

Analysis of Sula Language Shift in the Sula Community of Sula Village, Buru Regency: Sociolinguistics

Wulan Sapsuha

Faculty of Letters, Universitas Iqra Buru, Indonesia

E-mail: wulansapsuha03@gmail.com

Riki Bugis

Faculty of Letters, Universitas Iqra Buru, Indonesia

E-mail: rizkyc87@gmail.com

Iin Sulastri Ode Ami

Faculty of Letters, Universitas Iqra Buru, Indonesia

E-mail: iinodeami@gmail.com

Susiati

Faculty of Letters, Universitas Iqra Buru, Indonesia

E-mail: susiatiuniqbu@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

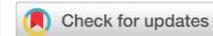
This study aims to analyze the factors causing the shift of Sula language and its impact on the preservation of culture and community identity in Lala Village, Buru Regency. The type of research is descriptive qualitative with sociolinguistic approach. The methods in this research are observation method with field observation techniques, in-depth interviews with informants from various age groups, and linguistic documentation. The results show that the shift of Sula language is influenced by various factors, including the lack of intergenerational language inheritance, the dominance of Indonesian and Ambon Malay in the public and domestic spheres, and the increasing practice of interethnic mixed marriages. The use of Sula is currently limited to the elderly. This shift has an impact on the fading of the Sula people's linguistic identity, the loss of local cultural terms, and the weakening of the younger generation's attachment to their ancestral heritage. Based on these findings, language revitalization efforts are needed through the use of Sula language in the family, as well as policy support from the local Sula community so that the Sula language can be revitalized.

Keywords: Language shift, Sula language, sociolinguistics

ARTICLE HISTORY

Published

January 31th 2026



ARTICLE LICENCE

© 2025 Semiotika
Urban dan Budaya
(Urban and Cultural
Semiotics)

Under the license CC
BY-SA 4.0



1. Introduction

Language plays a fundamental role in human interaction as a medium for expressing ideas, emotions, and social identity. Devianty (2017) defines language as a system of sound symbols produced by human speech organs and used by members of society to communicate. Beyond its communicative function, language reflects cultural values, collective identity, and a community's worldview (Weda et al., 2021; Aswad et al., 2019; Jung et al., 2025). Each linguistic community possesses distinctive linguistic features shaped by its cultural and environmental context, making language an essential marker of social identity and cultural continuity.

In multilingual societies, however, languages are not static. Social, economic, and technological changes often lead to shifts in language use. One prominent sociolinguistic phenomenon arising from these changes is language shift, which occurs when a speech community gradually abandons its native language in favor of a more dominant one. According to Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977), language shift is closely related to changes in the social functions of a language, influenced by factors such as education, economic opportunities, and political power. Similarly, the theory of ethnolinguistic vitality proposed by Laycock (1973) emphasizes that a language's survival depends on its status, demographic strength, and institutional support.

Language shift has implications that extend beyond communication patterns. It poses a serious threat to cultural preservation and ethnic identity, particularly among younger generations who tend to adopt dominant languages perceived as more practical and economically valuable (Mulatsih, 2014). As native languages lose their functional domains, intergenerational transmission weakens, leading to a gradual decline in the number of speakers and the erosion of cultural knowledge embedded in the language (Sukmawaty et al., 2022; Rahman & Amir, 2019; Sosrohadi, 2025).

This phenomenon is evident in the Sula-speaking community of Lala Village, Buru Regency. In this context, the Sula language faces increasing pressure from Indonesian, the national language used in education, administration, and formal communication, as well as Ambonese Malay, which functions as a regional lingua franca in Maluku. The dominance of Indonesian as a symbol of modernity and social mobility has significantly reduced the use of Sula as a mother tongue, especially among younger speakers.

Fishman's (1991) domain analysis theory explains that language use across domains such as family, education, and workplace determines whether a language is maintained or shifted. In Lala Village, which is characterized by a multi-ethnic population and frequent interethnic interactions, the use of Sula has become increasingly restricted to informal settings and older speakers. Urbanization further accelerates this shift, as younger community members migrate to urban areas for education and employment, where Indonesian dominates daily communication. Media exposure and technological development also contribute to the marginalization of Sula within the village.

