

Endangered Language: Preserving Totoli Language and Cultural Identity

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Abstract—Language extinction occurs when a language ceases to be spoken (Crystal, 2002; Krauss, 1992; Meek, 2019). This study examines the Totoli language, an endangered language in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, where a sharp decline in active speakers has been observed. Using a sociolinguistic approach, the research conceptualizes language as both a symbol system and a manifestation of cultural identity. Data were collected through structured questionnaires, focusing on patterns of language use across different domains such as family and neighborhood interactions. These findings highlight the diminishing role of Totoli in everyday communication, signaling an urgent need for intervention. This study emphasizes the importance of targeted preservation efforts to protect the Totoli language as one of the regional languages in Indonesia, especially in Sulawesi. It is important to highlight the urgency of implementing preservation and revitalization strategies to ensure the survival of Totoli language. Without such measures, Totoli risks extinction, underscoring broader implications for endangered languages globally.

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***Index Terms*—endangered language, language shift, language maintenance, Totoli language, Indigenous ethnicity**

I. INTRODUCTION

As part of culture, language plays an important role in everyday life. Language is the identity of a community, becoming one of the characteristics of a nation and its national identity (Hariyanto et al., 2023; Kalra & Danis, 2024; Taha et al., 2024a; Taha et al., 2024b; Zein, 2020). A language is threatened with extinction when its number of speakers decreases (Cárdenas et al., 2017; Montrul, 2023). Contributing factors include the scarcity of native speakers, displacement by more prestigious regional languages, and the younger generation's disuse of the language. In this century, 50% of the world's 5,000 languages are estimated to be endangered, with one language disappearing every two weeks (Dalby, 2003; Grenoble, 2024). The loss is often due to speakers shifting to other languages. According to Ethnologue, in 2023 there were 7,168 languages worldwide, with 3,078 classified as endangered (Julia, 2024; Krauss, 1992; Lewis et al., 2015; Peter, 2018; Ševčíková et al., 2023). In Indonesia, according to language map data from the Language Agency, Ministry of Education and Culture, there are 652 regional languages, with 384 of them in Papua and West Papua (Badan Bahasa, 2019), while Ethnologue (2013) identifies 719 languages, 707 of which are living and 12 extinct. Of the living languages, 18 are formal, 81 are developing, 272 are threatened, and 79 are dying.

Language shift and maintenance are intertwined phenomena (Ong & Troyer, 2022). A displaced language is one that cannot sustain itself, typically over a period of more than two or three generations (Bromham et al., 2022; Hariyanto et al., 2023; Sumarsono & Partana, 2007; Yance et al., 2024; Zalmansyah et al., 2023). Language maintenance occurs when a community decides to continue using its traditional language. Conversely, when a community adopts a new language in place of its old one, a language shift takes place, potentially leading to language extinction.

Totoli language, spoken in Tolitoli Regency, Central Sulawesi Province, faces such a challenge (Inhuong et al., 1990). Based on Language Map data (Badan Bahasa, 2019), Totoli is used in Bolano Village (Bolano District, Parigi Moutong Regency), Salugan Village (Lampasio District, Toli-Toli Regency), Dadakitan Village and Nalu Village (Baolan District, Toli-Toli Regency), and Lakatan Village (Galang District, Tolitoli Regency). Totoli-speaking areas are bordered by Javanese-speaking areas to the north, Dondo-speaking areas to the east, and Bajo, Javanese, Balinese, and Bugis-speaking areas to the south and west.

Despite a population of 225,154 in Tolitoli (BPS, 2020), the number of Totoli speakers is relatively small. The language, also known as 'Tolitoli language', is spoken along the coast from Dadakitan (Baolan District) to Lakuan (North Tolitoli District), with approximately 25,000 speakers (Errington, 2014; Himmelmann, 2001, 2008, 2010). Many speakers, particularly those in urban areas, are not fluent. Among the populations in Galang, Baolan, and North Tolitoli Sub-districts, only about 42% use Totoli (Inhuong et al., 1990). This erosion of language use points to its endangerment (Yulianti et al., 2022). This happens because in general, the Tolitoli ethnic community is a multilingual society.

