extinction of Serawai language is caused by globalization and modernity. Therefore, the people of South Bengkulu use slang more often than Serawai language. The dominance of economy, politics, and culture that marks globalization and modernization is a challenge for local language activists. That is, if we want Serawai language to be preserved, then the use of Serawai language in official events becomes a necessity. The use of Serawai language in officialdom is a form of resistance to modernity that carries international languages.

Third, the government still does not support the preservation of Serawai language. For example, there is no official dictionary of Serawai language that has been authorized by the local government of South Bengkulu regency. This is supported by the results of interviews with respondents who want a Dictionary and Pocket Book of Serawai language to support the improvement of Serawai language.

This is in the language of Austin and Sallabank as political domination. Political government policy has not touched on the process of Serawai language preservation. Serawai language is still considered as something less important to be a mainstay program. Whereas language is part of the identity of a society. When the language is eliminated, the identity of the community will also be lost.

Fourth, Serawai language is the mother tongue in South Bengkulu regency, has experienced mixing with other languages, this mixing comes from other regional languages, Indonesian and even foreign languages. Such as the word "duaghau" which means "door" is rarely used due to the more common use of Indonesian in the communication process.

Austin and Sallabank (2011) refer to the above condition as an attitudinal factor that makes Serawai language increasingly eliminated. Serawai language is considered rigid and poor (words), so it needs to mix with other languages. Although Serawai language cannot be separated from the influence of other languages, however, the expression of dialect as a characteristic need to be maintained. If not, then Serawai language will increasingly lose its meaning.

Conclusions

The condition of people who are reluctant to use slang, but do not understand their local language, is a symptom that the mindset of the community has been far from the meaning of cultural identity. As Arie MP Tamba said, language is an internal mental picture of a society. When people no longer want to use their local language as a means of communication, then there is something wrong in the self and social system of the community. This can be a serious problem if the community continues to let and increasingly abandon local languages as part of everyday life.

The suggestions that can be conveyed include that for further research, this research can be developed in other aspects that have not been studied or discussed, the limitations of distance and time due to the remote location of the research, and the difficulty of interacting with subjects who use local languages.

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