The impact of this language shift is increasingly visible among the younger generation, who predominantly use Indonesian even within family settings. As a result, intergenerational transmission of the Sula language is weakening, and the language faces the risk of gradual extinction due to limited documentation and minimal inclusion in formal education. Without deliberate revitalization efforts, such as integrating Sula into local school curricula and revitalizing cultural practices expressed through the language, the survival of Sula is seriously threatened.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the factors causing language shift in the Sula community of Lala Village and to examine its impact on cultural preservation and community identity. By understanding these dynamics, this research seeks to contribute to sociolinguistic studies and provide insights into sustainable language revitalization strategies in multilingual communities.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Previous Studies on Language Shift

Language shift has been widely discussed in sociolinguistic research, particularly in relation to cultural identity and intergenerational communication. Previous studies consistently show that education, migration, and the dominance of national languages play a significant role in accelerating language shift in multilingual communities. Language shift has been widely discussed in sociolinguistic research, particularly in relation to cultural identity and intergenerational communication. Previous studies consistently show that education, migration, and the dominance of national languages play a significant role in accelerating language shift in multilingual communities. As a result, minority and local languages are increasingly marginalized in everyday communication. This shift may eventually lead to language endangerment if no preservation efforts are undertaken.

Madeamin (2015) examined language shift within the Bugis ethnic community in South Sulawesi and found that formal education and migration were major factors leading younger generations to prefer Indonesian over their mother tongue. Similarly, Bhakti (2020) reported a shift from Javanese to Indonesian in family communication in Sleman, highlighting the strong influence of national language dominance and mass media on the decline of regional languages. These findings emphasize the crucial role of family domains in maintaining local languages.

Research by Mulatsih (2014) on Sundanese in urban areas of West Java revealed that reduced use of regional languages in cultural and traditional activities contributes significantly to language shift. Likewise, Marnita (2011) found that modernization and negative social stigma toward regional languages accelerated the decline of Madurese among urban youth. In the tourism context, Mustika (2018) demonstrated that the dominance of Indonesian and English reduced the use of Balinese in public domains, suggesting the need for balanced bilingual education.

Although extensive research has examined language shift among major ethnic groups such as Bugis, Javanese, Sundanese, and Minangkabau, studies focusing on remote island communities remain limited. This study addresses that gap by examining the Sula language shift in Lala Village, Buru Regency, highlighting local sociocultural dynamics, interethnic interaction, and the role of family and education in a peripheral context.

2.2 Theoretical Framework of Language Shift

Language shift is defined as a sociolinguistic process in which a speech community gradually replaces its native language with a more dominant language across various domains of life (Fishman, 1991). This phenomenon is closely associated with modernization, urbanization, and globalization, which privilege languages with higher economic and social value.

Fishman's (1991) Domain Theory explains that language shift occurs when a language loses its function in key domains such as family, education, and work. When a dominant language replaces a local language in these domains, the local language becomes vulnerable to decline. This theory is particularly relevant to the Sula language, whose use has been increasingly restricted to informal settings and older speakers. The Communication Accommodation Theory proposed by Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977) suggests that individuals adjust their language choices to align with dominant social groups to gain acceptance or economic advantage. In multilingual settings, this often leads speakers of minority languages to adopt majority languages such as Indonesian.

The Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory further explains that language survival depends on status, demographic strength, and institutional support (Giles et al., 1977). Languages with low prestige, limited speakers, and weak policy support are more likely to experience shift. In addition, globalization theory (Piller, 2020) highlights how national and global languages marginalize local languages through education, media, and technology. Fishman (2018) also emphasizes the importance of intergenerational transmission, arguing that when parents no longer pass their mother tongue to children, language shift accelerates rapidly toward endangerment.

2.3 Factors and Impacts of Language Shift

Previous studies identify both internal and external factors contributing to language shift. Internal factors include negative attitudes toward regional languages, weak intergenerational transmission, and changing cultural values that prioritize economic mobility (Bramono, 2012; Herlina, 2018). External factors include the dominance of national languages in education and administration, globalization, digital media exposure, urbanization, and lack of institutional support (Anhar, 2024; Julianti, 2023).

The impacts of language shift are primarily cultural and social. The decline of a local language leads to the loss of oral traditions, cultural knowledge, and ethnic identity,

while also weakening intergenerational communication (Fishman, 2018). However, language shift may also provide positive outcomes, such as increased access to education and economic opportunities through mastery of dominant languages (Piller, 2020; Prihandoko et al., 2019; Adinda et al., 2025).

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Based on these perspectives, this study views language shift in the Sula community as the result of interactions between sociocultural factors, language policy, and intergenerational dynamics. The dominance of Indonesian and Ambonese Malay, combined with weak institutional support and changing social values, has reduced the functional domains of the Sula language. This framework guides the analysis of factors and impacts of language shift while highlighting the importance of community-based and educational revitalization efforts.

