

Language Attitudes of Betawi Teenagers toward their Mother Tongue: A Sociolinguistic Perspective

Tadjuddin Nur

Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Hasanuddin

Lukman

Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Hasanuddin

Kaharuddin

Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Hasanuddin

Dafirah

Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Hasanuddin

Bio Profiles:

Tadjuddin Nur is a Ph.D candidate of linguistics department at Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University.

Email: nurtadjuddin23@gmail.com

Lukman is a Professor in linguistics, and a chairman of linguistics department at Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University.

Email: lukmansastra210@gmail.com

Kaharuddin is an associate Professor in linguistics at Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University.

Email: kaharuddin@unhas.ac.id

Dafirah is a senior teaching staff at Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University.

Email: dafirah@unhas.ac.id

Abstract

The present research sought to investigate the language attitudes of Betawi Teenagers towards their mother tongue. Language attitudes cover opinions, ideas, and prejudices that speakers have with respect to a language. Research of language attitudes is getting much attention for years in some fields. Due to the importance of the language attitudes, this research intends to describe the language attitudes of Betawi Teenagers towards their native language. The Betawi language is one of the dialects in Jakarta, Indonesia. This study employed descriptive qualitative research. The data used are the data obtained through questioners, observations, and in-depth interviews to know the attitude of the Betawi community language. The objectives of this study is to map out the language attitudes of Betawi teenagers towards their mother tongue or Betawi Language. The results showed that (1) The language attitude of the Betawi teenagers towards the Betawi language is negative, (2) The Indonesian language is strongly dominant in their daily life, and (3) The foreign languages do not affect in the maintain of their mother tongue. Apart from that, other languages such as “slang” also color their language choice. This linguistic fact is going continuously from time to time and influencing their language attitude. In fact, even though they understand the Betawi language, it is not of the primary use.

Keywords: *Sociolinguistics, Language attitude, Teenager, Betawi language*

Introduction

Language is a medium of communication to acquire information about culture and it is an identity of the speakers. Thus, humans are gifted to convey the message and to communicate with one another by using language. Moreover, language is a part of the culture, and both language and culture must be maintained. Culture is formed from the way people think and behave. From the way of thinking and behavior is formed a tradition of a culture that is different from one group with other community groups (Rahman & Letlora, 2018). The rapidly changing communication technology has changed the use of language and possibly creates new forms of discourse as a new way to participate in a community.

Studies on attitudes have been carried out by many experts or scholars, especially in the field of social psychology. Social psychologists have successfully carried out several studies. One of them is Triandis (1971: 2-4) who argues that attitude is the readiness to react to a situation or

event at hand. A person's readiness in dealing with a situation can usually refer to two things, namely mental attitudes, and behavioral attitudes. Mental attitudes is about thought and world view while behavioral attitudes is closely related to the way of doing something and seen in action.

Language attitudes in sociolinguistics are very much influenced by the appreciation of a person or group of people for the diversity of languages they encounter. The diversity of languages faced by a person is called language choice. The language choice is "a language as a whole" in a communication. The emergence of language choice is caused by the occurrence of language contact, social interaction, and culture. Therefore, speech groups which have the ability to choose a language or language code in certain events grow, either maintaining their first language or shifting the language to a new language or mixing the first language and language new. It's called a code-mixed event. In other words, someone who chooses the language in their communication is actually applying their communicative competence, or is showing their communicative performance. As behavior, language choice is essentially an act in using the selected language based on the available situation. However, for this study, the term 'language choice is used practically to refer to communicative performance or language behavior even though language behavior contains a broader range of meanings. In this regard, Blom & Gumperz (1971) proposed two types of code options:

1. Situational switching

In this context, situational switching is used to refer to the choice of language depending on various aspects of the situation, including the degree of formality. As might be predicted, when the linguistic situation is formal and relatively free of personal problems, it is the standard language varieties that he chooses, while the local varieties are chosen when the situation is informal.

