



Bugis Village Perceptions Toward Tialo Language Maintenance

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the perceptions of the Bugis Village community regarding the maintenance of the Tialo language and to examine the role of the government and relevant stakeholders in its preservation efforts. As one of the regional languages in Central Sulawesi, Tialo faces a decline in usage driven by the dominance of the Bahasa Indonesia, and low interest among the younger generation. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. The sample consists of 250 respondents selected through a non-probability sampling technique. The findings indicate that while the community holds a positive perception regarding the importance of maintaining the Tialo language, its usage remains predominantly confined to the older generation. Meanwhile, the government's role in supporting language preservation is still considered low.

KEYWORDS

Bugis Village;
Community perception;
Language maintenance;
Sociolinguistics;
Tialo Language.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan persepsi masyarakat Desa Bugis terhadap pemertahanan Bahasa Tialo serta mengetahui peran pemerintah dan pihak terkait dalam upaya pelestariannya. Bahasa Tialo sebagai salah satu bahasa daerah di Sulawesi Tengah menghadapi penurunan penggunaan akibat pengaruh globalisasi, dominasi bahasa Indonesia, serta rendahnya minat generasi muda. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa observasi, wawancara, kuesioner, dan dokumentasi. Sampel penelitian berjumlah 250 responden dengan teknik nonprobability sampling. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa masyarakat memiliki persepsi positif terhadap pentingnya pemertahanan Bahasa Tialo, namun penggunaannya lebih dominan pada generasi tua. Sementara itu, peran pemerintah masih tergolong rendah dalam mendukung pelestarian bahasa. Faktor utama penurunan bahasa meliputi dominasi bahasa global, minimnya perhatian pemerintah, dan kurangnya penggunaan dalam lingkungan keluarga. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan upaya strategis melalui sosialisasi, kegiatan literasi, serta integrasi bahasa daerah dalam pendidikan formal.

KATAKUNCI

Bahasa Tialo ;
Desa Bugis;
Pemertahanan Bahasa;
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1. Introduction

Language is one of the most critical elements in human life, as it functions as the primary tool of communication in social interaction. Through language, humans can convey ideas, feelings, and information to others. Beyond serving as a communication tool, language also possesses a broader function, namely as a means of identity formation, cultural development, and the transmission of social values from one generation to the next. Thus, the existence of language is not only related to linguistic aspects but is also closely intertwined with the social and cultural dynamics of society.

In the context of Indonesia's multicultural society, regional languages play a highly crucial role. Regional languages are not only used as a tool for daily communication but also serve as a symbol of cultural identity for specific community groups. They reflect the values, norms, and local wisdom that develop within a community. Therefore, the existence of regional languages must be preserved and maintained to prevent extinction.

However, in the current era of globalization, the existence of regional languages faces various serious challenges (Simanjuntak & Marpaung, 2025). Globalization has brought changes to various aspects of life, including language usage. The dominance of Indonesian as the national language and the influx of foreign languages into public life have caused a shift in language use. Society, particularly the younger generation, tends to prefer using Indonesian or foreign languages in daily communication because they are deemed more practical and carry higher social prestige.

This phenomenon also occurs with the Tialo language, one of the regional languages found in Central Sulawesi. The Tialo language is an integral part of the community's cultural identity, possessing high historical and social value. However, alongside modern developments, the use of the Tialo language has begun to decline, especially among the younger generation. This condition indicates symptoms of a language shift which, if not immediately anticipated, could lead to language degradation or even extinction.

Language maintenance is one of the efforts that can be undertaken to sustain the continuity of regional languages. According to Kridalaksana (2001), language maintenance is an effort to ensure that a language remains used and valued as a group identity through various means, such as education, literature, and mass media. This perspective indicates that language maintenance is not only related to language use but also involves various social aspects that support its continuity.

Furthermore, Astuti (2019) states that language maintenance occurs when a community is able to sustain the use of its language from one generation to the next, despite the influence of other, more dominant languages. This shows that the survival of

a language heavily depends on the attitude and awareness of the community in using and transmitting it.

In line with this, Prasetya (2020) explains that language maintenance can take place if a community continues to use their mother tongue in daily life. Thus, it can be concluded that language maintenance is strongly influenced by language use habits within the family environment, society, and educational institutions.

Based on the opinions of these experts, it can be understood that the community plays a pivotal role in determining the survival of a language. Public perception toward regional languages is the primary factor influencing their attitudes and behaviors in using the language. If the community holds a positive perception of their regional language, they will tend to maintain and use it in daily life. Conversely, if public perception is negative or indifferent, the use of the regional language will continue to diminish.

