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The Perception of Acehese Parents on Heritage Language Maintenance: A Quantitative Approach

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Abstract

Family is the ideal platform to maintain the indigenous language, and parents are the core feature in promoting it to the children. Many previous studies have concentrated on the Acehese younger generations' declination use of Acehese. Their perception of the language is initially linked to the parents' attitude towards it since the parents' attitude determines the children's perception of it. Hence, the present research aims to fill in the gap by assessing the language attitude of the Acehese parents living in the urban areas on Acehese and searching for their efforts in passing the language to their descendants. Fifty-five respondents from three different districts in Banda Aceh were purposely selected by considering some criteria to fulfill the need of this research. The data were collected by distributing questionnaires and analyzed using a descriptive quantitative model; a five-point Likert Scale, a weighted mean score, a mean combined score, and a score interval to put the results based on their criteria. The result shows that the language attitude of the Acehese parents is in good criterion (4.2); they honor, respect, and are proud of speaking the language as their identity. Moreover, they also put some genuine efforts into maintaining and inheriting the language by speaking the language while interacting with the spouse, children, and other Acehese community members; and promoting the language to their children in several ways despite living in urban areas.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language overwhelmingly corresponds to ethnicity and nationality; thus, it can be magnified to trace one's origin. As a symbol of ethnic recognition, language represents an identity of culture that contributes to marking different regions and nations. In Indonesia, there are numerous vernacular languages spoken across the nation to show the people's identity, and one of them is Acehnese, an indigenous language spoken natively among Acehnese speakers and communities, which reflects its cultural heritage and value as a part of its uniqueness.

Regional languages should be preserved as a part of national wealth and self-identity. Many researchers believe that preserving heritage languages is important. For instance, [Bodnitski \(2007\)](#) did a study to search for the first language maintenance among the Ukrainian immigrant families living in the USA. Similarly, [Jeon \(2008\)](#) researched the topic of the Korean language maintenance of an immigrated Korean family settling in the USA. Then, [Sevinç \(2016\)](#) conducted a study on Turkish language maintenance among Turkish families in the Netherlands. Those studies have revealed that protecting heritage language is a crucial thing to do as an attempt to save the self-identity or ethnic identity of the speakers while residing in another country where the heritage language is not natively spoken.

The majority of previous studies have also revealed that parents within the family are the right people to promote heritage language to younger generations, as many language interactions and language acquisition occur within the family ([Bodnitski, 2007](#)). Furthermore, parents are noted to be the ideal people to teach, transfer, maintain, and inherit the heritage language to their descendants because what the parents expose and habituate over the language will shape the children's proficiency and attitude towards it ([Tannenbaum & Hawie, 2002](#)).

Moreover, several studies have illustrated positive results in the relationship between the role and attitude among parents and the language continuity, especially those parents who reside in multicultural areas or countries. [Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe \(2009\)](#) conducted their research amongst Chinese immigrant parents living in the U.S. The result reveals that parents who have a positive attitude towards the heritage language tend to value the language and take action to pass it to children. [Liang \(2018\)](#), moreover, states that the immigrant parents in the United States and Canada take the responsibility to make an effort in heritage language maintenance, such as creating a language environment; thus, the children can benefit from it. Similarly, [Gupta \(2020\)](#), who carried out a study on Indian parents' perspective of maintaining heritage language in the metropolitan Jakarta, mentions that most the Indian parents show their agreement that it matters to protect and maintain the heritage language for children, and they take responsibility to do the duty.

On the contrary, there are also reports that there is no absolute correlation between parents' ideologies to parents' language choices at home ([Wilson, 2021](#)). Parents' attitude toward a language is not always congruent to language continuity since what they believe is not actually implemented during family interaction or repertoire ([Schwartz, 2008](#)). In addition, the existence of opposite principles among

family members about which language they should prioritize, minority or majority language, brings about conflicts within the same family which, in the end, remark that parents or family is not the only paramount element in language preservation (Curdt-Christiansen, 2016). Therefore, supports from the wider society also matters in heritage language development among children (Redemann, 2018).

Language maintenance cannot be done if speakers negatively perceive the language. This attitude will lead them to hesitantly speak their regional language in the society as they consider the language inferior. A similar condition is found among the Acehese adolescents. Some previous studies such as those by Fakhurrrazi (2016), Al-Auwal (2017), and Rahmatillah et al. (2021) have reported that home language becomes the reason why most of the Acehese younger generations nowadays are reluctant to speak Acehese. The majority of the Acehese parents consider Indonesian to be more prestigious and important; hence they resolutely teach the language to the children. Consequently, this habit shapes the children's perception of the use of Acehese in daily life. The parents do not realize that the continuity of the regional language lies in their hands, therefore, they have to take responsibility for preserving, teaching, and inheriting the language to their descendants. The most recent qualitative study by Yusuf et al. (2022) also revealed that despite the fact that all 12 couples interviewed in the research considered the Acehese language as vital for expressing their Acehese identity and were aware of its values, they did not teach their children the language. Only one family out of the twelve was successful in passing on and maintaining Acehese to their children.

