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THE GORONTALO LANGUAGE IN PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION: ITS MAINTENANCE AND NATIVE SPEAKERS' ATTITUDES

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Abstract: This study aims to describe the maintenance of the Gorontalo language in the workplace by Gorontalo speakers. To carry out qualitative research we collected data through interviews, observations and field records, and then analysed it employing Spradley's model (used in ethnography). The research reveals that: (1) the Gorontalo language is used in the work interactions between all employees, or between employees and customers who are fluent in the Gorontalo language; customers will start conversations using the Gorontalo language if they have close relationships with their interlocutors; (2) the attitudes of the speakers who actively use the Gorontalo Language in the workplace towards the language under discussion can be positive and negative depending on the backgrounds of the speakers; (3) the factors that affect Gorontalo language preservation can be classified into two groups: factors from the outside of the community, including changes in the composition of multi-ethnic society and the exposure to global information, and factors from within the community, such as the lack of public awareness of the urgency to maintain the Gorontalo Language as the local pride.

Key words: language preservation, Gorontalo, workplace, professional discourse, business discourse.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Gorontalo is a region located in the West part of North Sulawesi Province, which is inhabited by the Gorontalo ethnic group. The regional language (the Gorontalo language) is used in interaction among community members who live in Gorontalo and part of Gorontalo Regency (in ethnological publications, it is listed by the International Organization for Standardization under code 639-3). The Gorontalo language has many dialects, including Atinggola, Bune, and Gorontalo itself. However, the most dominant dialect used is the Gorontalo dialect, which has another name – Hulontalo.

With the arrival of immigrants from other regions who have brought a variety of cultures and languages, the Gorontalo people have gradually become multi-ethnic and multilingual. Until now, the Gorontalo people understand at least three languages, including: the Gorontalo language, which is used among Gorontalo ethnic groups, the Malay Manado dialect, and the Indonesian language, which is often used as the lingua franca or the common language of several ethnic groups. Manado Malay and Indonesian have become the two language choices that are commonly used by multiethnic communities in Gorontalo. The assimilation of the immigrant communities who have come to Gorontalo since 1953 exerts a significant influence on the Gorontalo language.

The existence of other languages within the Gorontalo community makes it difficult to maintain the original language of Gorontalo. Because of this, the Language Development Agency of the Ministry of Education and Culture has listed Gorontalo as one of the endangered regional languages. The observers of the Gorontalo language and the local government have announced issues and policies regarding the status of the language. The measures related to the maintenance of the Gorontalo language have still no impact on strengthening the position of the Gorontalo language in different spheres of people's lives, including the work environment involving Gorontalo speakers from different social backgrounds. In this article, we study conversations occurring in the trading environment, transportation services, traditional markets, and offices.

The use of the Gorontalo language in the workplace differs from the use of the Gorontalo language in other spheres of life, such as at home. In the work environment, Gorontalo-language speakers often have difficulty choosing which language they should use for interaction, as they remember that every person has a different background. Within the work environment, especially the places mentioned above, Gorontalo language speakers also face challenges in using the Gorontalo language which may come from the speaker's attitude towards the language itself. Moreover, the maintenance of the Gorontalo language in the workplace is also influenced by the factors that come from both inside and outside of the Gorontalo language speaking community.

In such situations, language contacts become an inevitable problem. Thomason [Thomason, 2001] defines language contact as a dynamic process that occurs in the interactions between speakers of two different languages in order to avoid communication gaps [Stolz, Bakker & Palomo, 2008]. Language contacts that occur for a long period of time can trigger a language shift if they are not considered as a phenomenon that harms the language or as what is called the neglect of the language [Pauwels, 2016].

Slowly but surely, the language shift will be followed by the language death as a consequence of language contacts that happened before [Riley, 2007]. Various research results have revealed that the causes of language shifts can be triggered by the speakers' choice of the language as they may actually "leave" their language [Fought, 2006] and the impact of acculturation on certain cultures [Ribes & Llanes, 2015].

This is what happened to the Gorontalo language, which is starting to be forgotten because its speakers prefer to adapt their language to the languages of immigrant people. This also concerns other regional languages in Indonesia mapped by the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) [Harimansyah et al., 2017].