In the context of this study, the perception of the Bugis Village community toward the Tialo language is a highly crucial matter to examine. Based on preliminary observations, it is known that the Bugis Village community generally possesses an awareness of the importance of maintaining the Tialo language as part of their cultural identity. In practice, however, the use of the Tialo language is still dominated by the older generation, while the younger generation tends to use Indonesian more frequently in daily communication.

This condition demonstrates a gap between attitude and practice in language use. Attitudinally, the community considers the Tialo language important to preserve, but in practice, its usage has begun to decline. This aligns with the concept of language degradation proposed by Permatasari et al. (2022), which is defined as the decline of language use and comprehension within a community.

Another factor contributing to the decline of Tialo language use is the minimal role of the government in regional language preservation efforts. Based on the research findings, government programs and policies related to the maintenance of the Tialo language are still classified as low. This indicates that preservation efforts have not been maximally executed.

1.1 Language Ecology in Parental Environment

Additionally, the family environment also plays a critical role in language maintenance. The family is the primary environment for an individual to learn a language. If the regional language is not used within the family circle, the process of transmitting the language to the next generation will be hindered. This condition stands as one of the primary causes of the declining use of the Tialo language among the youth.

Consequently, the maintenance of the Tialo language requires collaboration from various parties, including the community, government, and educational institutions. Language maintenance efforts can be pursued through various channels, such as

utilizing the language in daily life, cultural activities, and integrating the regional language into formal education.

Based on the aforementioned discussion, research on the perceptions of the Bugis Village community toward the maintenance of the Tialo language is highly imperative to conduct. This study is expected to provide a deeper overview of public attitudes and views toward regional languages, as well as the factors influencing their usage. Furthermore, the results of this study are also expected to serve as a consideration in formulating appropriate strategies to safeguard the continuity of the Tialo language in the future.

In addition to globalization and the dominance of the national language, shifts in public communication patterns also affect the survival of regional languages. The rapid development of information and communication technology has transformed how people interact. Society no longer communicates solely face-to-face but also through digital media such as social media, instant messaging apps, and other communication platforms. In this context, the use of Indonesian and foreign languages is more dominant compared to regional languages, including the Tialo language.

Language use in digital media tends to follow globally evolving trends. The younger generation, as the primary users of technology, more frequently uses languages deemed modern, practical, and easily understood by many. This causes regional languages to be rarely used in digital communication, thereby accelerating the language shift process (Chaudhary, 2025; Dewi, 2025; Yakubova, 2025). If this condition persists, the Tialo language has the potential to become increasingly marginalized in public life, particularly among the younger generation.

Moreover, educational factors exert a significant influence on the use of regional languages. In the formal education system, the use of Indonesian as the medium of instruction has become dominant. While this is vital for maintaining national unity, on the other hand, it can reduce the intensity of regional language use within the school environment. The lack of regional language integration into the learning process leaves the younger generation unaccustomed to actively using it.

1.2 Language Shift

According to Chaer and Agustina (2014), a language shift can occur if a society prefers to use another language that is perceived to have higher economic, social, or prestige value. In this case, Indonesian and foreign languages are often considered to possess these values more than regional languages. Consequently, the regional language is gradually abandoned by its speakers.

This phenomenon also aligns with the view of Thomason (2001), who states that intensive language contact can cause language changes or even shifts. In bilingual or multilingual societies, the more dominant language tends to replace the less dominant

one. This is evident in the Bugis Village community, which has begun shifting to Indonesian in various communicative situations.

Furthermore, Keller (1999) explains that language change occurs naturally as part of social dynamics. However, such changes can turn into a threat if they are not balanced by robust maintenance efforts. Therefore, a collective awareness from the community is required to continue using and preserving regional languages as a core element of cultural identity.

In the context of this study, it is crucial to understand that the maintenance of the Tialo language does not rely solely on individual factors but is also influenced by social, cultural, and structural factors. Public perception is the main key to determining whether the language will remain in use or be abandoned. Thus, this study not only examines the level of language use but also delves into how the community gives meaning to the existence of the Tialo language in their lives.

With a profound understanding of public perception, it is expected that more effective strategies can be formulated in the effort to preserve the Tialo language. These strategies can involve various stakeholders, such as the government, educational institutions, community leaders, and the younger generation as cultural successors. This research also carries a high level of urgency given the dwindling number of active Tialo speakers. If no serious preservation efforts are made, this language has the potential to face extinction in the future. Therefore, this study is expected to provide a tangible contribution to regional language maintenance efforts, specifically for the Tialo language in Bugis Village.