2. Metaphorical Switching

Metaphoric switching is used to describe language choices determined by the relationships of the participants. This can be seen in multiethnic and multilingual societies. No one there has only one language code in his repertoire. What often happens, in fact, is that people will always be involved in inter-linguistic or inter-dialect contact. To build social interaction smoothly, people will try to apply social integration skills with the community groups where they live. The level of social (and psychological) integration of a person is assumed to be sufficient to determine whether or not he/she performs social accommodation, including language accommodation. This

assumption is based on the reality that someone's laziness in the relationship will largely determine whether or not he is accepted by the other person.

Furthermore, there are three types of language choices: a) Choosing one intra language variation; b) Code switching; and c) Code mixing. These three types of language choices are very much influenced by a person's language attitudes towards their regional language.

Betawi Language

What is the so-called the Betawi Malay Language or Malay Dialect of Jakarta is a language which is a sub-dialect of the Malay language. Those who use this language are called the Betawi people. The Betawi people claim to be a native of Jakarta, the city which later became the capital of Indonesia. Thus, it can be said that this language is almost the same age as the name of the area where this language is used and developed, namely Jakarta. It is also called Batavia Malay. Based on 2000 data, speakers of this language are estimated to have reached 5 million (A survey by Ethnologue, 18th ed., 2015).

Betawi Malay is a creole language (Siregar, 2005) which is based on Market Malay coupled with elements of Sundanese, Balinese, languages from South China (especially Hokkien), Arabic, as well as languages from Europe, especially Dutch and Portuguese. Perhaps because this language exists in a multiethnic and multicultural society, namely in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia.

Initially, this language was only used by the lower middle class, especially in the early days of Jakarta's development. Because it develops naturally, in line with the development of multicultural life in Jakarta, the speakers of this language claim that this language is one of the Malay dialects, namely the Betawi dialect. There is no standard structure that stands out that distinguishes it from Malay. What can be seen are some of the characteristic of linguistic elements used, for example, from the decay of the *me-* prefix (such as Malay, including Indonesian), the use of the *-in* suffix (the same as Balinese), and the transition of the sound /a/ open at the end of the word to /e/ or /ɛ/ in some local dialects. That is the Betawi language spoken by a community in the capital.

In relation to the culture, Betawi people have their own culture. Their culture were developed as a result of a synthetic between pre-existing cultural elements brought by immigrants to form a distinctive cultural pattern (Budiawan, et al., 1979: 11). The native Jakartans call themselves the Betawi people or the Betawi Malay. As for the language spoken on the outskirts of Jakarta, in areas bordering Sundanese, they called it *Betawi Ora'*. Regarding the Malay language

(Indonesian language) which is taught in schools, they called it by the name of the high Malay language. Jakarta Malay is not much different from Indonesian. (Chaer, 2009)

Jakarta people or people who speak Betawi Malay inhabit the border between Cikarang and Tambun in the east to Tangerang in the west; from the seaside in the north to the border of Depok in the south. Thus, the speakers of this language on the one hand are growing but on the other hand, are starting to decrease. The young teenager speakers are starting to leave this language.

Objectives

The objectives of this study is to map out the language attitude of Betawi teenagers towards their mother tongue or Betawi Language. The strategy to reach the objectives is by preparing a well-designed research tool in order to cope the objectives of the research. This study employed descriptive qualitative research. The data used is the data obtained through questionnaires, observations, and in-depth interviews to know the attitude of the Betawi community language. Respondents which were involved in the research are respondents living in Jakarta, especially in Setu Babakan. This research took a social situation

Literature Review

In Jakarta, Betawi language is spoken by Betawi native speakers. In their daily life, they accustom to share and communicate something by using Betawi language besides Indonesian. The use of language side by side is something that cannot be avoided. These are logical consequences for multicultural and multiethnic societies. This fact is called a linguistic situation. Braine (2005) stated that linguistic situation in Indonesia is complex with hundreds local languages. In addition, Rahman and Letlora (2018) states that the existence of regional languages needs to be maintained and preserved as a cultural asset.