Furthermore, migration should be considered as another factor of regional language regression. Moving to areas where Acehese is not natively spoken is remarked as a big struggle to keep using it daily. Thus, language shift occurs eventually. Chairuddin (2018), who carried his research under the umbrella of the Acehese language maintenance among the Acehese speakers settling in Kampai Island, North Sumatera, found out that the Acehese people tend to shift their language in communication; they speak Acehese predominantly and Indonesian dominantly with other Acehese members in the area. It is done because they belong to the minority speech community where they should adapt and adjust to the new environment by shifting the language; they absorb new vocabulary and then use it in speaking. Hidayati et al. (2020) also postulated that most Acehese people residing in Delitua District, North Sumatera, favored shifting their language from Acehese to Indonesian since it can show their success and social status in the community.

On the contrary, according to Amna et al. (2018), the Acehese speakers living in Medan, North Sumatera, progressively protect the language by showing their positive attitude towards it; they use Acehese when communicating with the other Acehese community members. This attitude is influenced by the parents who encourage them to protect the language as part of their identity. A language can be preserved as long as the speech community still has a genuine willingness to use it in daily communication despite living abroad. Yusuf et al. (2013) and Pillai et al. (2015) successfully present the phenomenon where the Acehese community residing in Kampung Aceh, Malaysia keeps using the Acehese though residing in another country. They mark the language positively since they perceive that speaking Acehese can show their true identity, and it is a part of cultural heritage which must be maintained for the language continuity.

Unfortunately, according to Rohullah (2017), parents who have been living in big cities nowadays believe Indonesian or foreign languages as more prestigious to be taught to their descendants, leaving behind the vernacular language. Indeed, many studies have shown that family, especially parents, truly plays an essential role in heritage language mastery amongst youngsters (Al-Auwal, 2017; Bodnitski, 2007; Li, 2006; Muhammad, 2013; Tannenbaum & Hawie, 2002; Yusuf et al, 2022). A language will surely stay alive, be known, and spoken if it is inherited from the elders to the youngsters, so the speakers of the language can exist from time to time. Still, the pinpoint of the situation is that the parents' attitude towards their heritage language should be spotted at very first since what they perceive toward it will determine the language continuity; the positive attitude will immediately lead to consciously inheriting the language, whilst the negative one will walk in the path of reluctance (Djamareng & Jufriadi, 2016; Ikram & Paeni, 2009). Therefore, the parents should have positive language attitudes to show their consciousness of using the Acehnese in any circumstances, teaching and exposing it to their children, speaking it with the other Acehnese fellows, and prefer to communicate using it despite living in an urban area.

However, not much research focuses on parents' attitudes and efforts in inheriting the Acehnese to their descendants. Most of the studies were devoted to youngsters' attitudes towards the Acehnese, such as those by Alamsyah et al. (2011), Muhammad (2013), Fakhurrrazi (2016), and Al-Auwal (2017). The most relevant works related to the present study are those conducted by Muhammad (2013), Aziz et al. (2021), and Yusuf et al. (2022). However, those studies are concentrated on the parents' perspective on children's bilingualism in Banda Aceh, the issue of language shift among parents in Lhokseumawe City, the language attitude among three generations of women living in Bireuen Regency, and a quantitative study approach towards the attitudes of Acehnese young families and how their values influence the preservation of the indigenous language to their children. Therefore, this quantitative study matters to conduct as an attempt to fill in the gap since parents come as the first handy factor in promoting and inheriting the language. The parents' positive attitude toward the language results in a positive attitude among the children (Al-Auwal, 2017; Aziz et al., 2021). The researchers then formulated the following research questions:

- What are the perceptions of the Acehnese-speaking parents residing in urban areas toward heritage language maintenance?
- What are the parents' efforts toward the Acehnese language maintenance?

Accordingly, it can be noted that this research aims at investigating the Acehnese parents' perceptions of the use of the Acehnese in urban areas. It also seeks to find out their efforts to pass on the language to their children. Finally, the results of this research are meant to add some useful references for Acehnese, and other ethnicities in Indonesia to be aware of their heritage language maintenance.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Language Maintenance

The spread of English as the international language and the wider use of Indonesian as the national language have gradually changed the place of the Acehnese among the Acehnese speakers. Some previous studies have revealed that more and

more Acehnese youngsters nowadays feel reluctant to use Acehnese in communication (Alamsyah et al., 2011; Muhammad, 2013) they prefer to speak Indonesian rather than Acehnese. They perceive the Acehnese language as not prestigious, old fashion, and not well-communicative (Al-Auwal, 2017; Aziz et al., 2021).