The Tolitoli ethnic group has integrated with immigrant communities, including Bugis, Selayar, Javanese, and Gorontalo. This blending has led many Tolitoli people to abandon Totoli in favor of Indonesian or the Bugis language, which carries higher prestige. Multi-ethnic intermingling and language contact in Tolitoli have created a multilingual society. This often results in bilingualism or multilingualism, which can lead to language shift (Kridalaksana, 1983; Mufwene, 2020; Pepinsky et al., 2024; Zein, 2020). The increasing flow of information and communication in today's global society has further intensified language shifts, threatening the survival of regional languages.

An interesting observation regarding Totoli language use is the community's preference for Bugis. Based on observations and residents' testimonies, many Tolitoli ethnic people have a stronger command of Bugis than Totoli. Bugis is considered more prestigious, and most Tolitoli people are fluent in it. Language shift occurs when an old language is replaced by a new one, often across generations. Bilingualism is a prerequisite but not the sole cause of language shift. These generational shifts are of interest as they could lead to Totoli's extinction.

This study aims to describe the pattern of Totoli language shift, which threatens its extinction. The research focuses on Totoli language use in the family and neighborhood domains. Family and neighbors play a crucial role in mother tongue maintenance as they shape everyday language use (Spolsky, 2009). Language maintenance in families can involve both implicit and explicit language planning, ensuring the language is used at home (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006; Schiffman, 2012; Spolsky, 2012; Zalmansyah, 2019).

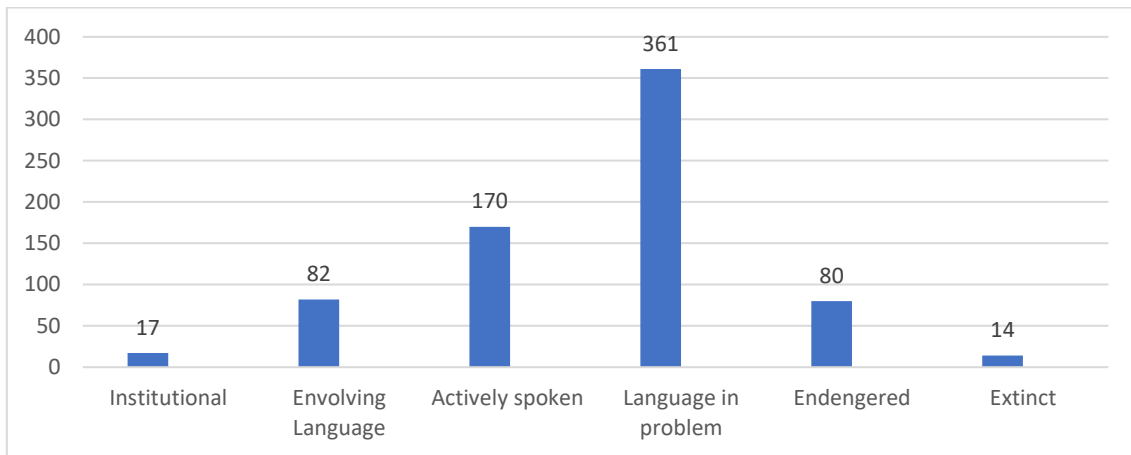
II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The endangerment of regional languages in Indonesia has become a significant concern among linguists and researchers. Various efforts have been undertaken to preserve these languages, as Indonesia is home to the second-largest number of regional languages globally, following Papua New Guinea (Tondo, 2009). Language extinction occurs when a language experiences a severe decline in usage, intergenerational transmission, and speaker population. This phenomenon significantly impacts linguistic diversity, disrupting the intricate network of human cultural expression worldwide (UNESCO, 2003).

