



The Vitality of South-Halmahera Bajau Language

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Abstract. This study aims to identify the vitality of Indonesian Bajau, especially spoken in the South Halmahera Region. The study applies a descriptive-quantitative method. The data were collected through a closed questionnaire. The data was then analyzed and categorized according to criteria proposed by Grimes at the Consignment of Endangered Language at Marasa Hotel in Ciawi, 2nd—4th of December 2011. The result shows that the average index of all indicators is 0.53. The number indicates that the target language is eroding, with only half of the children and elders using the language. Furthermore, it reveals that the Bajau people still actively use the language in the household. However, the language is not used in the other areas. The infamous sea nomads live quite far from the city but do not make them feel left behind. They still can access mass media in the national language. Most also speak at least three languages, including their mother tongue, the Bajau language, one other local language, and the national language. Even without proper regulation from the government, they are still proud of their native language. Parents transmit their language to their kids. The result of this study is expected to be used as the basis for further studies related to the conservation and revitalization of the language.

Keywords: Indonesian Bajau, language vitality, language revitalization, language conservation

1. Introduction

One of Indonesia's treasures is the number of languages that reach hundreds. On the official page of the Language Map in Indonesia issued by the Language Development Agency, it is recorded that there are currently 718 languages that have been identified. This wealth certainly deserves to be protected. The protection of regional languages is carried out, among other things, to minimize language shifts and the extinction of regional languages. This is because many studies have informed about Indonesia's shift and extinction of regional languages.

Protecting hundreds of regional languages in Indonesia is difficult to implement due to funding and human resource constraints. Therefore, creating a priority scale or group of languages is necessary, namely, which regional languages are more urgent to protect and which regional languages are less urgent to protect. One way to help group languages is by studying the language's vitality (life force). The vitality or life force of a language refers to

the intensity of use and existence of a language as a means of communication in various social contexts for certain purposes. The study of language vitality aims to determine the status of the language so that the next steps for protecting the language can be determined [9].

To measure a language's vitality level, this study refers to Grimes' theory, which has been interpreted by the Language Development and Fostering Agency and has a range of 0 to 1. The criteria for the level of vitality are (1) very endangered (0.0--0.2); (2) endangered (0.21-0.4); (3) eroding (0.41-0.6); (4) stable but threatened (0.61-0.8); and (5) safe (0.81-1) [9]. These criteria will also be adapted in this study.

Research into language vitality is no longer irrelevant to Indonesia. It is an important effort to protect local languages. [10] investigates the vitality of the Ternate language on Hiri Island. The result shows that the average index score is 0.64. The number is categorized as stable, but the language is threatened. This result is far different from the research by [5] that said, the language is endangered. However, both researchers used different methods to count the index number. The current study uses the same method as [10] since they use the proposed standard method from the Language Development and Fostering Agency. The study of the vitality of the Ternate language is the only study done for the languages in North Maluku.

[11] identified the vitality level of the Oirata language spoken in Maluku using the vitality level standards determined by the Language Development and Fostering Agency. The cumulative results of the index of all indicators showed that the vitality level of the Oirata language was at a score of 0.57, indicating that the Oirata language was "eroding." The similar result is also shown in the study by [12] who measured the vitality of the Tolaki language in Kendari City using the standards as [10] and [10]. The study results showed that the average index of all indicators was at 0.42 with a category of eroding. The category of "eroding" means that some speakers are children and the elderly, other children do not speak this language, and the language does not have official or prestigious status. The results of the vitality studies vary depending on various factors. Therefore, it is interesting to identify the vitality of the South Halmahera Bajau language so that it will determine the next step of protecting the language.

Research related to the Indonesian Bajau language is still limited in number. Previous studies have examined more from the descriptive linguistic side of the Bajau language in Nusa Tenggara or Sulawesi. One study that is quite close to the theme of this research is the study by [10] which discusses the resilience of the maritime lexicon of the Bajau language on the Tinanggea Coast, South Konawe Regency. The study used an Ecolinguistic approach. The results of the study showed that the Bajau Tinanggea community still maintains the use of 96% of its maritime lexicon. Bajau Tinanggea speakers still use their language in the family environment. They also have a good language attitude and still maintain their surroundings because they consider their environment, in this case, the sea, a source of life. In addition, the life of the Bajau community, which is still conservative, also causes the resilience of the maritime lexicon to be good. The results of this study are, of course, in contrast to the vitality status of the Indonesian Bajau language, which is threatened with extinction [5].