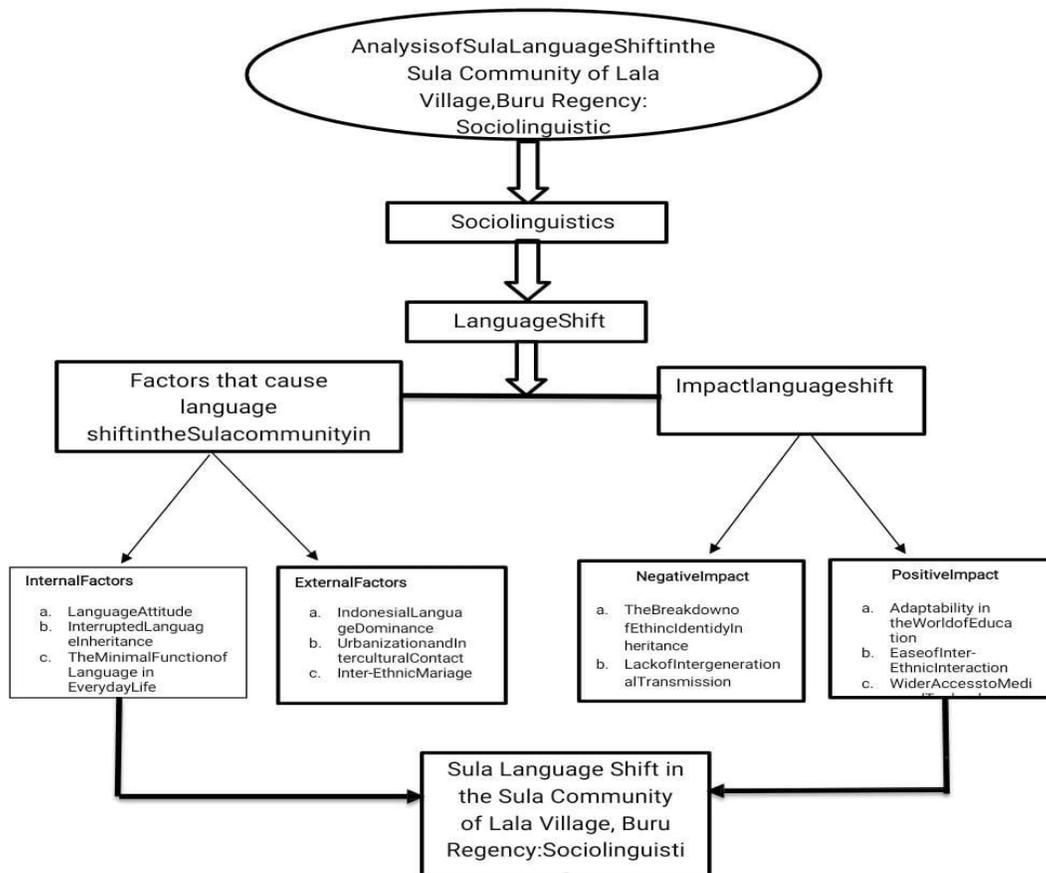


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

A sociolinguistic analysis of language shift in the Sula community of Lala Village, showing how social factors influence changes in language use. It identifies internal factors like language attitudes and daily usage, and external factors such as Indonesian dominance, urbanization, and intercultural contact as causes of the shift. The impacts

include negative effects like loss of identity and intergenerational transmission, as well as positive effects such as better education access and wider social interaction.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the phenomenon of Sula language shift within its social and cultural context in Lala Village, Buru Regency. A qualitative approach was chosen to capture community perceptions, language use patterns, and sociocultural factors influencing language shift across different domains of life. This design enables an in-depth understanding of both internal factors (language attitudes and intergenerational transmission) and external factors (modernization, education, and social interaction).