The process of language extinction is often gradual, making it difficult to pinpoint a specific timeline for its occurrence. However, this phenomenon holds serious implications for national language policies aimed at preserving cultural diversity

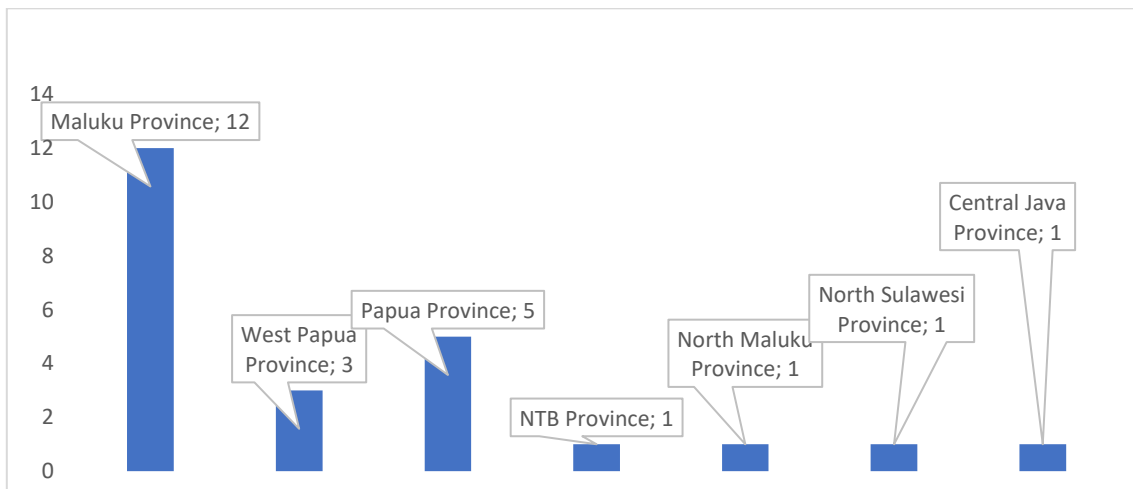
and advancing regional languages as part of Indonesia’s linguistic (Samiaji, 2024). Without intervention, the loss of these languages would mean the disappearance of invaluable cultural assets, as language embodies the cultural reality of its speakers.

According to *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (2021), Indonesia has approximately 742 languages, accounting for 10% of the world’s total languages (Samiaji, 2024). However, by the end of the 21st century, over half of these languages are predicted to become extinct. A 2021 study from the Australian National University (ANU) estimated that around 1,500 languages worldwide will disappear by the century’s end. Using similar variables, it is projected that approximately 441 regional languages in Indonesia (> 50%) will face extinction. Additionally, the *Ethnologue* 2023 report identified 24 regional languages in Indonesia that no longer have native speakers (Figure 1).



Source: *Ethnologue language data 2023*

Figure 1. Condition of Regional Languages in the World Based on Australian National University (ANU) 2021



Source: *Ethnologue language data 2023*

Figure 2. Extinct Languages in Indonesia

Based on Figure 2, it is shown that there are several provinces in Indonesia with the largest number of languages experiencing extinction: Maluku, Papua, West Papua, West Nusa Tenggara, North Sulawesi, Central Java, and North Maluku. In Maluku Province, 12 languages are starting to become extinct (Hoti, Hukumina, Hulung, Kamarin, Kayeli, Loun, Moksela, Naka'ela, Nila, Nusa Laut, Serua, and Te'un), in Papua there are 5 languages (Awere, Mapia, Onin Pidgin, Saponi, and Tandia), in West Papua there are 3 languages (Duriankere, Dusner, and Iha Podgin), in West Nusa Tenggara there is 1 language (Tambora), in North Sulawesi there is 1 language (Ponosakan), in Central Java there is 1 language (Javindo), and in North Maluku there is 1 language (Ternateno).

The distribution of endangered languages varies across provinces, with the highest number of critically endangered languages found in Maluku, Papua, West Papua, West Nusa Tenggara, North Sulawesi, Central Java, and North Maluku. Maluku has 12 endangered languages, Papua has five, West Papua has three, and other provinces have at least one language classified as extinct or near extinction. These figures underscore the urgency of language preservation efforts.

The vitality of regional languages in Indonesia varies significantly (Coulmas, 1997). Some languages still have a considerable number of speakers, while others are on the brink of extinction. However, the number of speakers alone is not the sole determinant of a language’s survival. Some small language communities maintain strong linguistic loyalty, ensuring their continued existence. Conversely, regional languages that cannot compete with dominant languages in social

and economic domains may shift from high-prestige domains (education, religion, government) to low-prestige domains (family, informal interactions). If this trend continues, these languages may become moribund and eventually extinct (Crystal, 2018; Gunarwan, 2006; Sasse, 1990).