In addition to the vitality status expressed by [5] in Ethnologue, no other research has revealed the vitality of the Bajau language, especially that spoken in South Halmahera. The results of this study will determine the next steps towards protecting the Bajau language of South Halmahera.

2. Methodology

Data were obtained through a yes-no questionnaire from native South Halmahera Bajau speakers. The questionnaire consists of several questions, including some private information about the respondent like name, age, education level, family, etc. and several variables related to language vitality adopted from [9] such as language contact, bilingualism, dominant position in society, language use, language attitude, regulation, language teaching, documentation, and new challenges. The respondents were natives of the South Halmahera Bajau language, male or female, aged between 17 and 50, born in one of the Bajau villages, educated or uneducated, and able to speak the Bajau language. Thirty respondents qualified for the research.

The collected data were analyzed descriptively using its percentage and frequency. The data was then categorized according to criteria proposed by Grimes at the Consignment of Endangered Language at Marasa Hotel in Ciawi, 2nd—4th of December 2011. The average score for language vitality levels are very endangered (0.00-0.20), endangered (0.21-0.40), eroding (0.41-0.60), stable but threatened (0.61-0.80), and safe 0.81-1) [9]. The average score from all variables determined the vitality of the South Halmahera Bajau language.

3. Result

3.1. Characteristics of the Respondents

The respondents in this study were 30 people from several villages in South Halmahera Island. Five (5) indicators describe the characteristics of respondents in this study. The five indicators are (1) gender, (2) age, (3) ethnicity, (4) education, and (5) mother tongue. The characteristics of the respondents can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Respondents Characteristics

	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	19	63.33
	Female	11	36.67
	Sum	30	100.00

Age Range	<25	20	66.67
	25-50	10	33.33
	>50	0	0.00
	Sum	30	100.00
Ethnic Group	Bajau	30	100.00
	Sum	30	100.00
Education Level	Highschool	11	36.67
	Diploma/Undergraduate	11	36.67
	Not answerig	8	26.67
	Sum	30	100.00
Mother Tongue	Bajau	26	86.67
	Makian	1	3.33
	Hapainyo	1	3.33
	North Molucan Malay	1	3.33
	Indonesian	1	3.33
	Sum	30	100.00

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the respondents in this study. Based on the table, it can be seen that out of 30 respondents, 63.33% were male, and 36.67% were female. Regarding the age group, 66.67% were under 25, 33.33% were between 25 and 50, and none were over 50. Although born in several different villages, all respondents (100%) claimed to be of Bajau ethnicity. Furthermore, 37.67% claimed to have completed D3/S1 higher education, 37.67% had graduated from high school, and the rest chose not to answer this question. In terms of the characteristics of the mother tongue, it can be seen that there were four (4) respondents (13.33%) who claimed to have a mother tongue other than Bajau even though they admitted to being of Bajau ethnicity. The respondents' mother tongues were Makian, Hapainyo (there is no description of this language in any language database), North Maluku Malay, and Indonesian.

3.2. The Vitality of South Halmahera Bajau Language

This section is divided into two things, namely (1) the calculation of the average index of all indicators and (2) a description of the vitality of the Bajau language for each indicator. Nine (9) indicators of language vitality are tested, namely (1) language contact, (2) bilingualism, (3) dominant position in society, (4) language use, (5) language attitudes, (6) regulation, (7) learning, (8) documentation, and (9) new challenges. Several statements in the questionnaire represent each indicator.