Within the socio-cultural context of local communities, regional languages serve an irreplaceable function as a medium for transmitting cultural values. Language does not merely convey verbal messages; it also contains philosophical meanings that reflect a society's outlook on life. Therefore, the existence of a regional language like Tialo is not only important from a communicative aspect but also as a vehicle for generational cultural preservation.

In Bugis Village, the Tialo language has historically been utilized as the primary language in community social interactions. This language is used in various activities ranging from daily communication and custom activities to traditional ceremonies. However, over the past few decades, the use of the Tialo language has begun to experience a significant decline. This change did not occur abruptly but is rather the result of a gradual social process.

One of the factors influencing this change is the community's increasing social mobility. Interacting with outsiders who use Indonesian has accustomed the Bugis Village community to using the language in various situations. Additionally, educational

and occupational demands have also driven the community to master Indonesian over their regional language.

This shift in communication patterns also impacts the community's perspective on regional languages. Regional languages are starting to be deemed less relevant in a modern context, thereby restricting their usage. This condition poses a unique challenge to Tialo language maintenance efforts. Without systematic efforts to sustain the language, it is highly probable that the Tialo language will suffer a more drastic decline in the future.

In this regard, the younger generation holds a highly critical role as successors of language and culture. In reality, however, the youth tend to lack an emotional attachment to the regional language. This stems from a lack of habitual regional language use from an early age, both in the family and educational environments. Therefore, more intensive efforts are required to revive the younger generation's awareness of the importance of the Tialo language.

Considering these various conditions, this research becomes highly relevant to conduct. This study aims not only to describe public perceptions but also to provide a realistic depiction of the current status of Tialo language use in Bugis Village. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a foundation for formulating more effective policies and strategies in regional language maintenance.

2. Method

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively understand the Bugis Village community's perceptions regarding the maintenance of the Tialo language. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires to statistically measure perceptions and language use frequency, while qualitative data was gathered through in-depth interviews and observations to interpret the contextual meanings behind the numbers (Tsushima, 2015; Xudoyqulova, 2025).

The research was conducted in Bugis Village, Mepanga Subdistrict, Parigi Moutong Regency—an area where Tialo is still spoken but faces declining use, particularly among the younger generation. From the village population, a sample of 250 respondents was selected for the quantitative phase using a non-probability sampling technique, based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (ethnicity & language proficiency).

The obtained data were then analyzed through several stages, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data analysis was conducted by interpreting the questionnaire results and correlating them with relevant language maintenance theories.

By using this approach, it is expected that the research can provide a comprehensive overview of public perception and the factors influencing the maintenance of the Tialo language in Bugis Village.

In this study, the descriptive qualitative approach was not only used to describe phenomena generally but also to understand the meaning behind the linguistic behaviors exhibited by the community. This approach allowed the researchers to acquire deeper and more contextual data, ensuring that the research findings provide a more comprehensive depiction of the Tialo language maintenance conditions.

The use of non-probability sampling in this study was based on the consideration that not all members of the population possessed characteristics suitable for the research objectives. Therefore, the selection of respondents was conducted purposively by considering specific criteria, such as age, educational background, and involvement in the use of the Tialo language. Thus, the data obtained is expected to be more representative in depicting the actual conditions.

The research instrument, in the form of a questionnaire, was structured based on indicators relevant to the concept of language maintenance. Each item in the questionnaire was designed to measure the extent of Tialo language use in various contexts, such as within the family, social activities, and daily communication. The measurement scale utilized was the Likert scale, which enabled the researchers to measure respondents' perceptions quantitatively.

In addition to questionnaires, interviews were also employed as a data collection technique to gather more in-depth information. Interviews were conducted with several respondents who were deemed to have knowledge and experience relevant to the use of the Tialo language. The interview data were subsequently used to corroborate the questionnaire results and provide a more detailed explanation of the occurring phenomena (Siedlecki, 2022).

The data analysis process was conducted systematically through several stages. The first stage was data reduction, which is the process of selecting and simplifying the data obtained from the field. The second stage was data display in the form of tables and narratives, facilitating the interpretation process. The final stage was conclusion drawing based on the results of the conducted analysis.

To ensure data validity, this study utilized a triangulation technique, specifically by comparing data obtained from various sources and methods. Consequently, the research findings are expected to have a high level of validity and be scientifically accountable.