Basically, a language that has been “shifted” can still be saved as long as there is still a positive attitude from the speakers towards the language. Language preservation efforts can be the only way to reduce the language shift. According to Crystal [Crystal, 2002] and Batibo [Batibo, 2005], language preservation is an effort to adopt special steps in order to maintain a language in its speaking community even though it is under pressure from another language which is more dominant.

Language preservation efforts can obtain a great attention from all groups of society. Language maintenance should be the responsibility of every element in society even though it does not guarantee preservation of the language. According to Holmes [Holmes, 2008], a strong determination to defend a language has been shown when minority groups managed to revive Welsh and Hebrew as they valued their distinct identity and made their languages an important symbol of this identity. Similar cases occur within the community of Zapotec speakers [Pérez, 2012] and Voro language community [Brown, 2010], which have a strong desire to defend their original languages.

Motivation to make efforts to maintain a language is basically inseparable from people’s perspective on the language [Odango, 2015; Jagodic, 2011]. The Gorontalo language is one of the languages that have prolonged contacts with other languages within the community. Language contacts are the reason for choosing the language that will be used by a group of people in the course of social interactions. The various life conditions of the Gorontalo people have led to the different attitudes of the speakers towards the Gorontalo language.

In terms of language attitudes, Vassberg [Vassberg, 1993] argued that the attitudes towards language varieties reflect the attitudes of speakers to the motivation of language choice and the effects on the language use. The attitudes shown by speakers towards a language can be divided into positive and negative ones. Pateda [Pateda, 2001] explains that the positive attitude of language speakers is reflected in a sense of responsibility and a sense of belonging to the spoken language. Conversely, negative attitudes are shown by the speakers who ignore their language.

This research does not describe how the Gorontalo language survives in all aspects of people’s lives, but focuses on the work environment. The structure of this study can be formulated in the following order of research problems:

- (1) The process of using the Gorontalo Language in the workplace;
- (2) Speakers’ attitudes towards the language;
- (3) Factors that influence the maintenance of the Gorontalo language in the workplace;

The description below reveals the results of the strong defence of the Gorontalo language in the work environment. This can be the first step to solve the problems that threaten the existence of the language which symbolizes the identity of Gorontalo people. The answers of the respondents to the questionnaires, related to the language attitudes and the form of using the Gorontalo language, serve as the information parameters regarding the maintenance of the Gorontalo language.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research is an ethnographic study conducted by applying the ethnographic model of Spradley (developed in 1979) to obtain the description of the Gorontalo language conservation in society. The territory covered by the research is limited to the central area of Gorontalo. The study

concerns the environment of workplaces that allow the interaction among workers and customers. Those observations are complemented by interviews and tapping of language use occurring in the workplace. In this case, the observation focuses more on the language used by permanent and freelance workers (employees) and independent workers. The research was carried out inside four workplace areas, including: (1) the shopping area in the downtown of Gorontalo where the shop employees communicate with their customers, (2) transportation services, with interaction between the drivers and the passengers, (3) the seller-buyer market environment, (4) the office environment, with the communication between office employees and the public being served.

For the sake of systematic data collection, the respondents are divided into the following groups: (1) teenagers – the age ranging between 12 and 25 years old; (2) adults - between 26 and 45 years old; and (3) the elderly – above 46 years old (based on the 2009 data about general age categories from the Indonesian Ministry of Health Regulation); (4) those who have no problem in the language articulation; (5) those who possess good skills at the Gorontalo language; (6) those who represent the groups of secondary education background in the workplace or office environment; (7) those who work but are uneducated or have only basic education. The total number of the respondents is 110 people. Below we can see the workplace descriptors that are studied in this research:

1) shops: crowded (50 buyers a day), employ the minimum of 25 people who have a standard educational background, 50 percent of the employees are native speakers of Gorontalo;

2) transportation services: motorized becak (Bentor) type of transportation, the driver joins another group of drivers at Bentor station, participates in the conversation with other drivers, the driver belongs to the original people of Gorontalo;

3) traditional market: the sellers that are visited by many buyers, the seller is the original person of Gorontalo;

4) office work: the offices that serve general public (urban village offices, state electricity company offices, telecommunications offices, health service offices).