Based on the index calculation, the vitality index values of the Bajau language are in order: language contact (0.69), language attitude (0.64), documentation (0.59), bilingualism (0.58), dominant position in society (0.55), regulation (0.51), learning (0.50), new challenges (0.49), and language use (0.30). The language use variable is the lowest, with an index of 0.30. The language use variable shows the usage of the language in formal, household, religious, educational, and trade domains. Although it is the indicator with the lowest value, all respondents (100%) admitted that the Bajau language is actively used in the household domain. In addition, some respondents use the Bajau language when praying. Respondents also stated that the Bajau language is not used in formal domains because there are no regulations for the government's use of the Bajau language. The language is rarely used in the trade domain because if you look at the characteristics of the respondents, there are also speakers of other languages who live side by side with the Bajau speakers. Interaction using the national language allows traders to reach more diverse buyers and vice versa.

Meanwhile, the language contact variable has the highest value, with an index of 0.68. This indicator is related to the distance of the speaking location, the mobility of the speakers, and access to mass media in other languages. The questionnaire results showed that the area where the speakers live is quite far from the centre of government. However, they consider their residence easy to reach from other areas. This ease of access then allows the speakers to travel to other places, and vice versa, many other tribes come to visit the speaking location. Respondents also have no difficulty accessing mass media in other languages. They can still listen to the radio or watch television using the national language.

The average cumulative index value of all variables is 0.53. Based on the convention of participants and resource persons at the "Endangered Language Consignment" at the Amarsa Ciawi Hotel, December 2-4, 2011, this figure means that the Bajau language in South Halmahera is eroding. The index of each indicator can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Cumulative Index Score

Variable	Index Score
Language Contact	0.68
Bilingualism	0.58
Dominant Position in the Society	0.55
Language Use	0.30

Language Attitude	0.64
Regulation	0.51
Language Learning	0.50
Documentation	0.59
New Challenge	0.49
Average Score	0.53

The overview of the vitality of the Bajau language for each indicator can be seen as follows.

Language Contact

Language contact refers to the distance of speech location, speaker mobility, and access to mass media in other languages. Eight statements indicate this variable. The statements are 1, 26, 33, 35, 37, 50, 78, and 84. The index value of this indicator is the highest of all indicators (0.68). Respondents' recognition of contact with other languages is shown in the following table:

Table 3. Language Contact Overview

Statement	Answer	Frequency	Percentage
1. Speakers of this language like to listen to the radio in another language.	Yes	25	83.33
	No	5	16.67
	Sum	30	100
26. The speech location is quite far from the city center (government center)	Yes	25	83.33
	No	5	16.67
	Sum	30	100
33. Many speakers of this language have lived in another area for a long time.	Yes	28	93.33
	No	2	6.67
	Sum	30	100
35. The community members can enjoy national television broadcasts.	Yes	26	86.67
	No	4	13.33
	Sum	30	100
	Yes	15	50.00
	No	15	50.00

37. The speech location is hard to reach from another area, especially from the city.	Sum	30	100
50. I live in an environment that utilises this language.	Yes	26	86.67
	No	4	13.33
	Sum	30	100
78. Speakers of this language often visit another region	Yes	23	76.67
	No	7	83.33
	Sum	30	160.00
84. Many speakers of other languages visit this area.	Yes	29	96.67
	No	1	3.33
	Sum	30	100.00

Table 3 describes the language contact experienced by Bajau speakers in South Halmahera. The table shows that Bajau speakers' residences are far from the city or government center. The Bajau tribe is a nation known to live as nomads on the open sea [13]. Therefore, Bajau tribal villages are usually spread along the coast, including in South Halmahera. To reach these villages from Ternate (the economic center in North Maluku), visitors need to change sea transportation modes several times. Although they are far from the city, respondents do not consider their residences difficult to reach. They do not find it difficult when they want to travel to other areas. This statement is supported by the statement that many members of other tribes come to the speech location. Respondents also admitted they had no difficulty enjoying access to mass media in other languages.