Precisely, language itself is strongly associated with a shared cultural identity of a community; it is a true symbol of identifying social groups (Brown, 2009; Fakhrurrazi, 2016; Holmes, 2001; Llamas et al., 2006; Sapir, 2003). A language shall disappear one day if it is no longer being taught to many children in a community. Language loss happens when the language loses its last native speakers or the fluent speakers die (Aziz & Amery, 2016). Therefore, language preservation is greatly required to prevent the language from becoming unknown.

In line with the discourse of language endangerment, certain notions emerge to be discussed in a row, such as a language shift, language maintenance, language loss, and language death. The term ‘language shift’ was first introduced by Fishman (1964). He defines language shift as a situation where a community leaves their heritage language behind and changes their vernacular into new. Kandler and Steele (2017) claimed that when a bilingual speech community begins to favor one language over another, it certainly reflects that a language shift is taking place. Language shift has been rising recently in which one language is replaced or assimilated to another language due to native speakers’ preferences, and the transformation of political, economic, and social settings in a speech community (Heinrich, 2015).

In addition, Ostler (2011) and Pauwels (2016) claimed that language loss constitutes a process of diminishing the linguistic abilities of a speech community to speak, understand, and use the language, including its dialects, and in the end, no native speaker remained (Huss, 2017). Language loss must be seriously considered since it indicates language endangerment and language death. Dastgoshadeh and Jalilzadeh (2011) outlined that language is a vital feature of a human to identify his social group, the value of culture, and ethnicity, so losing language means losing the carrier of identity. Therefore, language must be inherited by the young generation to survive.

Surprisingly, Acehnese youngsters nowadays are not frequently promoted and exposed to the Acehnese by their parents; hence they neither acquire nor absorb the heritage language (Muhammad, 2013; Yusuf, et al., 2022). Recently, more and more Acehnese-speaking parents prefer teaching their children Indonesian or even a foreign language such as English as their first language and leave the existence of Acehnese behind (Alamsyah et al., 2011; Yusuf, et al., 2022). Those children then acquire their regional language from their neighborhood or school. Indeed, parents within a family play a vital role in terms of exposing, transferring, inheriting, and preserving regional language since children learn their first language from their parents (Redemann, 2018). In other words, parents are the ideal persons to inherit the language. On the contrary, if they are reluctant to do so, it can be assumed that someday, the Acehnese might walk on the path of extinction (Harun, 2003).

Furthermore, the national language policy emphasizing Indonesian as the national language across the Indonesian archipelago has greatly impacted language shifts of regional languages (Musgrave, 2014). *Hari Sumpah Pemuda* (literally translated as the youth pledge day) honors the Youth Pledge (*Sumpah Pemuda*) made on October 28, 1928, at the Youth Congress, proclaiming “one motherland, one nation, one language”. This declaration was then adopted to strive for independence, and it became the fundamental idea to unite Indonesia through the Indonesian language.

Since then, the language has been massively used as the national language, specifically in formal settings such as educational services, government offices, politics, economics, and other formal events. Due to the condition, a great wave of the language shift has occurred in which regional languages become a minority, and the Indonesian is labeled the majority (Aziz & Amery, 2016). The language is used in almost all aspects of life, including the instructional language used when children start going to school. Hence, this perception makes more and more parents nowadays prefer to transfer the Indonesian rather than the regional languages to their children due to the demand (Aziz, et al., 2021; Muhammad, 2013; Yusuf et al, 2022).

However, the constitution clearly states that the Indonesian government promises to protect regional languages as the national wealth and cultural heritage (The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia, 2015). The languages are allowed to be used as a complement or supporting element towards the implication of Indonesian in educational contexts. In conclusion, both languages are to enhance the Indonesian culture and to show Indonesian identity; hence both should be used interchangeably.

2.2 Language Attitudes and Efforts

It is undeniable that “the sustainability of a language is largely determined by the language itself without any exception whether the language belongs to a national language or as a vernacular language” (Ginting, 2018, p. 125). This fact is overwhelmingly connected to language attitude, which plays an essential role in language maintenance. Similarly, language attitude is massively linked to self-identity and ethnicity where a speech community lives, so they try to maintain their heritage language (Holmes, 2001). Each speech community must maintain a positive attitude towards a language, especially parents, as they are the core feature responsible for language preservation. In short, those who have a good attitude toward their language will always show a group identity (Aziz et al., 2021; Fakhurrrazi, 2016).