Extensive research has been conducted on language endangerment, maintenance, and vitality, particularly in sociolinguistics (Chaika et al., 2024; Inayatussalihah, 2018; Inayatussalihah & Sudarmaji, 2020; Isaac Christopher, 2023; Lubogo, 2023; Mobarak Alhazmi, 2024; Obligar, 2024). One study on the Gayo language highlights its decline due to speakers shifting to languages with broader communication reach, such as Indonesian, to access greater social and economic opportunities (Rismawati, 2016). Another study which categorizes the causes of language extinction into natural and non-natural factors. Natural causes include natural disasters, the dominance of majority languages, globalization, migration, and interethnic marriage. Non-natural causes involve decreasing appreciation for regional languages, reduced usage in daily life, economic pressures, and the widespread use of Indonesian as the national lingua franca (Tondo, 2009).

Research on language vitality and maintenance consistently shows a downward trend for regional languages. Despite numerous studies on language endangerment, Totoli language has primarily been examined from a structural linguistic perspective, focusing on morphology and syntax (Inhuong et al., 1990; Kadiyala et al., 2024; Kadja et al., 2001).

Furthermore, Tamrin's (2018) research on Totoli language shift in family settings reveals a decline in its use across generations, with younger speakers increasingly favoring Indonesian. However, this study was limited to age-based language use within families and did not consider other sociolinguistic factors such as gender, education, occupation, or broader domains of use. Given the gaps in existing research, there has been no comprehensive study on the endangerment of Totoli across multiple sociolinguistic domains. This study aims to provide a critical assessment of the sociological factors influencing the survival of Totoli, contributing to the broader discourse on language endangerment in Indonesia. Moreover, the issue of regional language vitality remains a pressing concern, as many indigenous languages in Indonesia have yet to be thoroughly documented. The rapid modernization and sociocultural shifts in Indonesian society continue to accelerate language abandonment, making preservation efforts even more crucial.

III. METHODS

This research falls into the category of field research using a sociolinguistic approach. Specifically, it examines the use of language as a symbol system (code) and as a cultural behavior system tied to actual language usage contexts (Fasold & Connor-Linton, 2006; Fishman, 1986; Görlach, 1990; Roche & Kruk, 2024). This sociolinguistic study uses both quantitative and qualitative data to analyze the linguistic phenomenon comprehensively. Quantitative data is gathered using structured questionnaires, which provide predetermined alternative responses for each question (Cohen et al., 2017; Krosnick, 2018; Little, 2020; Paiva et al., 2018; Tamrin, 2017). Meanwhile, qualitative data is obtained through interviews, observations, and recordings using a snowball sampling technique (Akkaş & Meydan, 2024; Etikan et al., 2016; Gierczyk et al., 2023; Lenaini, 2021; Urme et al., 2022; Yip, 2024). These diverse data collection methods ensure a well-rounded analysis of language behavior. The study was conducted in Baolan District, the capital of Tolitoli Regency, and in Galang District, which is adjacent to the capital. Rather than studying the entire population, the research focuses on 107 respondents selected through simple random sampling. The sampling process categorized respondents based on age. For children and adolescents, samples were primarily taken from schools and youth groups in Baolan and Galang Districts using a systematic interval random sampling method. For adults and the elderly, samples were taken from every fifth house in residential areas, with particular emphasis on individuals of Tolitoli ethnicity.

The primary objective of this study is to determine the level of threat to the Totoli language's survival based on its use in different domains, specifically the family and neighborhood domains. These domains were chosen to assess the current status of the Totoli language. Given previous research findings indicating the Totoli language's vulnerability, understanding domain-specific usage patterns is crucial. The concept of language domains, developed by Fishman, offers a comprehensive framework that bridges micro and macro sociolinguistic perspectives. Fishman's hierarchical approach—starting from higher social constructs and moving to lower ones—provides valuable insights into language choice behavior (Fishman, 1997).

This study aims to provide recommendations for preserving the Totoli language based on domain-specific usage trends. The findings will contribute to efforts aimed at mitigating the risk of extinction. This research is also novel in its data collection and analysis methods, as it does not rely solely on questionnaires or the calculation of language vitality indices (Budiono, 2024; Harimansyah et al., 2019; Lauder & Kurniawati, 2019; Winarti, 2014). Instead, both quantitative and qualitative data are integrated for a holistic understanding of language survival and shift dynamics.