Bilingualism

The bilingualism variable is an indicator related to the mastery of local languages, other local languages, national languages and foreign languages. This variable is found in statements 3, 10, 14, 16, 23, 32, 36, 44, 48, 52, 54, 59, 77, 80, 88, and 89. The bilingualism index value is ranked fourth with a value of 0.58. The level of bilingualism of Bajau language speakers in South Halmahera is shown in the following table:

Table 4. Bilingualism Overview

Statements	Answer	Frequency	Percentage
3. Many of my tribe members speak Indonesian.	Yes	30	100
	No	0	0
	Sum	30	100

10. Every tribe member has to master this local language.	Yes	23	76.67
	No	7	23.33
	Sum	30	100
14. I use this language to communicate with my tribe members.	Yes	29	96.67
	No	1	3.33
	Sum	30	100
16. The utilisation of other languages obstructs the utilisation of this language.	Yes	8	26.67
	No	22	73.33
	Sum	30	100
23. I have mastered this language fluently.	Yes	29	96.67
	No	1	3.33
	Sum	30	100
32. Many other tribe members master this language.	Yes	23	76.67
	No	7	23.33
	Sum	30	100
36. I have mastered another local language.	Yes	11	36.67
	No	19	63.33
	Sum	30	100
44. My family members can speak another local language.	Yes	19	63.33
	No	11	36.67
	Sum	30	100
48. I also have mastered a foreign language.	Yes	10	33.33
	No	20	66.67
	Sum	30	100
52. My family can use a foreign language.	Yes	8	26.67
	No	22	73.33
	Sum	30	100
54. My family can use Indonesian fluently.	Yes	26	86.67
	No	4	13.33
	Sum	30	100
59. I have mastered Indonesian fluently.	Yes	29	96.67
	No	1	3.33

	Sum	30	100
80. The speakers of this language can still use this local language fluently.	Yes	23	76.67
	No	7	23.33
	Sum	30	100
88. The members of my tribe can speak other local languages fluently.	Yes	24	80
	No	6	20
	Sum	30	100
89. Many of my tribe members can speak a foreign language.	Yes	14	46.67
	No	16	53.33
	Sum	30	100
77. My partner and I speak the same local language.	Yes	15	50
	No	15	50
	Sum	30	100

Table 4 shows bilingualism found in Bajau speakers in South Halmahera. 96.6 % of respondents claimed to have mastered the Bajau language well, so they are commonly used in everyday life. This is caused by members of the Bajau Tribe community, who require all tribal members to master the Bajau language. In an observation in the speech area, the community members still actively use the language. In another statement, most respondents said that members of their groups and families mastered other regional languages well, even though only a small number of individuals mastered other regional languages.

Besides being able to communicate using Bajau and other regional languages, 96.67 % of respondents confessed that they speak Indonesian fluently, and 86.76 % of respondents stated that their family members were able to use Indonesian well. In other words, there are still members of the Bajau community who do not master the national language. Furthermore, a small portion of respondents (33.33 %) claimed to be able to speak foreign languages, and they have family members who can speak foreign languages (26.67 %). However, almost half the respondents (46.67%) consider members of the Bajau tribe to be able to communicate in foreign languages. Lastly, the ability of the Bajau community to speak other local, national, or foreign languages does not obstruct them from using their mother tongue.

Dominant Position in Society

This variable describes the dominant position of Bajau language speakers in government, trade, agriculture, and art. This indicator is found in statements 5, 12, 41, and 83. The value of this indicator is in the fifth position, with a score of 0.55. The description of the dominant position of Bajau language speakers in society can be seen in the following table:

Table 5. Dominant Position Overview

Statement	Answer	Frequency	Percentage
5. My tribe members have important positions in government.	Yes	22	73.33
	No	8	26.67
	Sum	30	100
12. My tribe members play an important role in the trade system.	Yes	21	70
	No	9	30
	Sum	30	100
41. My tribe members play an important role in the agriculture area.	Yes	17	56.67
	No	13	43.33
	Sum	30	100
	Yes	19	63.33

83. My tribe members play an important role in the art.	No	11	36.67
	Sum	30	100

Table 5 depicts the statement about the dominant position in society. The response shows that members of the Bajau tribe have been able to take an important role in various aspects of life. Most of the respondents (73.33%) believe that their group members can take important positions in government. 70% of the respondents also considered that their group members played a crucial role in the trade system. What is interesting about the response above is that 56.67% of respondents agree that members of the Bajau tribe have also taken an important role in agriculture even though, in general, the Bajau tribe is known as sailors. Lastly, 63.33% of the respondents decided they also play an important role in art. A more in-depth study is needed so that the statements of these respondents can be explained in more detail.