Attitude, then, depicts the feeling of tenderness, compassion, devotion, and discernment over something, and it is often noted as the perception of people over one’s language and other people’s language (Ajzen, 2005). Attitude could be positive and negative perception, belief, state of mind, reaction, response, or judgment of a language. A positive attitude adheres to the desire to maintain or preserve the language, and it shows up in several aspects, namely in language endeavors which can be monitored from language pride and language loyalty, whilst a negative attitude is reflected through lack of language pride and language disloyalty (Ginting, 2018).

Language pride is defined as an awareness of a person or a speech community to eagerly show the language as a symbol of their personal or group identity. The speakers also have a desire to respect the language wherever they live as a trait of a sense of belonging and a sense of honor towards the language (Arifin, 2017). Next, an attitude considering the impacts of a foreign language that can harm the existence of one’s language is called language loyalty. It is generally evidenced by a desire to retain the language that is articulated through its use; hence it will lead its speakers to maintain the language under adverse circumstances (Chaer & Agustina, 2004).

On the other hand, the negative language attitude tends not to use the language and preserve it in communication. The first type of negative attitude is a lack of pride towards the language; the attitude of speakers of a language that shows their reluctance

or hesitation to use, spread, and value the language as one's symbol of identity and ethnicity (Ginting, 2018). This trait generally reflects on one's feeling of discrimination towards the language that they perceive has less pride and prestige. In addition, language disloyalty is the unwillingness or denial to maintain a language that is assumed as the minor one due to the loss of loyalty (Kamasuriya & Pereira, 2021). The attitude leads speakers of the language to show their disinclination to make the language sustainable in a community. According to Chaer and Agustina (2004), there are some traits of speakers of a language that show their negative emotional response towards the language; perceiving the language as an unnecessary symbol, preferring to use a second or foreign language due to the prerequisite of society and hesitating to actively participate in language maintenance.

3. METHODS

3.1 Respondents

The specific characteristics of respondents of this research were purposely selected based on some criteria; they are Acehnese native speakers, live in Banda Aceh, and have children. Since the participation in this study is voluntary, the researchers randomly chose 55 respondents from different districts in Banda Aceh; 15 respondents from Ulee Kareng District, 25 respondents from Meuraxa District, and 15 respondents from Kuta Alam District.

3.2 Design and Data Collection

This research was conducted using the descriptive quantitative method by which the researchers attempted to investigate, examine, describe, and represent the data of the phenomenon by using numbers, percentages, charts, or graphs and describing them in words. For data collection, the researchers used a set of questionnaires adapted and modified from several previous related pieces of research (i.e., Delijar et al., 2019; Ginting, 2020; Muhammad, 2013) and to suit the need of the present research.

There were 10 (ten) statements within the questionnaire that were utilized to answer the two research questions. The statements, later, were split up into two sections. Section A, covering items number 1 to 4, was meant to assess the parents' language attitude towards the Acehnese by offering some statements linked to language pride and loyalty, known as the elements in assessing language attitude. Section B, involving statements number 5 to 10, was meant to seek out the parents' effort to promote, maintain, and transfer the Acehnese to their children. The questionnaire was made in closed-ended statements presented in Indonesian to make it more effective and efficient for the respondents to understand and respond.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data gathered from the questionnaire for parts A and B were evaluated by employing the following formula: Likert Scale, weighted mean score, combined mean score, and score interval. A five-point Likert Scale was used to score each option of

the statements within the questionnaire, ranging from (5) Strongly Agree (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree.

Next, after summing all of the respondents' combined scores, the researchers calculated the weighted mean score by magnifying the formula proposed by Sugiyono (2013):

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

where

\bar{X} = mean score

$\sum X$ = total score of the respondents

N = number of the respondents

Later, the combined mean score (\bar{X}_c) was operated to calculate the final result scores from the total of the four weighted mean scores. The combined mean score can be calculated using the following formula:

$$\bar{X}_c = \frac{\sum X_1 + \sum X_2 + \sum X_3 + \sum X_4}{n}$$

where

$\sum X_1$ = mean score of statement 1

$\sum X_2$ = mean score of statement 2

$\sum X_3$ = mean score of statement 3

$\sum X_4$ = mean score of statement 4

n = total data

To describe the frequency of each item of the scale, a score interval was used to put the means score into the interpretation score. The formula of the score interval is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Interval} &= \frac{\text{the highest score} - \text{the lowest score}}{\text{total category of the scale}} \\ &= \frac{5 - 1}{5} \\ &= 0.8 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, the interpretation of the mean scores based on the score interval, as suggested by Sugiyono (2013), is presented as follows:

Table 1. Interpretation of mean score.