3.2 Research Location and Time

The research was conducted in Lala Village, Buru Regency, an area experiencing a noticeable decline in the use of the Sula language. Data collection took place over three months. Participants were selected purposively and included three generational groups: 1) older generation (≥ 50 years), 2) adult generation (30–45 years), and, 3) younger generation (17–25 years). Key informants consisted of community leaders, educators, and families who still use Sula in daily communication.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

The research data were collected using several techniques. First, in-depth interviews were conducted to explore language use, language attitudes, and factors contributing to language shift. Second, participant observation was employed to directly observe language practices in family and community interactions. Third, documentation in the form of field notes and audio-visual recordings was used to support the validity of the research data.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This process involved data reduction to select and focus on relevant information related to the research objectives. The data were then categorized based on emerging themes, including the causes, processes, and impacts of language shift. Finally, interpretation was carried out to identify patterns and draw conclusions that are aligned with the aims of the study.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Factors Causing the Sula Language Shift in the Sula Community in Lala Village, Buru Regency

4.1.1 Internal Factors

It is the cause of language shift that comes from within the community itself. The following Sula language shift in Lala Village includes three factors:

a. Language Attitude

The language attitude of the Sula community in Lala Village is one of the main internal factors in language shift. Many community members, especially the young generation, have negative attitudes towards the Sula language, considering it less prestigious, old-fashioned, or useless in modern life.

Data 1

"Beta bisa sadiki bahasa Sula, tapi su jarang pake. Tamang- tamang jua jarang bicara bahasa Sula. Rasa seng gaul. Bahasa Indonesia kan umum, apalai katong mau kuliah atau karja di luar kota."

("I can speak a little Sula, but I rarely use it. My friends also rarely speak Sula. It doesn't feel modern. Indonesian is more common, especially if we want to study or work outside the region.")

From the statement by IS 20 years, it is seen that the use of Sula language is no longer part of the identity of pride for the young generation. Indonesian is considered more "cool", modern, and has a higher functional value, especially in the context of education and work. This reflects a change in the orientation of language values from a symbol of local culture to a pragmatic communication tool oriented towards social and economic mobility. Furthermore, this negative attitude accelerates language shift because languages that are not valued by their speakers tend to be abandoned and not actively inherited. When a language is no longer used in everyday interactions, the process of intergenerational inheritance is hampered, which ultimately threatens the sustainability of the language itself.

b. Interrupted Inheritance of Language

Language inheritance is a key process in maintaining the sustainability of regional languages. However, when this process is hampered or does not occur naturally, then the regional language will decline, even be threatened with extinction. In Lala Village, this phenomenon is evident in the interaction between the old and young generations, especially in the family realm.

Data 2

"Beta jua seng tau bahasa daerah, sampe ana-ana dirumah jua beta suru pakai Melayu Ambon sa."

("I also don't know the regional language anymore, so I also tell the children at home to just use Ambonese Malay.")

According to the statement above by ET 35 years old, it clearly proves that he no longer masters the regional language of Sula, which causes him to be unable to pass it on to his children. This shows that the chain of intergenerational inheritance has been broken, not only because of the lack of interest from the young generation, but also because of the loss of language competence in the old generation. The discontinuity of the Sula language inheritance in Lala Village is influenced by the decline in Sula language skills in the parent generation, and the deliberate awareness to use Ambonese Malay at home. This accelerates language shift and eliminates the possibility of children knowing or mastering their heritage language.

c. Lack of Language Function in Daily Life

Sula language is no longer actively used in various social, educational, economic, or work activities. The community, especially, prefers to use Indonesian because it is considered more practical, formal, and relevant in various contexts.

Data 3

“Di beta tanpa karja, samua orang pake Malayu Ambon. Kadang kalo bakudapa orang tua kampung, baru beta pake Bahasa Sula sadiki. Tapi su jarang sakali.”

(“At my workplace, everyone speaks Ambonese Malay. Sometimes when I meet old people from the village, I use a little Sula. But that is very rare.”)

The statement above by JU 25 years old, it shows that the function of Sula language is increasingly limited, especially in the work environment dominated by the use of Indonesian and Ambonese Malay. Sula language is only used occasionally, and even then it is limited to informal interactions with parents in the village. The minimal use in social and professional contexts reinforces the impression that Sula language is no longer relevant in modern life. As a result, the frequency of use has decreased drastically, and this has accelerated the process of language shift in society.

4.1.2 External Factors

It is the influence from outside the community that has caused the use of the Sula language to decrease. The following is the shift in the Sula language in Lala Village which includes three factors:

a. Dominance of Indonesia Language

It is one of the factors in the shift of the Sula language in Lala Village. Indonesian is widely used in education, government, media, and inter-ethnic communication, making it a more practical and preferred language.

Data 4

“Sosial media su basar pengaruhnya. Sakarang ana-ana labe banyak balajar dari internet deng youtube. Samua video pake bahasa Indonesia deng bahasa Inggris. Jadi dong samua labe dekat deng itu

daripada bahasa Sula."