Language Use

The language usage variable describes the use of the Bajau language in formal, household, religious, educational, and trade domains. This indicator is shown through statements 6, 13, 24, 27, 40, 51, 58, 60, 62, 66, 70, 79, 82, and 90. The index value of this indicator is the lowest of all indicators (0.30). The response to this indicator is shown in the following table:

Table 6. Language Use Overview

Statement	Answer	Frequency	Percentage
6. I use this language when I deal with health workers.	Yes	3	10
	No	27	90
	Sum	30	100
13. The government uses this language for correspondence with my tribe members.	Yes	4	13.33
	No	26	86.67
	Sum	30	100
24. Letters from school to me generally use this language.	Yes	4	13.33
	No	26	86.67
	Sum	30	100
27. My family can use this language fluently.	Yes	30	100
	No	0	0
	Sum	30	100
	Yes	11	36.67

40. Privat company allows the usage of this language in dealing with them.	No	19	63.33
	Sum	30	100
51. Government officers use this language when speaking with my tribe members.	Yes	19	63.33
	No	11	36.67
	Sum	30	100
58. This language is used for religious worship.	Yes	10	33.33
	No	20	66.67
	Sum	30	100
60. I use this language to pray.	Yes	22	73.33
	No	8	26.67
	Sum	30	100
62. Teachers or headmasters use this language when speaking to me.	Yes	9	30
	No	21	70
	Sum	30	100
66. Language is used for rental or sale and purchase agreement.	Yes	5	16.67
	No	25	83.33
	Sum	30	100
70. This regional language is used in schools to deliver lessons to students.	Yes	8	26.67
	No	22	73.33
	Sum	30	100
79. Bargaining activities in the market use this regional language.	Yes	12	40
	No	18	60
	Sum	30	100
82. I use this regional language to write letters to my family.	Yes	14	46.67
	No	16	53.33
	Sum	30	100
90. This regional language is used in advertising goods for sale	Yes	8	26.67
	No	22	73.33
	Sum	30	100

Table 6 illustrates the usage of Bajau language in various areas of South Halmahera. In the formal realm, this language tends to be rarely used. Respondents stated that health workers infrequently use this language when communicating with patients. Even though the tribe members can take important positions in the government, 86.67 % of respondents agree that the government cannot use this language to correspond with my group members. The government have to follow correspondence rules according to law. However, 63.33% of respondents said the officer can interact with the tribe members using this language.

100% of respondents agree that their family members can use this language fluently, although they do not use the language to correspond with their family members. Most local languages in Indonesia, including the Bajau language, have no alphabet. The absence of the alphabet makes it difficult for the members to correspond. A contradiction can be seen in the response to using the Bajau language in the school environment. 70% of respondents admitted that teachers and principals do not use Bajau language when talking to them. However, 73.33% of respondents admitted that teachers use Bajau language when delivering lessons.

Another contradiction is also seen in statements related to the use of language in the religious realm. 56.67% of respondents stated that they did not use Bajau language when performing religious services, while 77.33 % admitted using Bajau language when praying to God Almighty. The contradiction in the use of language in the religious realm is understandable because, in some religions, there are already established sequences and readings that are recited when praying. Meanwhile, praying is direct communication between a servant and his God, which is more personal so that any language can be used. Lastly, most respondents stated that Bajau language is rarely used in trade. This is because they live side by side with speakers of other languages. Using the national language will help smooth communication between sellers and buyers.