Criteria	Scale
Very Bad	1.0 – 1.8
Bad	1.9 – 2.6
Neutral	2.7 – 3.4
Good	3.5 – 4.2
Very Good	4.3 – 5.0

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Parents' Attitude towards Acehnese

Language attitude, in addition, is the key notion in language maintenance. This notion can be mirrored in its speaker's positive attitude, valuing of the language, and feeling of ownership. Figure 1 presents the detailed responses of the Acehnese-speaking parents' attitudes towards their heritage language.

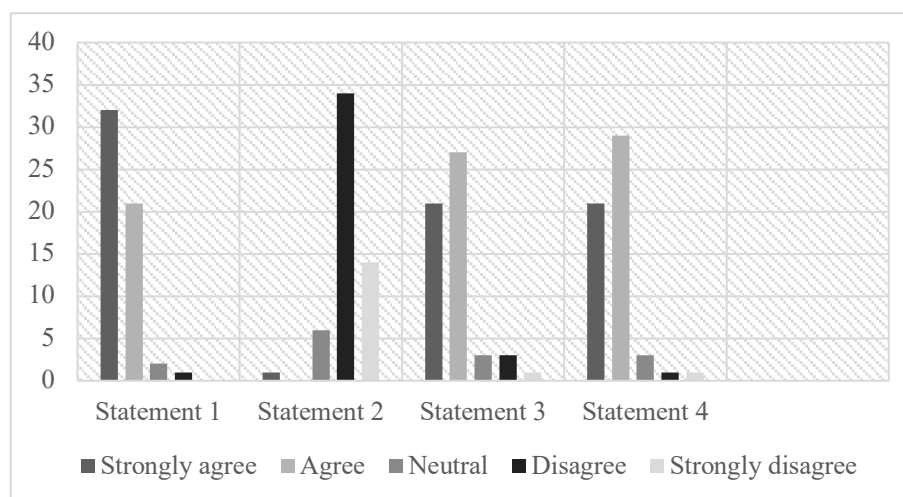


Figure 1. Frequency results of the respondents' language attitude.

Figure 1 highlights the Acehnese-speaking parents' perspective on using the Acehnese while settling in the urban area surrounded by a multilingual society. From Figure 1, it can be learned that parents have a positive attitude towards Acehnese even though they live in Banda Aceh, the capital city of Aceh province. A positive attitude can be learned from their responses to the questionnaire's statements. For example, more than half of the respondents (32 out of 55 respondents) show strong agreement that they are proud of being able to speak Acehnese despite living in an urban area. It portrays that occupying the urban area for such a long time, in which heterogeneous language and people are assimilated, does not stop them from loving their inherited language. Yusuf et al. (2022) also revealed that Acehnese parents, despite passing on or not passing on the heritage language to their children, have strong positive attitudes towards this language. Nevertheless, the attitude is largely useful in maintaining the language in the massive presence of heterogeneity of community or bilingual community in forms of language varieties (Holmes, 2001).

In maintaining the regional language, the speakers must promote the language to their children as they will play an important role in continuing the language in the future (Yusuf et al., 2013). Based on this claim, the result shows that the Acehnese-speaking parents still have this kind of attitude. The majority of respondents (34 or 61.8%) do not consider Acehnese as a conservative, old-fashioned language to speak to their children. This positive vibe is captivating since a good language attitude could be manifested in respecting the language as self-identity (Brown, 2009; Sapir, 2003). If the speaker of a language stigmatizes that a regional language is not modern, somewhat conservative, and left behind, they will surely find themselves reluctant to

use the language and purposely will not pass it to their descendants. Consequently, the language continuity is unsafe.

Linearly, Garvin and Mathiot (1968) claim that a sense of pride towards a language can be reflected in its speaker's willingness to speak and spread the language under any circumstances and environment. Since the sense of pride is one of the key elements in assessing language attitude, as previously mentioned, one of the efforts to maintain the sustainability of a language is by frequent and continuous use of the language under any circumstances (Pillai, et al., 2015). The frequent use of the language inside and outside the home will shape the familiarity and pride over the language among the children. Later on, they will benefit from the good habit that can create their genuine perception of the language. Moreover, what can be noticed from the research result is that many respondents (27 respondents or 49.1%) agreed with the opinions. They do not feel ashamed of speaking the Acehnese with children outside the house and in public places because they have pride when using it.