IV. RESULTS

Data on the potential extinction of the Totoli language by the Tolitoli ethnic group were reviewed across family and neighborhood domains. The study categorized language usage by age, gender, education, and occupation. Respondents were asked about the language they use with family members and in neighborhood interactions, with four answer choices: (a) Totoli language, (b) Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia), (c) other regional languages (e.g., Bugis, Selayar, Dampelas, Javanese), and (d) a mixture of Totoli and Indonesian. Additionally, respondents were asked about their proficiency in

other regional languages. The results offer insights into language usage patterns and the preservation of the Totoli language.

A. Language Usage Patterns in the Family Realm

One of the most important domains in the use of the mother tongue is the family domain. The family domain is related to communication relationship patterns between family members, such as grandparents, fathers/mothers, brothers/sisters, sons/daughters, and husbands/wives in various topics of conversation. The family domain is usually used as an indicator of the maintenance or shift of the mother tongue. In this study, the pattern of language use in the family domain is reviewed from two aspects, called role relationships and language events.

(a). Selection of Language Use in the Family Realm Based on Role Relationships and Gender Categories

Language usage patterns based on role relationships reviewed from the gender category, there are two groups: men and women. The description of the pattern of language usage of the Tolitoli ethnic group in the family domain based on role relationships and gender categories is presented in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1
THE USE OF TOTOLI ETHNIC LANGUAGE IN THE FAMILY REALM BASED ON ROLE RELATIONSHIPS AND GENDER CATEGORIES

No.	Gender	Role Relationship	Language Using								Total
			BT		BI		BL		BT, BI		
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1.	Male	Grandparents	24	44	25	47	0	0	5	9	100%
		Father/Mother	21	39	25	47	0	0	8	14	100%
		Brothers/Sisters	15	28	35	65	0	0	4	7	100%
		Sons/Daughters	4	11	24	71	0	0	6	18	100%
		Husband/Wife	8	24	22	65	0	0	4	11	100%
	Female	Kakek/Nenek	19	35	27	51	1	2	6	12	100%
		Father/Mother	18	34	30	57	1	2	4	7	100%
		Brothers/Sisters	12	26	33	72	1	2	0	0	100%
		Sons/Daughters	4	15	19	70	1	4	3	11	100%
		Husband/Wife	11	39	14	50	2	7	1	4	100%

(b). Selection of Totoli Language Use in the Family Realm Based on Role Relationships and Age Categories

The age categories in this study consist of four groups: (1) ages 11--27 years (children and adolescents) (2) ages 28--49 years (adults), and ages 50 years and above (elderly). The following is Table 2 shows the patterns of Totoli ethnic language use in the family domain based on role relationships and age categories.

TABLE 2
THE USE OF TOTOLI ETHNIC LANGUAGE IN THE FAMILY REALM BASED ON ROLE RELATIONSHIPS AND AGE CATEGORIES

No.	Age	Role Relationship	Language Using								Total
			BT		BI		BL		BT, BI		
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1.	11--27 years (Children and Adolescents)	Grandparents	6	12	32	67	1	2	9	19	100%
		Father/Mother	5	10	36	75	0	0	7	15	100%
		Brothers/Sisters	1	2	43	90	0	0	4	8	100%
		Sons/Daughters	0	0	5	71	0	0	2	29	100%
		Husband/Wife	0	0	5	71	0	0	5	17	100%
2.	28--49 years (Adult)	Grandparents	13	43	10	40	0	0	5	17	100%
		Father/Mother	11	36	14	47	0	0	5	17	100%
		Brothers/Sisters	2	7	23	77	0	0	5	16	100%
		Sons/Daughters	1	3	25	83	0	0	4	14	100%
		Husband/Wife	2	6	24	80	0	0	4	14	100%
3.	> 50 years (Elderly)	Kakek/Nenek	21	72	6	22	1	3	1	3	100%
		Father/Mother	21	72	6	22	1	3	1	3	100%
		Brothers/Sisters	14	48	12	42	1	3	2	7	100%
		Sons/Daughters	21	72	6	22	0	0	2	6	100%
		Husband/Wife	23	82	1	3	1	3	4	12	100%