The analysis of the research data is based on the approach by Spradley and Saville-Troike [Saville-Troike, 2003]. The stages of the data analysis in this study can be described in the following table:

Table 1. General Stages of Research Data Analysis

Sources	Activity	Purposes	Results
Raw Data	Early Classification	Sorting out usable data	The transcription of recorded data
Transcription of initial classification results	Further Classification	Grouping data per research focus	Recording data transcriptions per research focus
Data transcription per research focus	Early analysis	Describing the research findings	Description of the research findings
Description of research findings	The Analysis of Research Findings	Compiling a discussion of research findings	Description of the results and discussions
Description of the discussion of research results	Formulation of the research results synthesis	Compiling the research conclusions	The formulation of the research conclusions

From the table above, it can be seen that the stages of the research data analysis include sources, activity, purposes and results.

3. RESULTS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The environment of work is one of the life aspects that have a big influence on the survival of society. Differences in social, educational, and economic backgrounds create diversity in the use of the language by employees in their work places where people get involved in numerous conversations.

Taking into account the similarities between the social backgrounds of the respondents, we distinguish between two groups of the work environment: first, the area of shops and offices; second, the outdoor markets and public transportation services.

In this research, the term “worker” refers to the store employees, drivers at transportation services and market sellers.

3.1. The use of the Gorontalo language in the workplace

It is well-known that educational, social, economic and cultural aspects of a person’s background find their reflection in the way the person uses a language. The use of language is influenced by the conditions of the work environment, the situation and interaction between workers in the workplace. In order to maintain good relationships in the workplace, business owners apply language proficiency standards to their employees. This policy can be observed in stores and offices. Some businesses demand that their employees use the Indonesian language with customers, while others do not stipulate the use of any language.

This condition generates three kinds of language use: 1) employees automatically use Indonesian in their interaction with customers; 2) employees use the Malay Manado language combined with the Gorontalo language; 3) in conversations between fellow employees, one of the interlocutors uses the Gorontalo language and the opponent can respond in either the Gorontalo language or the Malay Manado language.

As it has already been mentioned, in this research we single out two kinds of the work environment: stores/offices and the outdoor workplaces (markets and Bentor transportation).

Below are the examples of conversations from the two types of work environment that occurred around Gorontalo City. The *italicized phrases* indicate the Gorontalo Language and the underlined phrases refer to the Malay Manado language, the translation into English is carried out by the authors of the article (Table 2).

Table 2. The Conversation between Store Keepers

	Conversation		Ref.
A	Ey, ada orang di lantai tiga?	Eh, are there any people on third floor	20.45
B	<i>Dia'a</i>	No	20.46
	<i>Lati teeto boito</i>	Maybe that's a ghost	20.47
A	<u>Ampadua</u>	Four and two	20.49
C	Wey, lantai tiga, tidak ada orang lantai tiga?	Hei, is there any person on third floor?	20.50
A	Mana <i>te</i> Yaya?	Where is Yaya?	20.51
B	<u>Bakasekaluar</u> barang di <u>sablah</u> dia.	He is taking out a thing in the other (room)	20.52
C	Ey, <i>te</i> Aki ini tidak <u>bolemo</u> tolong?	Hey, don't you want to help Aki?	20.53
	<i>Aati</i> tolong <u>kasana</u> dia.	He needs help	20.54
A	Hari Minggu?	On Sunday?	20.55
C	Iyo.	Yes.	20.56
B	<u>Napa</u> barang grosir, baru tidak ada yang <u>moba</u> ini.	This is a wholesale item, then who else to take care of it.	20.57

The conversation in the table above shows the mixed language use of Gorontalo, Malay Manado and Gorontalo-Malay Manado. However, the interlocutors use the Malay Manado language more often than the Gorontalo Language. Out of the three participants above, interlocutor B uses the Gorontalo Language more frequently as can be seen in data 20.46 to 20.48. While other employees tend to use the Malay Manado language during the conversation. Based on the observed conversations, it can be concluded that the elements of language that stand out in this conversation are forms of personal pronouns because the pronouns of both languages are very easy to find in daily conversations.

Based on the results of the interview it was found that when the store keepers are in their respective family domains they can still interact by using the Gorontalo language, especially when talking to the elderly people (parents). The language used in the family can be different from the language used at work.

The involvement of speakers and customers from various circles of society who mostly use Malay Manado into the process of work urges them to adapt the language they use when they interact with others. Besides, in their interviews, the employees admit that it is the long period of time they work that has developed their language habit. The analysis of the conversation in an office shows similar results.