3. Results and Discussion

The research indicates that the community holds a positive perception toward the

maintenance of the Tialo language; however, its usage remains heavily dominated by the older generation. The younger generation tends to use Indonesian in their daily lives. Furthermore, the government's role in language preservation is still low.

Based on the results of the data analysis, it is evident that the Tialo language is still actively present in Bugis Village, albeit with limited intensity. The language continues to be used in specific contexts, particularly in communication between individuals who share the same cultural background. This demonstrates that while the Tialo language has not been entirely abandoned, its usage has begun to experience a narrowing of domains.

Within a social context, the use of the Tialo language tends to be more dominant among the elderly population. This demographic group maintains the use of the language as an integral part of their cultural identity and long-established habits. Conversely, among the younger age group, the use of the Tialo language is considerably lower. This points to distinct language use patterns driven by age factors.

In addition to age, educational attainment also influences the use of the Tialo language. Respondents with higher levels of education tend to use Indonesian more frequently in daily communication. This shift is driven by the demands of educational and occupational environments, which predominantly utilize Indonesian as the primary medium of interaction.

The research findings also reveal that the use of the Tialo language in formal settings, such as schools or workplaces, is virtually non-existent. Indonesian serves as the primary language in these contexts. This condition highlights that the Tialo language has not been afforded adequate space within formal domains, thereby further restricting its use.

Nevertheless, in informal contexts, such as conversations among friends or family members, the Tialo language is still employed, though inconsistently. This indicates that the language still functions as an identity marker within specific groups, even if it is not widely utilized.

These findings corroborate previous research indicating that the Tialo language is currently in a stage of language shift. Without serious maintenance efforts, the use of the Tialo language will continue to decline. Consequently, strategic measures are urgently required to expand the use of the language across various domains, both formal and informal.

Table 1. Community Perception on Tialo Language Preservation

No. Questionnaire Item	Mean Score	Description
1. I frequently teach the Tialo language to my children.	1.60	Very Rare
2. I frequently listen to Tialo music or songs in the mass media.	2.12	Rare
3. I frequently use the Tialo language in community social activities.	2.70	Rare
4. I frequently use the Tialo language in daily conversations.	2.81	Rare
5. I frequently use the Tialo language in cultural and traditional activities.	1.45	Very Rare
6. I frequently use the Tialo language in public places.	2.66	Rare
7. I frequently use the Tialo language in interpersonal communication.	3.26	Frequent

Table 2. Community Perception on Government Effort's on Tialo language Preservation

No.	Questionnaire Item	Mean Score	Description
1.	The local government organizes preservation programs for the Tialo language.	1.51	Very Low
2.	The local government promotes the use of the Tialo language in daily life.	1.49	Very Low
3.	The local government provides resources for learning the Tialo language.	1.32	Very Low
4.	The local government organizes cultural events that utilize the Tialo language.	1.46	Very Low
5.	The local government cooperates with other institutions to preserve the Tialo language.	1.65	Very Low
6.	The local government monitors the use of the Tialo language in the community.	1.31	Very Low
7.	The local government promotes the Tialo language through mass media or the internet.	1.48	Very Low

The community of Bugis Village possesses a relatively positive perception regarding the importance of the Tialo language as a cultural identity. This is evident from the respondents' statements, particularly among the older generation and customary leaders, who view the Tialo language as a core identity and a symbol of unity for the Tialo people. These findings reveal a gap between attitude and practice. Attitudinally, the community acknowledges the significance of the Tialo language; however, in daily practice, its usage has begun to decline, especially among the younger generation.

Based on the questionnaire results obtained from 250 respondents, it is apparent that public perception toward the Tialo language generally falls into the positive category, yet this is not accompanied by consistent usage in daily life. This underscores a manifest discrepancy between linguistic attitude and actual practice.

In the first questionnaire table, it can be seen that the mean scores for Tialo language use across various activities range from low to moderate. For instance, the statement regarding the use of the Tialo language within the family domain yielded a score of 1.60 (very rare). This indicates that Tialo has not yet become the primary language in the intergenerational transmission process, despite the family being the primary and most crucial environment for language inheritance.

Additionally, the use of the Tialo language in cultural activities also received a score of 1.45 (very rare). This finding is quite concerning, as cultural activities should ideally serve as the primary sphere for maintaining regional languages. The infrequent use of the language in cultural activities indicates a decline in its function as a symbol of cultural identity.

Meanwhile, the use of the Tialo language in interpersonal communication obtained a higher score of 3.26 (frequent). This indicates that the Tialo language is still utilized within specific contexts, particularly in interactions among fellow speakers who share the same cultural background. In other words, the Tialo language has not entirely vanished, but its application has become confined to specific situations.