("The media has a huge influence. Now children learn more from the internet and YouTube. All the content is in Indonesian or even English. So they are more familiar with it than Sula.")

The statement above resource person shows the strong influence of digital media in shaping the language habits of the young generation in Lala Village. Children access more information and entertainment from the internet and YouTube, where almost all of the content uses Indonesian or English. This makes Indonesian more dominant in their daily lives, both in understanding, conversation, and way of thinking. Meanwhile, the Sula language is becoming increasingly foreign, because it is not present in the digital spaces that they often consume.

b. Urbanization Intercultural Contact

Being one of the external factors that drives the shift of the Sula language. Many residents of Lala Village, especially the young generation, migrate to the city to study, work, or get married, so they interact more with speakers from various ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.

Data 5

"Sakarang ini su biasa orang nikah baku campur. Kalo laki deng bini bukung orang Sula, tetap di rumah pake Malayu Ambon supaya samua bisa baku carita."

("Nowadays, it is common for people to have mixed marriages. If the husband or wife is not from Sula, they automatically use Ambonese Malay at home so that everyone can communicate.")

According to the statement above by JT 29 years old, mixed marriages are a common phenomenon in Lala Village, where the husband or wife is not from the Sula tribe. This condition causes the use of language in the family environment to change, with Indonesian becoming the main choice to facilitate communication between couples and family members from different ethnic backgrounds. This mixed marriage contributes to the reduced use of the Sula language in the domestic sphere, which is the main space for language inheritance to the young generation. Because Ambonese Malay is more practical and inclusive in the context of a heterogeneous family, the Sula language is slowly experiencing a decline in function and use.

c. Inter-Ethnic Marriage

Inter-ethnic marriage in Lala Village is one of the significant external factors in the process of Sula language shift. Through interview data with several informants, it was found that in families consisting of couples of different ethnicities, Indonesian is used as the main liaison language in the household.

Data 6

"Banya kaweng muda sakarang kaweng deng orang dari luar daerah, karna beda bahasa, dong lebih suka pake Melayu Ambon, apalai bicara deng ana-ana."

(“Many young couples now marry people from outside the region. Because of the different languages, they are more comfortable using Ambonese Malay, especially when talking to their children.”)

The statement above made by the resource person ND 25 years old, is in accordance with the statement that inter-ethnic marriages (inter- regional) in Lala Village also encourage the shift of the Sula language. Due to the differences in language background between husband and wife, Ambonese Malay is chosen as the main language of communication in the family so that it is easier to understand by all members, especially children. As a result, the Sula language is rarely used and is not actively inherited, thus accelerating the process of language shift between generations.

4.2 The Impact of the Causes of the Sula Language Shift on the Sula Community in Lala Village, Buru Regency

4.2.1 Negative Impact

The Sula language in Lala Village has a negative impact on the continuity of culture and ethnic identity of the community. When the community no longer masters the Sula language, the cultural values, oral traditions, and local wisdom contained in the language are also threatened with extinction. The following is the shift in the Sula language in Lala Village covering three impacts:

a. The Disruption of Ethnic Identity Inheritance

The breakdown in the inheritance of ethnic identity occurred when the Sula language was no longer taught and used in families and social environments.

Data 7

“Beta ana-ana seng bisa Bahasa Sula. Beta jua jarang pake, karna dong seng mangrti. Lama-lama bahasa ni akang ilang, apalai kalo seng ada yang teruskan.”

(“My children don’t speak Sula. I also rarely use it, because they don’t understand it. In time, this language could disappear, especially if no one continues it.”)

The results of the interview data above by NS, 46 years old, identified the break in the transmission of Sula language between generations. NS realized that his children did not understand Sula language, so he himself rarely used it in everyday conversation. This situation shows that the lack of language use in the family environment is a major factor in language shift.

b. Lack of Intergenerational Transmission

Referring to the condition when the process of language inheritance from the old generation to the young generation does not take place optimally. In Lala Village, this is one of the impacts of the Sula language shift.

Data 8

“Beta biasa campur bahasa Sula dan Melayu Ambon. Tapi ana- ana

cuma jawab pake Melayu Ambon. Jadi lama-lama beta iko.”

(“I used to mix Sula and Indonesian. But the kids only answered using Indonesian. So after a while I started to follow suit.”)