According to Llamas et al. (2006), Brown (2009), and Fakhurrrazi (2016), language is noted as a shared-identity community, hence losing a language means losing identity and culture. To maintain a language also means preserving the identity of its speech community (Yusuf, et al., 2013). Further, children who are exposed to and passed a language by their parents will certainly and easily acquire it. Therefore, parents need to know that transferring Acehnese to their descendants maintains language longevity. This statement is correlated to the respondents' answers in which they perceived that it is important to promote Acehnese to their children as a part of their identity wherever they live.

After calculating all of the scores from the questionnaire responses, the weighted mean scores are displayed in their group based on their interpretation.

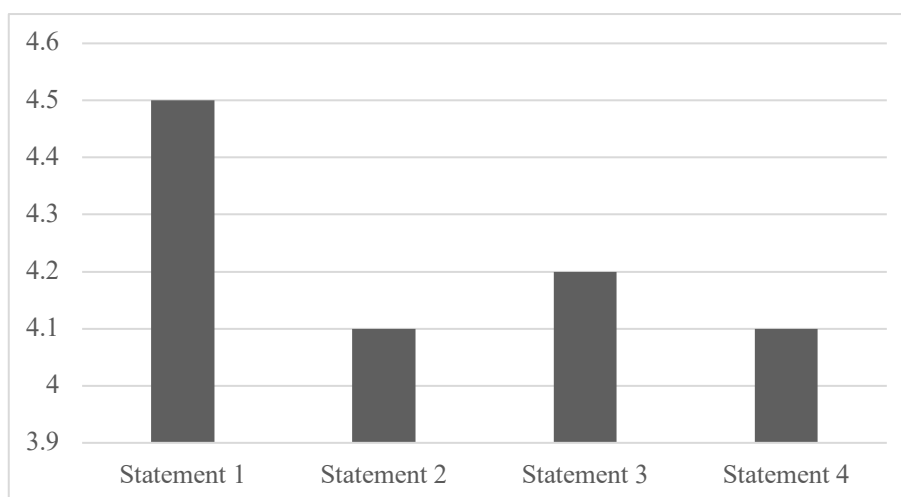


Figure 2. The weighted mean scores of the parents' language attitude.

To reach the final score of the four mean scores of the statements and to put the scores based on their criteria, the combined mean score was applied as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \overline{Xc} &= \frac{\sum X1 + \sum X2 + \sum X3 + \sum X4}{n} \\ &= \frac{4.5 + 4.1 + 4.2 + 4.1}{4} \\ &= 4.2 \end{aligned}$$

It can be noted from the calculation of the combined mean score that the Acehnese-speaking parents have a good perspective on the use of the Acehnese (4.2 points). It indicates that they still honor the heritage language and show their true color of identity within their society, as also reported by [Aziz et al \(2021\)](#) and [Yusuf et al. \(2022\)](#). The positive attitude was mirrored by their pride and loyalty towards the language ([Yusuf, et al., 2013](#)); being proud of using the language, being keen on using it, perceiving that it is a mark of ethnic identity, and being confident in using it. According to [Corson \(2001\)](#), a positive language attitude towards the heritage language is crucial to reflect the speakers' self-identity and self-esteem. Similarly, the parents are still giving a high pride over the language to make it live longer in the society. This also suggests that the language speakers remain abundant in the present time.

4.2 The Parents' Effort toward the Acehnese Language Maintenance

In terms of preserving the indigenous language while settling in a multilingual and multicultural society, a positive perspective toward the language is not the only pivotal core to possess; a persistent endeavor is also strongly counted in. Hence, this section answers the second research question. In terms of protecting a heritage language, the persevering efforts are immensely required to maintain the language, and they are plausible to do in many ways: the internal context, such as mutual conversation with spouse or children and other people, and the external context, such as reciprocal communication with other Acehnese people.

The frequency result of the statements related to efforts in the questionnaire is presented in Figure 3.

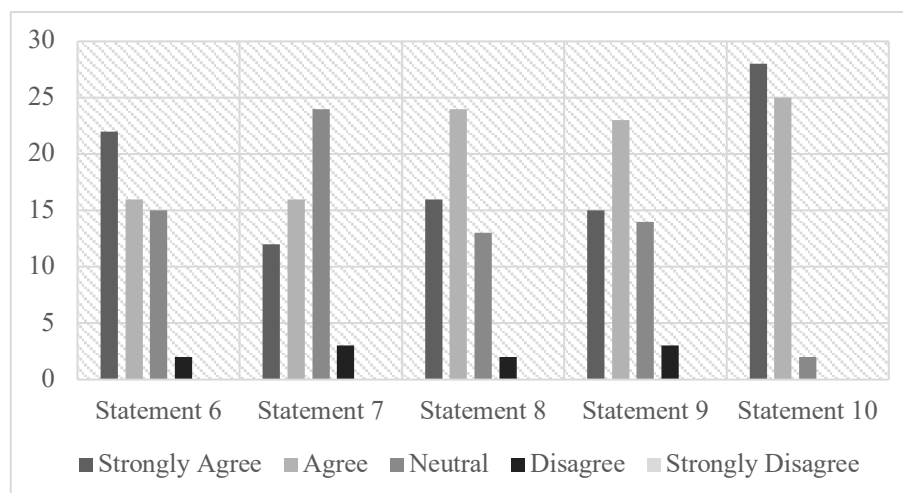


Figure 3. The frequency result of the respondents' language maintenance endeavor.