In the second questionnaire table concerning the government's role, all indicators fell into the very low category. For example, language preservation programs scored only 1.51, language promotion scored 1.49, and the provision of learning resources scored 1.32. This data demonstrates that the government has not provided maximum support for Tialo language maintenance efforts.

This lack of government involvement directly impacts the low public awareness regarding regional language use. Without clear policies and programs, the community lacks a strong incentive to maintain the language. Therefore, more serious government intervention is required in the form of structural policies, educational programs, and cultural events.

To summarize, the questionnaire findings delineate three primary drivers behind the diminishing vitality of the Tialo language. These encompass the sociolinguistic hegemony of Indonesian and international languages, a critical lack of government intervention, and a marked reduction in vernacular transmission within the household. These three factors are interconnected, forming a cycle that accelerates language degradation. If left unaddressed, the Tialo language faces potential extinction in the future.

Nevertheless, the persisting positive perception within the community presents a significant opportunity for language maintenance efforts. This positive attitude can serve as primary capital to develop language preservation strategies, such as through education, cultural initiatives, and the utilization of digital media.

Further examination of these research findings reveals that the maintenance of the Tialo language is in a critical state. This is characterized by low language use across various domains, particularly within the family environment and cultural activities. Such a condition indicates that the function of the language as a primary communication tool

has begun to be supplanted by another, more dominant language.

According to the language domain theory posited by Fishman, language use across various spheres—such as family, education, and community—serves as a vital indicator of a language's vitality. In this study, the infrequent use of the Tialo language within the family domain indicates that the process of intergenerational language transmission is not functioning optimally. This stands as a primary indicator of an ongoing language shift.

Moreover, the low usage of the Tialo language in cultural events reflects a decline in the symbolic function of the language. The language is no longer actively used to represent cultural identity in customary and traditional practices, a condition that could lead to the loss of the intrinsic cultural values embedded within the language.

When compared to other studies, these findings align with the research by Permatasari et al. (2022), which states that the decline in regional language use occurs predominantly among the younger generation due to the influences of globalization and modernization. The youth tend to favor languages perceived as more relevant to contemporary advancements.

Furthermore, a study by Syamsuddin et al. (2025) also indicates that the lack of government support is a primary factor in the decline of regional language use. This highly corroborates the findings of this study, which show that the government's role in maintaining the Tialo language remains very low.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, this condition can be categorized as the initial stage of a language shift. If serious maintenance efforts are not undertaken, this state could progress into language loss. Therefore, strategic measures are imperative to prevent the extinction of the Tialo language.

One viable strategy is to increase language use within the family environment. Parents play a pivotal role in introducing and teaching the regional language to children from an early age. Additionally, the employment of the regional language in cultural and social activities must be revitalized to reinforce its function as a cultural identity marker.

On the other hand, the government needs to enhance its role through policies that support regional language preservation. Programs such as introducing the regional language in schools, organizing cultural festivals, and leveraging digital media can serve as effective steps to increase the usage of the Tialo language. The utilization of digital media also presents a promising opportunity for language maintenance efforts. The Tialo language can be introduced through creative content such as videos, music, and social media platforms. In this way, the regional language can remain

relevant to modern advancements and spark interest among the younger generation to use it. Through integrated efforts among the community, government, and educational institutions, it is hoped that the Tialo language can be sustained and safeguarded against extinction. The positive public perception identified in this study serves as a highly vital initial asset to support these endeavors.

4. Conclusion

This study successfully consolidates the sociolinguistic dynamics of the Bugis Village community regarding the survival of the Tialo language. The analysis demonstrates that while the community maintains a highly positive collective perception and views Tialo as an essential marker of cultural identity, this sentiment is not reflected in daily linguistic practices. A stark discrepancy exists between positive linguistic attitudes and actual implementation. The domains of Tialo language use are undergoing regressive contraction; active communication is heavily confined to the older generation, whereas the youth are shifting massively toward Indonesian due to globalization and modernization. This degradation is further exacerbated by suboptimal mother-tongue transmission within the family unit—the cornerstone of natural language inheritance—alongside a critical deficit in concrete structural policies and preservation programs from the local government.

Future researchers are encouraged to conduct experimental or action research examining the efficacy of integrating the Tialo language into the local content curriculum of formal education. Public policy studies are required to draft effective regional regulations that mandate the formal utilization of the local vernacular in public spaces and traditional customs.

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