(c). *Selection of the Use of Totoli Ethnic Language in the Family Realm Based on Role Relationships and Educational Categories*

Apart from being reviewed from the age and gender categories, the use of Totoli ethnic language is also reviewed from the education category: elementary school/did not graduate, junior high school, senior high school, and higher education/university. An overview of the use and application of Totoli language in the family sphere based on role relationships and educational categories is presented in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3
THE USE OF TOTOLI ETHNIC LANGUAGE IN THE FAMILY REALM BASED ON ROLE RELATIONSHIPS AND EDUCATIONAL CATEGORIES

No.	Level of Education	Role Relationship	Language Using								Total
			BT		BI		BL		BT, BI		
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1.	Elementary school (SD)	Grandparents	18	82	4	18	0	0	0	0	100%
		Father/Mother	17	76	4	18	0	0	1	5	100%
		Brothers/Sisters	12	53	9	41	0	0	1	5	100%
		Sons/Daughters	6	30	10	50	0	0	4	20	100%
		Husband/ Wife	11	54	8	40	0	0	1	5	100%
2.	Junior high school (SMP)	Grandparents	5	16	25	78	0	0	2	6	100%
		Father/Mother	5	16	25	78	0	0	2	6	100%
		Brothers/Sisters	5	16	27	84	0	0	0	0	100%
		Sons/Daughters	2	25	4	50	0	0	2	25	100%
		Husband/ Wife	2	25	5	62	0	0	1	12	100%
3.	Senior high school (SMA)	Grandparents	8	36	11	50	0	0	3	14	100%
		Father/Mother	8	36	12	55	0	0	2	9	100%
		Brothers/Sisters	7	32	14	64	0	0	1	4	100%
		Sons/Daughters	2	17	10	83	0	0	0	0	100%
		Husband/ Wife	2	14	12	86	0	0	0	0	100%
4.	Higher education/University (PT)	Grandparents	10	32	15	48	0	0	6	20	100%
		Father/Mother	8	26	18	58	0	0	5	16	100%
		Brothers/Sisters	3	10	23	74	0	0	5	16	100%
		Sons/Daughters	0	0	21	87	0	0	3	13	100%
		Husband/ Wife	1	5	21	87	0	0	2	8	100%

B. *Selection of the Use of Totoli Ethnic Language in the Family Realm Based on Role Relationships and Job Categories*

The use of Totoli ethnic language is also reviewed from the job category, such as farmers, civil servants/military/police, traders, self-employed, students, and unemployed. The description of the use of Totoli ethnic language in the family realm based on role relationships and job categories is presented in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4
THE USE OF TOTOLI ETHNIC LANGUAGE IN THE FAMILY REALM BASED ON ROLE RELATIONSHIPS AND JOB CATEGORIES

No.	Level of Education	Role Relationship	Language Using								Total
			BT		BI		BL		BT, BI		
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1.	Farmer	Grandparents	9	53	6	35	1	6	1	6	100%
		Father/Mother	8	47	6	35	1	6	2	12	100%
		Brothers/Sisters	6	35	8	47	1	6	2	12	100%
		Sons/Daughters	4	23	9	53	1	6	3	18	100%
		Husband/Wife	4	23	10	59	1	6	2	12	100%
2.	Government employees, Police, Army	Grandparents	7	44	6	37	0	0	3	19	100%
		Father/Mother	7	44	6	37	0	0	3	19	100%
		Brothers/Sisters	3	19	11	69	0	0	2	12	100%
		Sons/Daughters	0	0	15	94	0	0	1	6	100%
		Husband/Wife	0	0	15	94	0	0	1	6	100%
3.	Merchants	Grandparents	4	29	9	64	0	0	1	7	100%
		Father/Mother	5	36	8	57	0	0	1	7	100%
		Brothers/Sisters	4	29	9	64	0	0	1	7	100%
		Sons/Daughters	0	0	11	92	0	0	1	8	100%
		Husband/Wife	0	0	11	92	0	0	1	8	100%
4.	Self-employees	Grandparents	7	41	10	59	0	0	0	0	100%
		Father/Mother	7	41	10	59	0	0	0	0	100%
		Brothers/Sisters	5	29	12	71	0	0	0	0	100%
		Sons/Daughters	2	15	11	85	0	0	0	0	100%
		Husband/Wife	2	15	11	85	0	0	0	0	100%
5.	Students	Grandparents	2	7	27	90	0	0	1	3	100%
		Father/Mother	1	3	27	90	0	0	2	7	100%
		Brothers/Sisters	1	3	28	94	0	0	1	3	100%
		Sons/Daughters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
		Husband/Wife		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
6.	Un-employee	Grandparents	9	69	4	31	0	0	0	0	100%
		Father/Mother	9	69	4	31	0	0	0	0	100%
		Brothers/Sisters	4	31	9	69	0	0	0	0	100%
		Sons/Daughters	2	18	9	82	0	0	0	0	100%
		Husband/Wife	2	18	9	82	0	0	0	0	100%