The assessment of the parents' efforts in maintaining Acehnese can be observed in Figure 4 of the weighted mean scores.

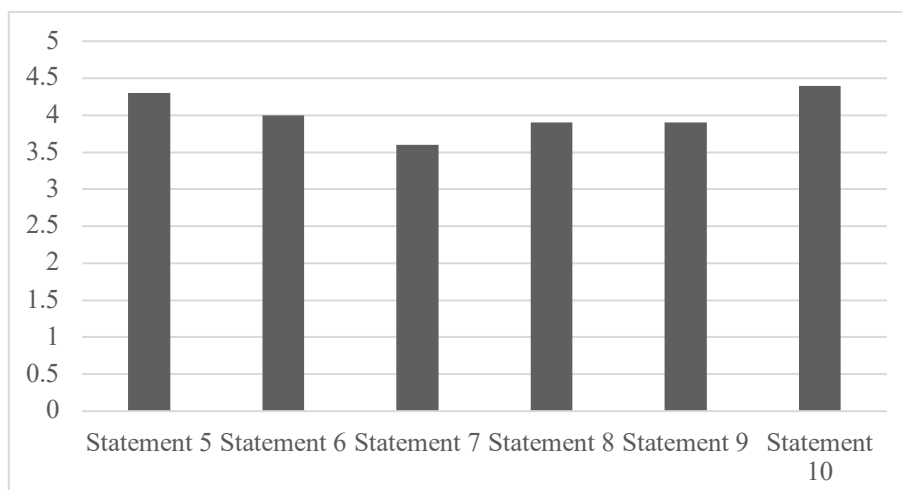


Figure 4. The weighted mean scores of the respondents' language maintenance efforts.

The research result has revealed that most parents (27 respondents) are willing to speak Acehnese with other Acehnese fellows despite living in Banda Aceh, where the Indonesian is more favored and widely used. [Djamareng and Jufriadi \(2016\)](#) state that whenever speakers of a language prefer to speak their indigenous language with people from the same speech community, it indicates that they have a positive attitude toward language maintenance. The data reflects that speaking Acehnese with other Acehnese fellows is a sign of loyalty to the language though they live in an urban area. Language protection also seems prone to do through family communication. An Acehnese wife can speak the language while conversing with her husband and vice versa. This home language habituation will affect the children's perspective toward the language. [Al Zoubi \(2018\)](#) claims that progressive use of language around children will unconsciously create proficiency in the language. Therefore, the more a spouse speaks a certain language around their children, the more familiar they will be with the language. In agreement with this argument, 28 respondents agreed to this effort, while the rest mixed Acehnese and Indonesian while speaking with their spouses. The latter result indicates a relatively not-so-threat situation because the Acehnese is still used in their conversation.

Furthermore, the core feature of language maintenance is inheriting or passing the language to children through casual conversation to keep the language known and spoken by the younger generation. There are enjoyable ways to promote the language to children. For example, when the children talk to their parents, they can respond in Acehnese. [Luo and Wiseman \(2000\)](#) and [Mills \(2001\)](#) mention that the visible effort, of using the heritage language to talk with children at home, can bring a good effect on the children's positive attitude towards the language. Thus, they will use the language to socialize with others even after being exposed to another language. Consequently, it will preserve the heritage language in the future ([Pillai, et al., 2015](#); [Yusuf, et al., 2013](#)). The research result indicated that 24 respondents showed their effort in promoting the language to their children in the mentioned way. Meanwhile, some others did not feel so assured about speaking the Acehnese language to their children as most of them speak Indonesian most of the time. The result reveals that although the parents have a good perspective on the language, they remain reluctant to speak Acehnese dominantly to their children. This finding is in line with the discovery

by Aziz et al. (2020), Aziz et al. (2021), and Yusuf et al. (2022), It is understandable since when it comes to literacy, the parents prefer to teach Indonesian to their descendants as the Indonesian is more formal and is required in the educational domain and the work-life later on (Aziz & Amery, 2016; Muhammad, 2013).