Table 3. The Conversation between Office Employees

	Conversation		Ref.
A	Mari, Tante Ece.	Please come in.	31.10
	<i>Mopigipa ti Aya?</i>	Do you want to meet the headman?	31.11
B	<i>Saya. Ada dorang?</i>	Yes. Is he in his place?	31.12
A	Ada <i>stau</i> , tadi <i>dapa</i> dengar ada <i>ba</i> telpon.	Yes, I hear he is still on his phone	31.13
	Tunggu <i>wa</i> , <i>molia</i> kamari. Dudu dulu.	Wait a minute, I will check it	31.14
B	<i>Saya</i>	yes	31.15
C	Sapa? <i>TiAya?</i>	Who? The headman?	31.16
A	<i>Iyo</i>	Yes	31.17
C	<i>Barukaluar</i> kasana, <i>depe</i> anak <i>somo</i> melahirkan.	He has just left, his daughter will soon give birth	31.18
B	Oh	Oh	31.19
A	Ah <i>ijo</i> , <i>ti Susi aati</i>	That's right	31.20
B	<i>Pata'o?</i>	So?	31.21
	<i>Bolemo</i> sayakase tinggal <i>kasana</i> ini berkas? Atau nanti besok? <i>Bo</i> ini <i>walingoliobolo</i> ini hari.	Can I leave this file? Or should I deliver it back tomorrow? But it is stated that the time is only for today.	31.22
C	<i>Berkas wolopo'oololi Ta Ece?</i> Ah, <i>olo</i> kartu <i>ye?</i>	What's the file, Ta Ece? Oh for the registration?	31.23
B	<i>Saya</i>	Yes	31.24
A	<i>Bolemose</i> tinggal <i>Ta Monu ye?</i> Kan <i>ti</i> Tante Ece <i>so</i> tidak <i>mobatanda</i> tangan <i>to?</i>	Have I left it here? Or there is another file I need to sign?	31.25
B	<i>Saya, bolo</i> kartu keluarga yang <i>mo</i> antar.	Yes, this is just a family registration.	31.26
	<i>Soba</i> tanda tangan kalamarin.	I signed it yesterday.	31.27
C	Oh <i>kasetinggal jo</i> , <i>de ma teleponuolami mola ti Ta Ece wanuwo</i> <i>luo u duhengalo</i> .	Oh just leave it, we'll call you later if there is any data needed.	31.28

The conversation data from the office environments demonstrate the use of the Malay Manado language mixed with Gorontalo languages. **Table 3** shows that participants A and C tend to use the Malay Manado language more often, while participant B (the person who visits the office) speaks the Gorontalo language.

There is a change in the language used by the office staff (C), they use the Gorontalo language to respond to the visitor. Similar characteristics of the use of the Gorontalo language are also observed in the interactions between sellers and buyers at the traditional markets.

Table 4. The Conversation between Fishmongers and Buyers at the Traditional Market

	Conversation		Ref.
A	Barapa itu, Om?	How much is that?	11.45
	Yang tiga pulima itu?	Thirty five?	11.46
B	lyo	Yes	11.47
	Boleh mo kupas itu ibu, ye	Can you peel the skin?	11.48
	Basardepe ikan, Ibu	It's a big fish.	11.49
	Potongan	Cut it	11.50
C	Om, depe tambah tadi mana?	Where is the bonus?	11.51
B	Depe tambahan situ mana ye?	What bonus?	11.52
	Ada, Bu	Oh, here it is	11.53
D	Yiii	Ih	11.56
B	Yii kiapangana?	Ih, what's wrong?	11.57
	Comburu ngana?	You want bonus too?	11.58
D	Bangganga	Nope	11.59
B	Yiiiha	Alah (ah)	11.60
D	Polelema'olinenemu	Tell that grandmother	11.61
B	Tinene yito bo tiyombumu, nunu	Grandma is a parent of your parent, dear	11.62
	Tanu ta toonu li baapumu	I don't know who your grandpa is	11.63
	Ti nene yito mantan li baapumu	That grandma is the ex of your grandpa	11.64
	Ti baapumu lonika to Amurang	Your Grandpa was married in Amurang	11.65
	Lo nika to Jakarta yilalite Ahok	Yes, if they were married in Jakarta, they will be like Ahok	11.66
	Pata'o ma le ulungo	And then they will get into prison	11.67

Table 4 shows that people at the traditional market have a high diversity of backgrounds. Sellers and buyers are not always the original people of Gorontalo. It is easy to find newcomers that mingle up with indigenous people at the traditional market. Generally, the sellers at the traditional markets, when selling their wares, use the Malay Manado language but occasionally they use the Gorontalo language.