Language Attitude

The language attitude variable is an indicator related to the attitude of speakers and the government towards the language. This variable is stated through 12 statements, namely statements number 7, 15, 19, 20, 30, 55, 73, 74, 75, 76, 81, and 85. The language attitude index value is in second place with a value of 0.64. The description of the speaker's attitude towards the Bajau language in South Halmahera is shown in the following table:

Table 7. Language Attitude Overview

Statement	Answer	Frequency	Percentage
7. People who do not use this language will be ostracized.	Yes	3	10
	No	27	90
	Sum	30	100

15. This language must be used in arts and customs.	Yes	26	86.67
	No	4	13.33
	Sum	30	100
19. I am proud of this language	Yes	30	100
	No	0	0
	Sum	30	100
20. The government recommends the use of regional languages.	Yes	8	26.67
	No	22	73.33
	Sum	30	100
30. This language is more important than other regional languages.	Yes	20	66.67
	No	10	33.33
	Sum	30	100
55. The government appreciates the use of this language.	Yes	26	86.67
	No	4	13.33
	Sum	30	100
73. This language is more beneficial than other regional languages.	Yes	15	50
	No	15	50
	Sum	0	0
74. More residents of this area speak my language than other languages	Yes	26	86.67
	No	4	13.33
	Sum	30	100
75. I will reprimand or correct if someone uses this language incorrectly.	Yes	30	100
	No	0	0
	Sum	30	100
76. Many people will hate people who do not use this regional language.	Yes	7	23.33
	No	23	76.67
	Sum	30	100
81. I get a lot of benefits from this language.	Yes	28	93.33
	No	2	6.67
	Sum	30	100
85. This language is considered the most important language in this area.	Yes	27	90
	No	3	10
	Sum	30	100

Table 7 illustrates attitudes towards the Bajau language in South Halmahera. All respondents agreed that they are proud of this language. Most people in the speech area speak this language. They use language to do art and customs. They also benefit from using this language, so they consider it more important than other languages. Once someone makes mistakes while using the language, they will reprimand them. However, they do not agree that people who do not use this language are ostracized or hated. According to respondents, there is no recommendation from the government to use this language. However, they feel that the government still respects the existence of this language.

Regulation

This variable is related to various policies set by related agencies regarding the use of this language. This variable is shown through statements 8, 34, 45, 49, 61, 65, 76, 68, and 87. The regulation index value is in sixth position with a value of 0.51. The description of the influence of regulations on the Bajau Language in South Halmahera is shown in the following table:

Table 8. Regulation Overview

Statement	Answer	Frequency	Percentage
8. There is an obligation to use this language in governmental spheres on certain days.	Yes	9	30
	No	21	70
	Sum	30	100
34. Regional regulations ensure that this regional language is preserved.	Yes	11	36.67
	No	19	63.33
	Sum	30	100
45. Some regulations inhibit the use of this regional language.	Yes	9	30
	No	21	70
	Sum	30	100
49. People who do not use this language will be considered to be violating customs.	Yes	4	13.33
	No	26	86.67
	Sum	30	100
61. The government develops and protects this language.	Yes	19	63.33
	No	11	36.67
	Sum	30	100
65. Traditional institutions develop this language so that it continues to be used.	Yes	13	43.33
	No	17	56.67
	Sum	30	100
	Yes	19	63.33

67. Traditional institutions protect this language well.	No	11	36.67
	Sum	30	100
68. The use of Indonesian hinders the development of this language.	Yes	10	33.33
	No	20	66.67
	Sum	30	100
87. This regional language is mandatory for use in public services on certain days.	Yes	12	40
	No	18	60
	Sum	30	100

Table 8 reflects the existence of regulations on the use of the Bajau language. In general, the government does not set regulations regarding the development of this language or rules regarding its use in everyday life. However, 63.33% of respondents felt that the government continues to develop and protect this language.

The respondents also considered the existence of customary institutions to be quite helpful in protecting the Bajau language. As a language its speakers actively use, customary institutions do not play a lesser role in developing this language. They only ensure that they will protect the language, less they know that preserving it will maintain it for a long time. Regulations on using Indonesian as the national language are quite well-received by Bajau speakers. The use of Indonesian can coexist with the use of Bajau. This national language rule also does not hinder the use of Bajau in everyday life.