Language attitudes is the field under the umbrella of Sociolinguistics. Hudson (1996), sociolinguistics puts an enormous research field which is composed of a variety that is formed from existing social groups. Aldosari (2014) claims that generally attitude contains three components, such as the way the human think, behave, and feel.

Moreover, a research of language attitude is getting much attention for years since this research is one of the important topics of researches in some fields especially in sociolinguistics. Bohner and Dickel (2011) stated that the research of language attitude is one of the fundamental topics in a sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics research. They, then, further expound that attitude

as “the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary social psychology”. According to Kridalaksana (2001), language attitude covers mental attitude or feelings towards the position of its own language or language of others. Based on the context above, this research is based on linguistic knowledge and attitude of Betawi teenagers toward their own native language.

The study on language attitude towards English related to multilingual speakers has been conducted in Indonesia (Wati, 2018). The study focuses on Javanese undergraduate students language attitude and investigate how gender and length of study aspects determine language attitude. In the research, the result reveals that the undergraduate students displayed differing language attitudes towards English covering the cognitive, behavioral, and affective aspects. In this study, male undergraduate students perform a more positive language attitude compared to its counterpart.

Language attitudes are influenced by two things (Ellis, 1994); they are internal and external. Internal factors are the lack of polite principles in language caused by environmental factors of these speakers, and emotions that tend to be related to specific knowledge. Meanwhile, external factors that influence language attitudes are the lack of cooperation principles in the language, which results in a lack of understanding of each other, and contexts such as settings, activities, and relationships in interaction also have a role in determining language attitudes.

Language is the primary means of human communication. It is a powerful social force that does more than convey intended referential information. It also indicates both personal and social characteristics of the speaker, depending on the particular listener

Attitudes are how people feel about the language (Crystal, 1997: 215) and is “a construct that elucidates linguistic behaviour or in particular” (Mamun et al., 2012: 201). The attitudes can be positive or negative (Ellis, 1994: 1997). Anderson in Chaer (2010: 151) suggests two types of attitudes: linguistic attitudes and non-linguistic attitudes. Both types can be related to cognition or beliefs about the language. Thus, language attitude is a relatively long-term belief or cognition, partly about language, regarding the object of language, which gives a person of tendency to react in a certain way he likes. Anderson revealed that beliefs about language and language objects are things that can influence attitudes in language. Many people believe that their mother tongue is their identity, which indicates their place of origin. They tend to respond positively to their second language by not forgetting the native language they have acquired.

In line with this, Gavin and Mathiot in Lukman (2012) suggest the characteristics of language attitudes, namely language loyalty, language pride, and awareness of the norm. The three characteristics of the language attitude explain as follows. (1) language loyalty, which is the initial capital for a language community to maintain or maintain its language. With this feature, the negative influence of other languages is easily prevented. The society of a language always fosters a love for the language. (2) Language pride creates a sense of belonging to language so that it always uses the language as a form of identity and community unity. Besides, this characteristic also encourages people to develop their language so that it continues to be richer in terms of both vocabulary and terminology. With the pride in language speakers, the continuity of a language will maintain. (3) Awareness of the norms of language (awareness of the norm) embodies an intelligent person in language. Intelligent means careful and polite in language.

In this study, the researcher tries to reveal how the Betawi teenagers' attitude responds to the linguistic phenomenon that is currently happening, namely the shifting of the mother tongue by the second language, which then becomes the language used in everyday life. The occurrence has been happening for a long period and will continue to happen. Therefore, increasing awareness of language needs to be done so that the mother tongue is the primary language that can balance everyday language. In that sense, using a second language without forgetting the mother tongue, in the end, these two languages can be used in their proper context.

Factors Affecting Language Attitudes

There are several factors that influence a person's language attitude, including: political factors, ethnic factors, race, prestige, and/or language difficulty level. One example is the use of Javanese in Javanese society. Today, the use of Javanese among Javanese people seems to be less enthusiastic. This is an early sign of a less positive attitude towards the language. Regional languages are sometimes seen as languages that are less flexible and less up to date.