Buyers can also be found interacting in the Gorontalo language and other languages. The use of the Gorontalo language tends to appear when buyers make transactions. The seller will respond to the buyer in the same language, as can be seen from **Table 4** above.

The situation when interlocutors use the same language can create a good communication relationship between the two sides. That is why buyers and sellers often use the Gorontalo language to facilitate the achievement of the transaction.

Generally, the Gorontalo language is used by adults when they talk to elderly people, while the younger generation, both sellers and buyers, tend to use the Malay Manado Language more often.

The interaction between a traditional transportation driver and his customers is of the same character. See **Table 5** below.

Table 5. The Conversation between a Driver and a Customer

	Conversation		Ref.
A	Sokamana poli kitape helem ini?	Where is my helmet?	11.45
B	Sopipa ti mama janda Nunu.	Gone	22.31
A	Yih tinggolopumu	Damn. (cursing)	22.32
B	Wolo?	What did you say?	22.33
A	Eh tida mobakusedukita, napa ti oma monae. Co mana uti ambe kamari! Tunggu Oma wa?	I am not joking. I have a passenger to be delivered. Please, bring my helmet back!	22.34
C	Capat sadiki sayang	Quick quick	22.35
D	Sabar Oma, memang dia ini jamo'otame	Be patient Oma, he really can't be expected.	22.36
C	Alihe'o Nune, madi patu lo dulahu	Quick please, the sun is burning.	22.37

		Conversation	Ref.
A	Iya Oma. Wey co ambe kamari uti. Ka'l nga yang jagabapancuritape helem	Okay, Oma. Hey, bring my helmet back. Your brother often stole it.	22.38
E	Ey huangangamu, tinggaharapumu wa'u mota'owa delo tiyombumu	Hey, shut up, do you think I'm a thief like your grandfather?!	22.39
C	Astagfirullah	Astagfirullah	22.40
A	Juga Oma. Usah dengar dorang Oma	Let's go oma. Don't hear them up!	22.41
B	Wey ti Oma somokase tinggal ngana ini	Looks like Oma will leave you.	22.42

When Bentor passengers use the Gorontalo language (22.37), the drivers can still understand and respond in the Malay Manado Language (22.38). In other words, the younger generation of people who are active in the environment of work can still passively interact in the Gorontalo language. Thus, the use of the Gorontalo language in a highly diverse society can also be seen in the environment of public transportation by Bentor (transportation) drivers.

Basically, store employees, office employees, sales people, and drivers mentioned in this research use the Gorontalo language in the situations of close relationships. According to the workers' opinion, the use of the Gorontalo language is considered as a "barrier" between the purpose of the conversation in the workplace and the aim of the conversation between several parties who belong to the non-working society. It creates an *image* in the society that the conversations of workers at the traditional market and the conversations of public transportation drivers tend to be vulgar. Thus, their speech is commonly considered to be characterized by bad or abusive language. Outdoor workers often use elements of insults which seem normal to them. Such kind of insult words could not be found in the speech of office workers and the store keeper.

The research suggests that the use of the Gorontalo language is limited to certain situations and conditions, which include moments: (1) during the interaction between fellow workers who understand the Gorontalo language and have close relationships with each other in the work place and (2) during the interaction between the worker and the customer or client, if the latter starts the conversation in the Gorontalo language. Outside these two conditions, workers who understand the Gorontalo language show a tendency to ignore it and choose to speak another language. For example, when a customer who interacts with a worker starts the conversation in Malay Manado or Indonesian. The reason for such language choice is because they have to build a good relationship with their customers. The workers' answers regarding the use of the Gorontalo language in the workplace also reflect their language attitudes.

3.2. Speakers' attitudes towards the Gorontalo Language

Language defense cannot be separated from the speakers' attitudes towards their original language. Generally, attitudes to a language are strongly influenced by the social structure of a particular society [Saville-Troike, 2003]. The attitude to a language is not something that is only simply formed; this is a long process. Language attitudes potentially experience various changes because they depend on interrelated causes. The existence of different languages in society is alleged to contribute to the change of speakers' attitudes towards a language. The same concerns the Gorontalo language, which competes with other languages in speakers' lives. The development of positive attitudes towards the Gorontalo language is a challenge that needs to be faced in an effort to preserve the language as a symbol of ethnic identity.