Language Learning

Learning variables are related to intergenerational transmission, availability of teaching materials, and readiness of literacy materials. These variables are found in statements 9, 18, 28, 38, 42, 46, 57, 63, and 86. The regulation index value is in the seventh position with a value of 0.50. The description of the Bajau Language learning indicators in South Halmahera is shown in the following table:

Table 9. Language Learning Overview

Pernyataan	Jawaban	Frekuensi	Persentasi
9. Parents always reprimand their children if they make mistakes in using this language.	Yes	24	80
	No	6	20
	Sum	30	100
18. This is the language I use to speak with my family at home.	Yes	29	96.67
	No	1	3.33
	Sum	30	100
28. Many school books are written in this language.	Yes	4	13.33
	No	26	86.67

	Sum	30	100
38. Every parent will teach this language to their children.	Yes	28	93.33
	No	2	6.67
	Sum	30	100
42. There are many writings in this language.	Yes	11	36.67
	No	19	63.33
	Sum	30	100
46. This language is taught in formal schools.	Yes	6	20.00
	No	24	80.00
	Sum	30	100
57. Children can still speak this language well.	Yes	28	93.33
	No	2	6.67
	Sum	30	100
63. There are adequate teaching materials for learning this language.	Yes	9	30.00
	No	21	70.00
	Sum	30	100
86. There is a lot of reading material in this language.	Yes	11	36.67
	No	19	63.33
	Sum	30	100

Table 9 illustrates the education indicators in this study. Bajau speakers still preserve their language. Parents participate by teaching their children to use Bajau in the family environment. In addition, when children make mistakes when using Bajau, parents will always reprimand them. This response aligns with the reaction to the bilingualism statement, where some respondents answered that family members and the community in their tribe can communicate well using Bajau. In addition to intergenerational transmission, this section discusses the availability of teaching languages and literacy materials. The response results show no adequate availability of teaching and literacy materials related to the Bajau language in South Halmahera. The absence of teaching materials means this language is not taught in formal schools.

Documentation

This variable describes the quality and types of Bajau language documentation in South Halmahera. The existence of this variable is indicated by statements number 2, 21, 22, 25, 31, 39, 43, 47, 56, 69, and 72. The documentation index value is in third position with a value of 0.59. The description of Bajau language documentation in South Halmahera is shown in the following table:

Table 10. Documentation Overview

Statement	Answer	Frequency	Percentage
2. The grammar of this language has been compiled.	Yes	18	60
	No	12	40
	Sum	30	100
21. This language already has a writing system.	Yes	11	36.67
	No	19	63.33
	Sum	30	100
22. Documentation about this language can be found easily.	Yes	18	60.00
	No	12	40.00
	Sum	30	100
25. Documentation about this language is compiled in book form.	Yes	10	33.33
	No	20	66.67
	Sum	30	100
31. This regional language script system has been included in Unicode.	Yes	9	30.00
	No	21	70.00
	Sum	30	100
39. Documents about this language have been found for centuries.	Yes	18	60.00
	No	12	40.00

	Sum	30	100
43. Documentation in the form of audio recordings can also be found.	Yes	17	56.67
	No	13	43.33
	Sum	30	100
47. Many new vocabulary words are found in this language.	Yes	10	33.33
	No	20	66.67
	Sum	30	100
56. There is documentation about the history of this language.	Yes	8	26.67
	No	22	73.33
	Sum	30	100
69. This regional language dictionary has been compiled.	Yes	8	26.67
	No	22	73.33
	Sum	30	100
72. This regional language has been well documented..	Yes	14	46.67
	No	16	53.33
	Sum	30	100

Table 10 describes the Bajau language documentation indicators in South Halmahera. The table shows the uncertainty of the respondents about the language documentation. When asked about the language documentation, 53.33% of the respondents said the language had been well documented, and 60% said they could easily find it. However, when asked about specific types of documentation that have been done, 60% of respondents said that the Bajau grammar had been compiled, and 56.67% said that they could find audio recordings of the language. Moreover, 63.33% said that the language still has no writing system; thus, 70% believe that the language has not been included in the Unicode. The absence of a writing system makes it hard to compile documentation in the form of a book or dictionary, let alone the documentation of this language's history.