Likewise with the Betawi language, young people today do not really understand their traditional language and are less enthusiastic about using the language since some of them feel that the language is less prestigious and it seems that its users are from the middle to lower class. This is also an indication that they are no longer interested in learning their mother tongue.

A negative attitude will also be seen if a person or group of people do not have an awareness of the importance of the local language to be preserved and used among themselves.

This attitude can be seen in their speech acts. Language is used regardless of the rules that apply in that language. They do not feel the need to use the language with pride.

Language Choice and Language Attitude

Language choice (language choice) is ‘a language as a whole’ in a communication. The emergence of language selection is caused by the occurrence of language, social, and cultural contacts so that speech groups grow which have the ability to choose the language or language code in certain events, either maintaining the first language or shifting the language to a new language or mixing the first language and a new language. In other words, someone who chooses the language in their communication is actually applying their communicative competence, or is showing their communicative performance. As behavior, language selection is essentially an act or behavior in using the selected language based on the available situation. However, for this study, the term ‘language selection’ is used practically to refer to communicative performance or language behavior even though language behavior contains a broader range of meanings.

In a multiethnic and multilingual society, presumably no one has only one language code in his repertoire. What often happens, in fact, is that people will always be involved in inter-linguistic or inter-dialect contact. To build social interaction smoothly, people will try to apply social integration skills with the community groups where they live. The level of social (and psychological) integration of a person is assumed to be sufficient to determine whether or not he/she performs social accommodation, including language accommodation. The assumption is based on the reality that a person’s laziness in the relationship will largely determine whether or not he is accepted by the other person.

There are three types of language choice: a) Choosing one intra language variation; b) Code switching; and c) Code mixing. Based on these thoughts, language attitudes can be traced through two things, namely through one’s loyalty in using a language, and one’s views on a language, including the mother tongue. There are also related to the use of language. Giles (1991), for example, identified three patterns of language use: a) The use of ethnic minority languages; b) Bilingual in ethnic languages and dominant languages, and c) Monolingual in dominant languages.

Furthermore, referring to what was stated by Giles et al (1991), it can be ascertained that a member of the community is likely to apply the following language choices: a) Using local/first language (divergent), b) Using regional / first language and national language (convergent) , and

c) Using the national language, Indonesian Indonesian for this case study (convergent). This kind of language selection pattern seems to be an important part of this research.

The choice of language is closely related to how a person perceives a language. Ervin and Trip (1964) identified four main factors that led to language selection, namely: a) Situation and setting, such as time and place, b) Participants in interactions, such as: age, gender, occupation, socioeconomic status, origin, background ethnic background, and its role in relationships with other participants, c) Conversation topics, can be topics regarding work, as well as actual events, and d) The interaction function which is a function of conversation in interactions.

Methods

This research is conducted in Jakarta with the spot in Setu Babakan (the place where mostly the population is Batawi people). The respondents of this study are 50 native Betawi teenagers (23 female and 27 male) aged between 15 – 24 years old. The respondents go to 46% female and 54% male.