Meanwhile, the speakers who use this language at work are rarely able to determine their attitude to it. However, the in-depth research carried out through interviews and observations shows

that the attitudes shown by the speakers in the workplace can be categorized as positive and negative ones. A positive attitude is characterized by respect and loyalty to the Gorontalo language while a negative attitude is characterized by disrespect and disloyalty. Both kinds of attitudes towards the Gorontalo language can be seen in every age group. A positive attitude shown by adult workers encourages them to use the Gorontalo language in their interactions in the workplace and voluntarily provide direction to other workers who have difficulty using proper Gorontalo. They are aware of the urgency to support the Gorontalo language in society. Adult and elderly speakers claim to use the Gorontalo language in their interactions with everyone.

Some workers of different age groups demonstrate a negative attitude towards the language as it is no longer suitable for use by people in the city. The necessity to interact with society members from various social backgrounds is the reason for leaving the Gorontalo language, which seems to interrupt the assimilation of diverse society. Both attitudes are motivated by various aspects of life that each speaker has. The similarity of background is not an indicator of the similarity of people's attitude to the language.

At every job there are workers from different backgrounds. Shop keepers and office workers may have various levels of education, economic status and social background. The educational background of the workers in social service offices observed in this research includes different levels – from the general secondary school education level to the undergraduate level. As for traditional market sellers and Bentor drivers, the situation is different – they generally have from primary to junior secondary education. A high level of education does not guarantee the positive attitude to the Gorontalo language, and vice versa. The language attitudes that were shown by the workers in the shopping areas, offices, markets and transportation services indicate the complexity of the problem and the necessity to support and preserve the Gorontalo language.

The workers deal with their partners and colleagues, who are not only Gorontalo speakers but may use other languages, to establish good communication. Besides, the rules for using a language, which are applied in the workplace (the use of the standard language in customer service), also become an obstacle for workers to regularly use the Gorontalo language. Regarding this situation, several workers who were interviewed admit that before being the respondents of this study they were completely unaware of the problems of the Gorontalo language. Furthermore, the participants of the research actually got motivated to take part in the effort of further language preservation.

Several informants say they actually realize the shift in the role of the Gorontalo language in their lives; however, they choose to be ignorant. In these conditions, language preservation will require hard effort. Speakers who are ignorant of their language make it difficult for the Gorontalo language to regain its vitality and dignity. Such attitude of the speakers to the language can be observed not only in the workplace, but also in other aspects of their life. Some people believe that the Gorontalo language is not suitable for the current time, especially in urban areas. Another assumption is that Gorontalo is a language that is only used by the elder generation.

On the other hand, the Gorontalo language serves as a symbol of ethnic identity, which is seen as a separate motivation to intensify the use of the Gorontalo language at least in the family environment. Some employees admit that their children have no difficulty understanding the Gorontalo language even though they only have the ability to understand the meaning and are not fluent in using the Gorontalo language. A positive attitude towards the Gorontalo language can be built through teaching it to the younger generation. This is related to the research results of Nuryani [Nuryani, 2019] on the use of the language in family relationships and its impact on a person's language attitudes.

In the end, the attitudes towards the Gorontalo language of the people who actively use it in the workplace as was observed in this study are divided into two categories and include positive and negative ones. Both categories depend on the background of the employees and their treatment of the Gorontalo language as the local pride that should be preserved. To obtain more accurate data regarding the quantity and quality of the attitudes to the Gorontalo language, further quantitative research should be carried out.

3.3. The factors that affect the maintenance of the Gorontalo language in the workplace

Social development and changes that occur in society have an indirect impact on language preservation. Social changes observed in this study concern changes in people's behavior or attitudes towards the Gorontalo language. In multi-ethnic Gorontalo, people use several languages. Apart from the Gorontalo language as the local language, other languages can also be used, namely the Malay-Manado language and the Indonesian Language that are getting increasingly widespread in various spheres of life. The use of languages other than the Gorontalo language by society members can easily be explained: it is due to the aim of facilitating communication with other ethnic groups from outside Gorontalo. The purpose of the communication act can be achieved, however, it will gradually decrease the use of the Gorontalo language and put it into a position of being replaced by other languages.