According to RS 33 years old. To the data above, there is a language shift marked by minimal intergenerational transmission in the family. Although parents still try to maintain the Sula language by mixing it in everyday conversations, children only respond using Indonesian. This shows that children are not used to or do not have sufficient understanding of the Sula language, so they are more comfortable communicating with Indonesian which they consider more practical and commonly used, both at school and in social environments.

c. Loss of Group Solidarity

The loss of group solidarity is one of the significant impacts of the Sula language shift in Lala Village. Language, in addition to being a means of communication, also functions as a symbol of identity and social glue in a community.

Data 9

“Su paleng jarang. Biasa tu yang tua-tua yang pake Bahasa Sula. Ana muda su seng bisa, karna pengaru Melayu Ambon dari kacil.”

(“It’s very rare. Usually only the old ones use Sula. Young people can’t anymore, because of the influence of Ambonese Malay since childhood.”)

The results of the interview data above by RU 40 years, show that in accordance with the real conditions of the language shift that occurred in Lala Village, this data shows that the use of the Sula language has decreased drastically, especially among the young generation. The Sula language is now only used by the old generation, while the young generation tends not to master it because since childhood they have been exposed to and accustomed to using Indonesian.

4.2.2 Positive Impact

The positive impacts of the Sula language shift in Lala Village include ease of communication with the wider community through the use of Indonesian, which is the national language and more commonly used. This shift also opens up greater opportunities for the young generation to access education, jobs, and information from outside the region, thus increasing their ability to adapt in the modern world.

a. Adaptability in the World of Education

One of the positive impacts of the shift from Sula to Indonesian is the increasing ability of the young generation to adapt in the world of formal education.

Data 10

“Dari kacil diajak carita pake Melayu Ambon, beta labe capat mangarti pelajaran. Kalo masi pake bahasa Sula tarus, mungkin susah jua nanti di sekolah.”

(“Since I was little, I was spoken to in Ambonese Malay , so I understood the lessons faster. If I still use Sula language, it might be difficult later in school.”)

The results of the interview data above by KF 17 years old, show that the use of Indonesian since early age in family communication makes it easier for children to understand lessons at school. KF realizes that if communication continues to use Sula language, children may have difficulty in following formal learning that uses Indonesian as the language of instruction. This indicates that Indonesian is considered more relevant and supports the success of children's education in Lala Village.

b. Ease of Inter-Ethnic Interaction

The shift from Sula to Indonesian has a positive impact in terms of strengthening cross-ethnic social interaction in the Lala Village community. Indonesian, as the national language and lingua franca, is widely used by residents from different ethnic backgrounds such as in mixed families, such as between Sula, Buton, Javanese, Ambonese people.

Data 11

“Di kampong ini orang tacampor, ada yang dari Buton, Jawa, Ambon jua. Kalo beta pake Bahasa Sula, balom tentu dong mangarti. Jadi pake bahasa Melayu Ambon itu paleng aman dan samua bisa mangarti.”

(“In this village, the people are mixed, there are some from Buton, Java, and Ambon too. If I use Sula language, they may not understand. So using Ambonese Malay is the safest and everyone can understand.”)

The informant's statement, “In this village, the people are mixed there are some from Buton, Java, and Ambon too. If I use the Sula language, they might not understand. So using Ambonese Malay is the safest, and everyone can understand,” reflects the social reality of the multiethnic community in Desa Lala. The diversity of ethnic backgrounds necessitates effective communication among the villagers. In such a social setting, the use of a local language that is understood only by a limited group becomes inefficient. As a result, the community tends to choose a language that is considered neutral and widely accepted by all groups in this case, Ambonese Malay.

c. Wider Access to Media Technology

It has a positive impact because it opens up greater learning opportunities for the community, especially the young generation. With the dominant use of Indonesian in the media, children become more fluent in the language, making it easier to understand information, lessons at school, and communicate in a broader context.

Data 12

“Beta sering lia tutorial di youtube par tugas sekolah. Kalo seng bisa Bahasa Indonesia, beta pasti seng bisa mangarti. Tamang- tamang jua bagitu.”

“I often watch tutorials on YouTube for schoolwork. If I don't speak Indonesian, I will have a hard time understanding. My friends do the same.”)

Based on the above statement by FU 18 years old, this shows that Indonesian language skills have an important role in supporting access to digital learning resources, such as YouTube. This indicates a close relationship between mastery of the national language and success in the formal education process, especially in the digital era. Mastery of Indonesian makes it easier for children to access digital media such as YouTube for learning purposes. Because most of the content uses Indonesian, they find it easier to understand the material. This shows that Indonesian provides an advantage in keeping up with technological developments.