New Challenge

The new challenge variable is related to the language response to new domains and media. This variable is found in statements 4, 17, 29, 53, 64, and 71. The regulation index value is in eighth position with a value of 0.49. The description of the new domain indicator is shown in the following table:

Table 11. New Challenge Overview

Statement	Answer	Frequency	Percentage
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4. This regional language can also be used to discuss modern science.	Yes	24	80
	No	6	20
	Sum	30	100
17. This regional language is easy to use on the internet.	Yes	6	20.00
	No	24	80.00
	Sum	30	100
29. I can use a computer to write this regional language without any technical difficulties.	Yes	21	70.00
	No	9	30.00
	Sum	30	100
53. This regional language vocabulary was developed to meet the challenges of the times.	Yes	18	60.00
	No	12	40.00
	Sum	30	100
64. This regional language is widely used in cyberspace.	Yes	9	30.00
	No	21	70.00
	Sum	30	100
71. many people can communicate with you in this regional language online.	Yes	11	36.67
	No	19	63.33
	Sum	30	100

Table 11 describes the indicators of new challenges for the Bajau language in South Halmahera. Most of the statements are related to computers and cyberspace (internet). Bajau speakers do not find it difficult to write this regional language on a computer or the internet. This is likely due to the condition of the Bajau language, which, although it does not have a script, can still adapt to the existence of the Latin script. This convenience is not in line with the number of users of this language in cyberspace. The location of the speech, which is far from the city, can make speakers of this language rarely use the internet. This situation causes the number of internet users who can communicate using this language to be small.

4. Discussion

The result from this study is not in line with the previous study. The result from this study shows that the language is eroding somehow in between the study from [5] and [14]. [5] marked this language as an endangered group, where children do not learn or use this language daily. Even though this study and [5] use different standards to categorize a language, declaring the South Halmahera Bajau language an endangered language is an exaggeration. The speakers still proudly utilize their mother tongue, and parents still teach their children to use the language and reprimand each other when they make mistakes. The appropriate grouping for the South Halmahera Bajau language according to [5] is stable, where a formal institution does not maintain the language, but the language is still taught and used by children daily. Moreover, the number served by [14] is too high. Even though this study and the study by [14] are different, this study can use their study as the benchmark for this study. Bajau people in the speech area where [14] done their study still speak their language in the family or society. The tribe also maintains a conservative life, thus making the durability of the language still reliable. Bajau people in South Halmahera are more moderate. In the questionnaire, they said they were proud of using the language and thought that their language was the most important in the area. When someone makes mistakes while using the language, they will correct him without isolating him.

The language vitality study aims to establish the priority of local languages that must be protected due to lack of funding and human resources. Compared to the results of other language vitality studies, the Bajau language in South Halmahera is still not included as a priority for language conservation and revitalization. The average index of 0.53 is still higher than the vitality index of Tolaki language by [12]. However, compared to other languages from the same region, such as the Ternate language [10] and the Oirata language [11] The vitality index of the South Halmahera Bajau language is considered lower. Thus, it is supposed to be a priority to be protected over another language in the region.

The average index of 0.53 means the language is “eroding”; only half of the children and elderly use the language. The other half of the children do not speak the language [9]. These criteria are not compatible with the questionnaire. In the bilingualism variable, most respondents said they can speak this language fluently, as do the other tribe members. In the language use variable, even though the language is not used in formal, trade, religion, and education, the language is still used while speaking within family members. Parents transmit the language to their kids and also supervise the usage of the language daily. Speaker's attitude towards the language is positive. To say the declining durability of the South Halmahera Bajau language resulted from speakers who do not want to use the language is irrelevant. Other variables unrelated to the direct usage of the language contribute to the decline of the average index.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to confirm the vitality status of the South Halmahera Bajau language to set priority for language conservation and revitalization. The result shows that the average index of the vitality of the South Halmahera Bajau language is 0.53, categorized as eroding. Normally, language in this category is only used by partial children and the elderly. The other half of children do not learn or use the language. However, in terms of speakers, the speakers' attitude toward this language is positive. They still communicate in the family or society using this language. In terms of priority, the index number of this language is considered lower than other languages in the region, which means this language needs to be preserved first. This priority might shift once the vitality study of different languages in the area is done.

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