C. Patterns of Language Use in the Neighborhood Sphere

The neighborhood realm is also one of the realms that reflects the preservation of the mother tongue. As long as the mother tongue is still used in the neighborhood realm, the language is considered to still survive (Lauder, 2018; Lukman & Widayastuti, 2024; Tamrin, 2016). In other words, the neighborhood domain can be used as one of the indicators of mother tongue maintenance. In the neighborhood domain, the objects of observation are conversations between neighbors of the same age, older neighbors, and younger neighbors. Data on the pattern of use of Totoli ethnic language in the neighborhood domain were obtained through respondents' answers to the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to determine what language choices were used when communicating with neighbors of the same age, older neighbors, and younger neighbors. The respondents' answer choices were presented in percentages according to the language used in communicating with neighbors (Table 5).

TABLE 5
USE OF TOTOLI ETHNIC LANGUAGE IN NEIGHBORHOOD/SOCIETY

No.	Speech Participants	Language Using								Total
		BT		BI		BL		BT, BI		
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
	Same age	13	12%	71	67%	13	12%	10	9	100%
	Older	14	13%	70	65%	11	10%	12	12%	100%
	Younger	5	6%	86	80%	7	6%	9	8%	100%

D. Bilingualism of the Tolitoli Ethnic Group

Bilingualism is related to the use of two languages or two or more language codes by a speaker alternately in his/her interactions with others. To be able to use two or more languages, a person must master both or more languages. Based on the Tolitoli ethnic questionnaire, in addition to being able to speak Totoli regional language, they are also bilingual and even multilingual, such as Bugis, Buol, Javanese, Selayar, and Kaili languages as seen in Table 6 below.

TABLE 6
THE ABILITY OF TOLITOLI ETHNIC GROUPS TO SPEAK TOTOLI AND OTHER REGIONAL LANGUAGES

Language Using											
Totoli Language		Bugis Language		Buol Language		Javanese		Selayar Language		Kaili Language	
F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
77	72%	78	73%	15	14%	2	2%	5	5%	2	2%

V. DISCUSSION

Based on the data in the tables and figures, information was obtained regarding language use in the family domain and the bilingualism patterns of the Tolitoli ethnic group in Tolitoli Regency. Table 1 highlights the use of the Tolitoli language in the family domain across gender categories and role relationships. Among 54 male respondents speaking with grandparents, parents, siblings, children, and spouses, 29% used Totoli, 59% used Indonesian, and 12% code-mixed Totoli and Indonesian. Among 53 female respondents, 30% used Totoli, 60% used Indonesian, 3% used other languages, and 7% code-mixed. This indicates a significant shift to Indonesian, with women preserving the Totoli language more than men. However, for both genders, Indonesian has become dominant in the family domain.

Age-based data (Table 2) reveals three categories: children/adolescents (11–27 years), adults (28–49 years), and elderly (50 years and above). Among 48 children and adolescents, only 5% used Totoli, 75% used Indonesian, and 20% code-mixed. Among 30 adults, 19% used Totoli, 65% used Indonesian, and 16% code-mixed. In contrast, 69% of 29 elderly respondents used Totoli, 23% used Indonesian, and 6% code-mixed. This shows that only the elderly still maintain Totoli in family conversations, while children, adolescents, and adults have largely transitioned to Indonesian. The generational shift away from Totoli is especially evident among younger, productive-age groups.