4.3 Discussion

4.3.1 Factors Causing Language Shift in the Sula Community in Lala Village, Buru Regency

Based on the results of direct observations and interviews in the field, it was found that the shift in the Sula language in Lala Village was influenced by various interrelated internal and external factors. The community in general began to replace the use of Sula with Indonesian in various aspects of daily life. This is especially true for the young generation, who are no longer fluent, and even tend to be passive towards their ancestral language. The use of Sula is currently limited to conversations between parents or the elderly, while in the context of households, education, and other social communications, Indonesian is the main choice. This language shift is in accordance with Fishman's (1991) statement, which states that a language will experience a decline in function if it is not used consistently in important domains such as family and education.

The results of the study found that the majority of parents in Lala Village no longer teach Sula to their children. They choose to use Indonesian because it is considered more practical and supports the success of children's education. Children grow up without having active, even passive, skills in speaking Sula. This is in line with Fishman (2018), who emphasized that language shift occurs when the inheritance of language from one generation to the next is interrupted. Without consistent language interaction within the family, the language will not survive.

Previous research results by Fishman (2018) emphasized the importance of language transfer from generation to generation as the key to the survival of a language. When this inheritance process stops, language shift is inevitable. This is in line with the results of research conducted by researchers that most parents in Lala Village no longer use Sula when communicating with their children. Indonesian is considered more useful in practice, especially in the world of education and inter-ethnic communication.

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it was found that mixed ethnic marriages also accelerate language shift. In this type of family, Indonesian is used

as the main language of instruction because it is considered neutral and acceptable to all family members. This condition is in line with Thomason (2020), in a situation of unequal contact between two languages, a language that has a higher social and economic value will replace a language with a lower status. From the results of interviews conducted by researchers, several informants stated that they found it easier to understand information from digital media such as YouTube or Facebook because the content uses Indonesian. This shows a positive impact of language shift in terms of access to information and technology. In line with Piller's statement (2020), mastery of the national language allows individuals to be more involved in the modern world. However, this also causes a decrease in the use of Sula among adolescents.

4.3.2 The Impact of Language Shift on the Preservation of Culture and Identity of the Sula Community in Lala Village

Based on the results of field research conducted in Lala Village, Buru Regency, various positive and negative impacts were found that were interrelated, the shift in the use of the Sula language had a direct impact on the erosion of the cultural identity of the local community. From the results of the observation, it was found that the Sula language was only used in limited scopes such as conversations between parents. The young generation tends to no longer use it, and many do not understand the Sula language. They are more fluent in Indonesian because the educational and family environment is more supportive of the use of the language. As a result, cultural values that can only be transmitted in their entirety through the Sula language are starting to disappear and are not known to the next generation. This is in line with Fishman's theory (2018) which states that language is the main symbol of a community's cultural identity.

When a language becomes extinct or abandoned, the unique perspectives, values, and cultural heritage of the community will also disappear. This is also reinforced by Bramono (2012), who explains that language extinction is often accompanied by the loss of traditional knowledge such as customary terms, local medicine, kinship systems, and distinctive outlooks on life, which cannot be translated completely into other languages. Taylor (1977), states that if a language has low vitality in this case the number of active speakers continues to decline, there is no institutional support, and it is not used in the main domain, then the speaker community tends to experience an identity crisis. This is in accordance with the results of research in Lala Village, where children and adolescents no longer feel attached to the identity of "Sula people" because they do not master their ancestral language.

Based on the results of interviews with a number of informants, such as teachers, students, and parents, it is known that the ability of the young generation to speak Indonesian has provided significant advantages in following the formal education process. Children find it easier to understand lesson materials, communicate with teachers, and take exams because the language of instruction used in schools is Indonesian. This is in accordance with Fishman (2018), who stated that when the national language becomes the main tool for education and social mobility, the young

generation tends to prioritize the language for their academic and professional success. Based on the results of the study, the shift from Sula to Indonesian in Lala Village has several positive impacts, especially in terms of education, cross-ethnic communication, and access to information.