Next, the other exciting effort to promote the language to younger generations is by teaching and familiarizing the language through entertainment, such as songs and films. As many as 24 respondents responded positively to this idea. Nowadays, many of the Acehese songs and films can be easily reached by them as media to learn their indigenous language. Al Zoubi (2018) says that the more input parents exposed to the children, the more they can acquire and become proficient in the language. It means that the frequent exposure to the language in many ways could shape the good fundamental acquisition in the language, directly impacting their proficiency and attitude towards the use of the language.

The home language or language chosen by those parents to be passed to their children as their mother tongue is another factor in language maintenance. The first language acquisition is essential to define one's identity; to which ethnic or speech community they belong. Ginting (2018) mentions that if parents in mixed communities still prefer to teach the regional language to their children, it indicates that the parents have good language loyalty. Some parents possess a good willingness to teach Acehese as their mother tongue despite living in a city where the Indonesian and foreign languages are most preferred. It reflects their pure ownership over the language; thus, half of the respondents agreed with this opinion.

Finally, parents should be aware that they take full responsibility for passing the language to their children (Aziz et al., 2020; Yusuf et al., 2022); they are the key feature in transferring the language. Their duty to promote and pass the language to their children is to preserve the language from language loss. The parents' awareness, willingness, and consciousness to do it will certainly benefit the language sustainability. A good awareness of parents to maintain the existence of regional language will be evidenced through their willingness to transmit the language to their children under any circumstances (Chaer & Agustina, 2004). Half of the respondents reacted positively to this statement in which they are conscious of what they should do to preserve the language.

In terms of the level of effort, the combined mean score is calculated to reach the final score of the six mean scores and then is placed into their criteria as in the interpretation score.

$$\begin{aligned}\bar{X}_C &= \frac{\sum X_5 + \sum X_6 + \sum X_7 + \sum X_8 + \sum X_9 + \sum X_{10}}{n} \\ &= \frac{4.3 + 4 + 3.6 + 3.9 + 3.9 + 4.4}{6} \\ &= 4\end{aligned}$$

The aspect of language maintenance efforts also indicates a good level. One attempt that the parents show at the language maintenance is the emphasis on the necessity to speak the language frequently with and around the children to foster their proficiency in the language and shape their positive attitude towards it (Li, 2006). It indicates that their commitment to use, teach, and transfer the language to the younger generations can help preserve the language.

In a linear fashion, it is in line with the research result conducted by [Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia \(2020\)](#) or Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, which states that Acehnese is one of the safe regional languages in Indonesia because many people use it in communication and many youngsters still understand it. Similarly, [Wahidi and Putra \(2019\)](#) conclude that the majority of the Acehnese native speakers still possess a positive perception of the language, and thus, it is good to pass the language to the younger generation as an attempt to keep the language safe in the future. Those who have a positive attitude towards their language will always use it daily, transfer it to younger generations, and maintain it as their true color of identity in the compound speech community ([Aziz et al., 2021](#); [Fakhrurrazi, 2016](#)).

However, similar to [Yusuf et al. \(2022\)](#), the most apparent result of the statement is that the majority of the parents do not overwhelmingly speak the Acehnese to their children. Indeed, they tend to speak Indonesian, the official language among the Indonesian inhabitants, and it is widely used in formal contexts. In this modern era, national and foreign languages are much more preferred as the former serves as the formal language in many aspects of life, and the latter is used to engage and explore the world. It is inevitable that when the children enter school life, they will be heavily exposed to Indonesian rather than the Acehnese or other regional languages. It is crucial to note that though the regional language is perceived to play little function daily, it must be preserved to show one's true identity; reflecting the ethnicity and nationality to which the speaker belongs to. Therefore, it would be better for the parents to teach and pass both languages to their children since they matter in different aspects of life.

5. CONCLUSION

Language attitude and efforts considerably matter in language maintenance. A positive language attitude towards the regional language will benefit the language continuity from the present to the future. Parents, then, are the rightest people to promote, transfer, and pass Acehnese to the younger generations. Therefore, the first thing to be examined in the domain of regional language usage, perception, and attitude are the parents since they are the agents of language preservation in the era of globalization.

The Acehnese parents in this study have shown a good language attitude toward the Acehnese, and they also showed positive and actual actions in preserving the language. Based on the above elaboration, they made some efforts to transfer the language to their descendants. Hence, it indicates that language sustainability is still in the safe category based on the assessment of the language maintenance aspects. This genuine endeavor should be maintained progressively to preserve the true community identity and avoid language loss.

This research has revealed its result based on the scientific procedure of quantitative data analysis. However, there are limitations, such as the small number of respondents and the use of only one kind of instrument. Therefore, it is suggested that further research add more respondents and more instruments to collect more data from respondents.

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