Educational background also plays a role in language use (Table 3). Respondents with only elementary school (SD) education show the highest Totoli use (60%), with 33% using Indonesian and 7% code-mixing. In contrast, among junior high (SMP) respondents, 20% used Totoli, 70% used Indonesian, and 10% code-mixed. Senior high (SMA) respondents showed 27% Totoli use, 68% Indonesian use, and 5% code-mixing. Among university-educated respondents, 15% used Totoli, 71% used Indonesian, and 14% code-mixed. This pattern suggests that higher educational attainment correlates with a shift to Indonesian, with elementary-educated individuals more likely to maintain Totoli.

Employment categories also reflect shifting language patterns (Table 4). Farmers show the highest Totoli use at 36%, with 40% using Indonesian and 12% code-mixing. Civil servants/police/military show 21% Totoli use, 67% Indonesian, and 12% code-mixing. Traders used Totoli 19% of the time, Indonesian 74%, and code-mixed 7%. Among entrepreneurs, 28% used Totoli and 72% used Indonesian. Students had the lowest Totoli use (4%), with 92% using Indonesian. Unemployed respondents used Totoli 41% of the time, while 59% used Indonesian. This suggests that formal employment and education are associated with decreased Totoli language use, with students shifting most prominently to Indonesian.

Language use in the neighborhood domain provides further insights (Table 5). When communicating with same-age neighbors, 12% used Totoli, 67% used Indonesian, 12% used other languages, and 9% code-mixed. Conversations with older neighbors showed similar trends: 13% used Totoli, 65% used Indonesian, 10% used other languages, and 12% code-mixed. Among younger neighbors, only 6% used Totoli, while 80% used Indonesian, 6% used other languages, and 8% code-mixed. Overall, 76% of neighborhood conversations are conducted in Indonesian. This indicates that even in informal, community-based interactions, Indonesian has overtaken Totoli as the dominant language.

Finally, bilingual and multilingual proficiency data highlights broader language dynamics in Tolitoli Regency (Table 6). While 72% of Tolitoli respondents are fluent in Totoli, 73% are fluent in Bugis, a newcomer language. Smaller percentages speak Javanese (2%), Selayar (5%), and Kaili (2%). Bugis has gained prestige due to intermarriage and its widespread use in the Tolitoli community. Interviews confirmed that Bugis is more commonly used than Totoli in many contexts. This shows that language shift in Tolitoli is not only toward Indonesian but also influenced by the social status and integration of other regional languages. As Lukman & Widyastuti note that the neighborhood domain can serve as a

crucial indicator of mother tongue maintenance, with language use reflecting the broader trends of language preservation or shift within a community (Lukman & Widyastuti, 2024).

VI. CONCLUSION

Totoli language in Sulawesi faces a critical threat of extinction, as evidenced by its declining use among Tolitoli ethnic group. In the family domain, Totoli language is used by only 29% of respondents, compared to 60% who prefer Indonesian. Its use persists primarily among those aged 50 and above. In the neighborhood domain, the shift is even more pronounced, with only 10% using Totoli language compared to 71% who use Indonesian. The community is generally bilingual or multilingual, with 72% of respondents mastering Totoli language and 73% fluent in Bugis. Bugis, as a newcomer language with higher prestige, has supplanted Totoli language as the preferred language, especially among the young generations.

This research highlights the unique sociolinguistic dynamics in Tolitoli regency. It introduces a novel domain-based analysis focusing on family and neighborhood contexts, complemented by demographic categories such as age, gender, education, and occupation. This comprehensive approach provides an in-depth understanding of language shift patterns not explored in previous studies. Moreover, it emphasizes the role of language prestige as a significant factor driving the shift from Totoli language to Bugis language and Indonesian language, a finding that enriches the broader discourse on language endangerment. By integrating local data with global sociolinguistic frameworks like those proposed by Fishman and Spolsky, this study bridges micro-level language dynamics with macro-level theories of language shift and maintenance. The findings underscore the urgency of preserving Totoli language and contribute valuable insights to minority language studies globally. This research offers a vital reference for addressing language extinction threats and fostering the sustainability of endangered languages in Indonesia and beyond.

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