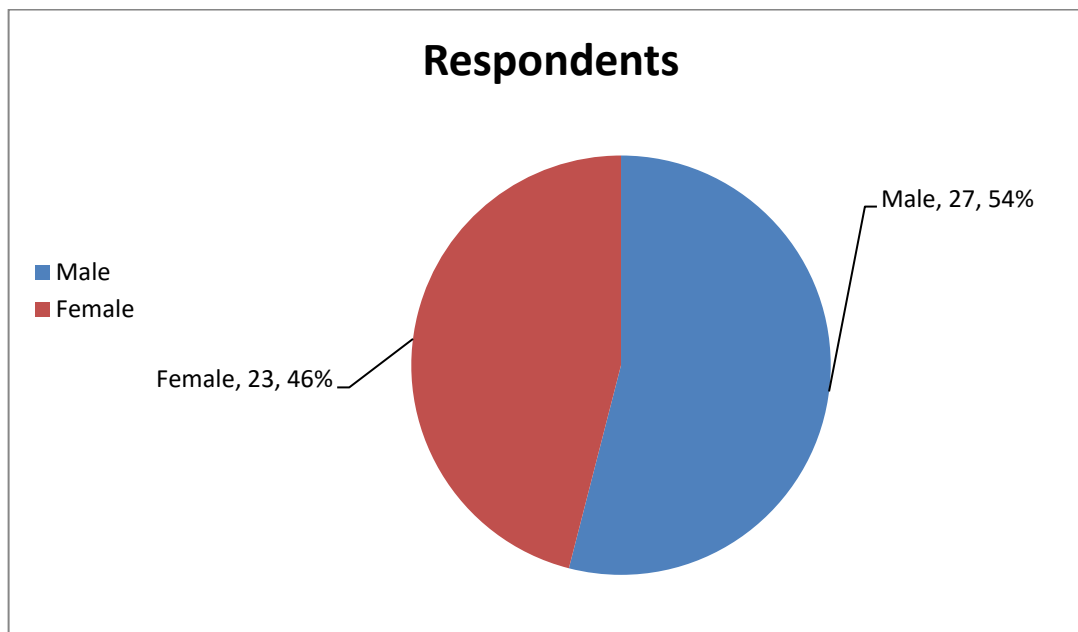


Figure 1. The research respondents of Betawi Teenagers

Each respondents fill out a questionnaire. There are a number of questions that are formulated and asked to measure the respondents' language attitudes. The answers to the questionnaire are grouped into three components as in the following table.

Table 1. Standing Position of the Respondents' Language Attitude

	Components	Total
Language attitudes	(A) Positive towards Betawi Language	18
	(B) Negative towards Betawi Language	24
	(C) Neither negative nor positive towards Betawi Language	8

These three components will be described in the section Finding and discussion

Types of Language Attitudes

Types of language attitudes can be classified into two main types, namely positive attitudes and negative attitudes.

- a) Positive Attitude. Positive language attitude is an attitude related to behavior that is not contrary to the rules or norms of the language that applies, or there is a sense of pride in a language.
- b) Negative Attitude. Negative attitude towards a person when indifferent to the construction and preservation of a language. They become less proud to use their own language as a marker of identity, in fact they feel ashamed to use that language.

Characteristics of Language Attitude

Garvin and Mathiot (in Chaer and Agustina, 2010: 153) formulate three characteristics of language attitudes namely: 1) Characteristics of Positive Language Attitudes. This feature covers a) Language Loyalty. Loyalty of language that encourages the community of a language to defend its language and when necessary to prevent the influence of other languages. 2) Language Pride. Pride of language that encourages people to develop their language and use it as a symbol of identity and unity of society, and 3) Awareness Of The Norm. Awareness of the existence of Language Norms that encourage people to use their language carefully and politely; and is a factor that has a great influence on the act of language use activities. 2) Characteristics of Negative Language Attitude. These characteristics include a) There is no passion or encouragement to

maintain the independence of the language, b) Loyalty to the language begins to weaken, and c) Lack of pride in the language

Findings and Discussion

The research data were obtained by distributing a number of questions in the form of a questionnaire. This study did not differentiate between male and female respondents. Each reason is formulated based on the respondent's response in filling out the questionnaire. Respondents who answered (A) were positive towards Betawi Language are caused by various reasons

Table 2. Reasons for positive towards Betawi Language

No	Reasons	Total
1	As a Betawi, I feel that the Betawi language needs to be preserved and maintained	6
2	I am proud to be a Betawi person and speak the Betawi language.	5
3	Betawi language is an identity for the Betawi people and needs to be used.	3
4	I am very confident in using the Betawi language wherever I interact with fellow Betawi people.	2
5	If the Betawi people do not respect and use the language, then this language will be marginalized.	2
		18