A different reality was put forward by Aliakbari & Khosravian [Aliakbari & Khosravian, 2014] in their research on the phenomenon of language choice. The widespread use of Persian as the state language in multi-ethnic Iran does not completely obstruct the maintenance of mother tongues of various local ethnicities. For example, the Turkic ethnic society in Iran still maintains the use of the Turkish language in the communication among group members, especially in informal situations [Nouri, 2015].

In other words, the pressure from other languages on the mother tongue can be overcome by the determination of the speakers to maintain the language. If Gorontalo language speakers can overcome external factors that affect the existence of their language, then the survival of the Gorontalo language can definitely be provided. Society leaders who clarify this matter admit that the reason for choosing another language as a means of communication is to show respect to the guests or newcomers who do not understand the Gorontalo language. In fact, in different situations of communication with fellow Gorontalo speakers, other languages may still be used.

Apart from social changes, another external factor that influences language preservation is the influx of global information flows. Through various media, representatives of all levels of society can have an easier access to the information from outside of the world. Such access to information is available not only in the downtown. Nowadays, thanks to the latest technological advances, people in the outskirts of towns can also easily access global information.

The exposure to information in various languages is another factor that affects the use of the language in Gorontalo. This concerns the use of the language by the adult group of Gorontalo speakers, especially by those belonging to the younger generation. Younger generation speakers are a group that is prone to experience language changes which they encounter through the media both through interaction with their social environment and through the use of languages that are used in the mass media. Meanwhile, adult speakers admit that they are trying to adapt their language to the language used by the modern younger generation. As Yuliati points out in her research, young speakers inherit the language of adult speakers within the family and through other environments [Yulianti, 2013]. Judging by the answers of the respondents, it is

the response of the society to external factors that indirectly impacts the conditions of language retention.

Gorontalo language speakers who go to work admit that their lack of knowledge about the necessity to protect this language is also due to their low awareness of the state of the Gorontalo language. This is an important reason for implementing Gorontalo language defense socialization which should penetrate various layers of society. Nowadays, the socialization process is carried out by the Gorontalo language Office. As for the wider society, they have not experienced the effects of the Gorontalo language preservation. However, the local government has begun to intensify the use of the Gorontalo language in different public spaces that are accessible to various groups. Regarding this matter, the participants of this study claim to realize that they now have a desire to use the Gorontalo language more wisely.

Most of the young informants see this wise use of the Gorontalo language by adults as a sufficient example that the younger generation should follow. However, in the workplace interaction, there are many adult speakers who use the Gorontalo language only in certain situations, such as during the interaction with adult partners and when adult workers make jokes with fellow workers.

The problem that arises is that when workers make fun of each other the Gorontalo language they use tends to contain swear words. As Halim Dukei told us in his private interview on the 20th of August, 2018, an abusive joke is a common matter in the conversations between workers (in this case, the Bentor drivers and the traditional market sellers) without any age limit. In order to be preserved the Gorontalo language needs to enjoy a positive attitude from its users.

4. CONCLUSION

Gorontalo is the mother tongue of the Gorontalo people. Nowadays, Gorontalo speakers are mainly adults and elderly people. Based on the explanation above, there are several conclusions.

First, the Gorontalo language is used in various workplaces in the interaction between employees who fluently speak the Gorontalo language and have close relationships with each other and between workers and customers who make conversations in the Gorontalo language. On the other hand, employees with Gorontalo language skills indicate a tendency to ignore this language and choose to use another language. They argue that in this way it is possible to facilitate the interaction in work environments that involve language speakers who have difficulty understanding the Gorontalo language.

Second, the attitudes of Gorontalo language speakers who actively use the language in the workplace can be divided into positive and negative ones. A positive attitude is revealed in the appreciation of the Gorontalo language expressed in its proper use or personal motivation to maintain the language. A negative attitude is shown by disrespecting the position of the Gorontalo language and the tendency to ignore the use of proper Gorontalo.

Third, the factors that influence the preservation of the Gorontalo language can be classified into (a) factors from the outside of the society, which include a change in the composition of a multi-ethnic society and exposure to global information; and (b) factors from within the society, which include a lack of community awareness caused by low understanding of the urgency to maintain the Gorontalo language for the sake of the Gorontalo people.

This research is also aimed to promote further studies of other minority languages that face extinction.

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