For respondents who answer (B) negative towards Betawi Language due to a number of reasons as seen as follows;

Table 3. Reasons for negative towards Betawi Language

No	Reasons	Total
1	Betawi language is only used in limited circles	8

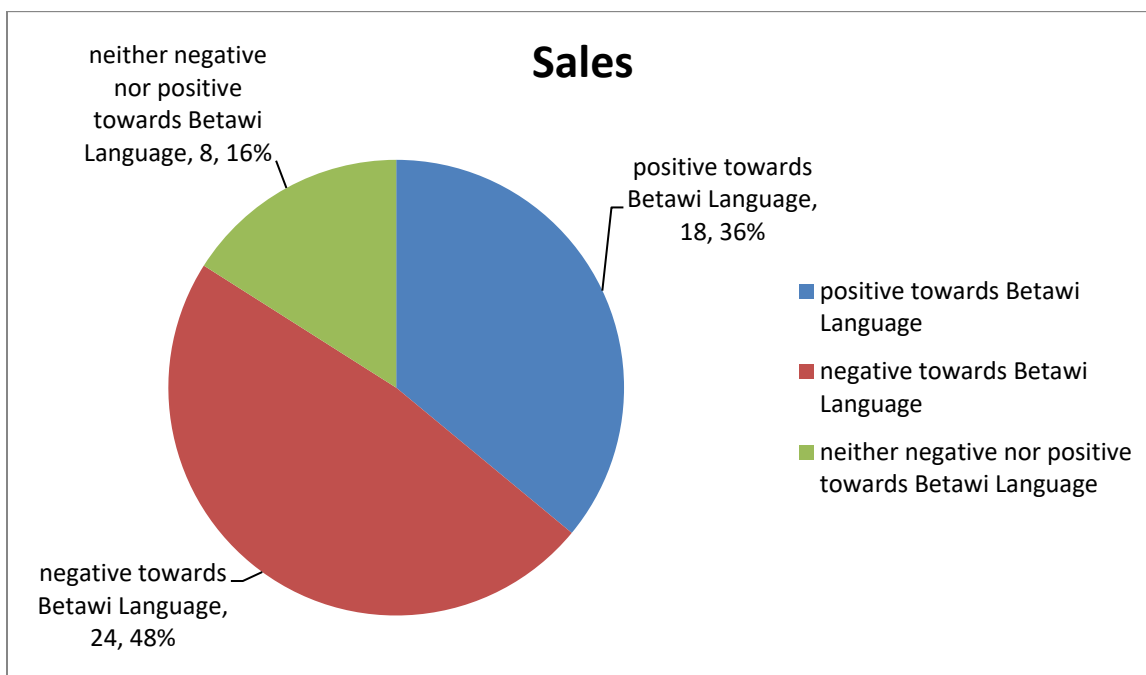
2	If the Betawi language is less attractive to young people, there is no need to worry.	6
3	Betawi language is only for old people, while for young ones, let them choose another language they like.	5
4	Betawi language does not keep up with modern developments.	3
5	Sometimes I am ashamed to use Betawi among other language speakers.	2
		24

It turns out that there are also a number of respondents who answered (C) neither negative nor positive towards Betawi Language. This response is a real illustration that not all language speakers care with the preservation of their language. The respondent's reasons can be seen in the following table;

Table 4. Reasons for neither negative nor positive towards Betawi Language

No	Reasons	Total
1	I grew up in a family that was not used to using the Betawi language.	3
2	I hang out with people who are not used to using the Betawi language.	2
3	I went to an international school that uses English so that my Betawi language is not working knowledge.	1
4	I do not state my attitude towards the Betawi language.	1
5	I have very little knowledge of Betawi language.	1
		8

Based on the data of this study, the language attitude of Betawi teenagers toward their local language only reached 24, 48% and it is categorized as 'negative'. Compared to the positive ones, it only reached 18 respondents and reached 36%. Another factor is because there are a number of respondents namely 8, 16% are in the position 'neither negative nor positive towards Betawi Language'. By combining the B and C components, the result shows still negative.



Based on the figure above, it is already clear that (A) positive towards Betawi Language, 18, 36%, (B) negative towards Betawi Language 24, 48%, and (C) neither negative nor positive towards Betawi Language, 24, 48%. The discussions of the components are as follows;

A. Positive towards Betawi Language

There are several reasons why Betawi teenagers have a positive attitude towards Betawi language, among others, it is revealed from their responses; 1) as a Betawi people I feel the Betawi language needs to be maintained and maintained (6), 2) I am proud to be a Betawi person and use the Betawi language (5), 3) Betawi language is an identity for the Betawi people and needs to be used (3), 4) I am very confident in using the Betawi language wherever I interact with fellow Betawi people (2), and 4) if the Betawi people don't respect and use the language, then this language will be marginalized (2)

B. Negative towards Betawi Language

This component is, of course, unexpected where a number of respondents stated negative attitude towards Betawi Language. This is revealed from various reasons such as the following; 1) Betawi language is only used in a limited circle (8), 2) if the Betawi language is less attractive to the young, there is no need to worry about it (6), 3) Betawi language is only for the old, for the young, let him choose another language he likes (5), 4) Betawi language does not follow modern developments (3), and 5) I sometimes feel ashamed of using Betawi among other language speakers (2).

C. Neither negative nor positive towards Betawi Language

Based on the fact, language attitudes are not only divided into positive attitudes and negative attitudes, there are also a number of respondents who can be considered neutral. They are included in the category "neither negative nor positive towards Betawi Language" Their reasons are revealed as follows; 1) I grew up in a family that is not used to using Betawi (3), 2) I hang out with people who are not used to using Betawi (2), 3) I go to an international school that uses English so my Betawi language is not working knowledge (1), 4) I do not state my attitude towards Betawi (1), and 5) I have little knowledge of Betawi (1)

The three components mentioned above show a language attitude condition which is caused by several things:

- 1) The attitude of Betawi teenagers towards mother language is negative since they do not realize that language is a cultural identity. They are not proud of their mother tongue. Even though they understand this language enough, they do not use it outside the family circle. This attitude is also influenced by the language trend in people outside their community.
- 2) Due to the influence of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural life, in the wider community, there is a tendency to interact using Indonesian. Apart from that, the use of slang also color their language habits. Betawi teenagers have a good understanding of the Betawi language. Teenagers understand their mother tongue.
- 3) The role of Betawi parents is very decisive for the decline in language attitudes for teenagers. The use of Betawi language in the home should be maintained. They should be made aware of the importance of maintaining their mother tongue as a wrong indentation so that teenagers feel responsible for maintaining their mother tongue. Betawi language

spoken by native of Betawi teenager speakers is only at certain times and situations. Even they communicate at home, they occasionally use Indonesian.

- 4) Apart from cultural stakeholders, the government should also play a role in preserving local languages (including Betawi), for example by allowing this language to be studied in elementary schools.

Conclusion

Language is the most dominant cultural aspect in life. As a mean of communication, the language reflects the character of the user. In Indonesian context, a country with a multi-ethnic population, each ethnicity has its own local language. Betawi, for example, is one of the tribes in Indonesia who inhabit Jakarta. The mother tongue of this tribe is Betawi language. Due to the language attitude factor, now Betawi language is starting to be left by its young speakers.

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the language attitude of the respondents' towards Betawi language is 'negative'. Vice versa, they give higher respect to Indonesian language as national language and foreign language such as English. This language attitude is shaped by a number of determinant factors including the language habits of the respondents outside the home environment where Indonesian language and foreign language dominate the active language use, which then affects them when they are inside the house where traditional language is usually uttered by the elder communicators. Meanwhile, a very positive attitude towards the Indonesian language is due to the habitual factors of parents who give freedom to language choices to their children. Moreover, the positive language attitude towards foreign languages such as English is caused by most respondents' perceptions towards it as the language of modern developments.

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