The young generation is now more fluent in Indonesian, which supports the smooth learning process in schools, opens up wider job opportunities, and facilitates social interaction outside the local community. Indonesian has become the main communication tool in the family, education, government, and media environments, replacing the function of Sula which is now limited to traditional contexts and elderly groups. Piller (2020) also supports this finding, that in the era of globalization, national and international languages have a primary place in the education system, media, and technology, so that local languages are considered less relevant. As a result, people prefer the dominant language for social mobility and global access.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that: The shift of the Sula language in Lala Village occurred due to several main factors. First, the lack of intergenerational transmission, where parents prefer to use Ambonese Malay in everyday communication rather than teaching Sula to their children. Second, the narrowing of the function of the Sula language which is now only used in traditional ceremonies and conversations between the old generation, has caused a decline in its use in other domains of life such as home, school, and workplace. Third, the view that Indonesian is more practically useful in education, work, and social interaction has also accelerated this shift process.

This is very significant for the preservation of the culture and identity of the Sula people. The loss of the use of the Sula language has resulted in the severance of the inheritance of local cultural values, such as manners, traditional expressions, and the Sula outlook on life. Group solidarity is weakened because language is no longer a tool to unite the community. However, on the other hand, this shift also has positive impacts such as increasing the ability of the young generation to speak Indonesian, which makes it easier to access education, work, and inter-ethnic interaction.

References

1. Adinda, R., Sosrohadi, S., Syafitri, B. A., & Andini, C. (2025). Cognitive And Cultural Barriers In Synonym Acquisition: A Psycholinguistic Study Of Indonesian Learners Of Korean. *TPM–Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology*, 32(4), 881-888.
2. Anhar. (2024). Dampak media sosial terhadap perubahan struktur dan kosakata bahasa Indonesia di kalangan generasi muda. *Jurnal Intelektual Indo-MathEdu*, 5(6).

3. Aswad, M., Rahman, F., Said, I. M., Hamuddin, B., & Nurchalis, N. F. (2019). A software to increase English learning outcomes: An acceleration model of English as the second language. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 26(6.2), 157.
4. Bhakti, P., & Wirayudha. (2020). Pergeseran penggunaan bahasa Jawa ke bahasa Indonesia dalam komunikasi keluarga di Sleman. *Jurnal Skripta*, 6(2).
5. Devianty, R. (2017). Bahasa sebagai cermin kehidupan. *Jurnal Tarbiyah*, 24(2).
6. Fishman, J. A. (1991). *Reversing language shift: Theory and practice of assistance to threatened languages*. Multilingual Matters.
7. Fishman, J. A. (2018). *Language shift and cultural reproduction*. In *Language and ethnicity in minority sociolinguistic perspective* (pp. 41–56). Routledge.
8. Giles, H., Bourhis, R. Y., & Taylor, D. M. (1977). *Towards a theory of language in ethnic group relations*.
9. Herlina, E. (2018). Situasi bahasa di daerah Pangandaran (studi tentang pergeseran dan pemertahanan bahasa). *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*, 3(1), Universitas Wiralodra.
10. Julianti, D. (2023). Analisis pengaruh bahasa daerah terhadap penggunaan bahasa Indonesia. *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Sosial*, 3(2).
11. Jung, S., Ko, Y., Kyeongjae, P., Sosrohadi, S., & Rahman, F. F. (2025). Bridging Cultural Gaps: Addressing Translation Issues in Korean Language Expression for Indonesian Learners. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Applied Science*, 10(3), 1-8.
12. Madeamin, R. (2015). *Pergeseran Bahasa Bugis di Sulawesi Selatan*. Universitas Islam Makassar.
13. Marnita, R. (2011). *Pergeseran bahasa dan identitas sosial masyarakat Minangkabau perkotaan: Studi kasus di Kota Padang*. Universitas Andalas Padang.
14. Mulatsih, D. (2014). Pergeseran dan pemertahanan bahasa di wilayah Pangandaran. Lembaga Penelitian Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati Cirebon.
15. Piller, I. (2020). *Linguistic diversity and social justice: An introduction to applied sociolinguistics*. Oxford University Press.
16. Rahman, F., & Amir, P. (2019). Trends in Reading Literary Fiction in Print and Cyber Media by Undergraduate Students of Hasanuddin University. *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(2), 66-77.
17. Sosrohadi, S. (2025). Counter-Myth Representation In The Multimodality Of TV Advertisement: Wardah Halal From The Beginning. *Dialectica Online Publishing Journal*, 1(1), 1-19.
18. Sukmawaty, S., Andini, C., & Rahman, F. F. (2022). The Shift of Honorifics due to The Promotion As A Government Official: Comparative Study. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 5(1), 166-176.
19. Weda, S., Atmowardoyo, H., Rahman, F., & Sakti, A. E. F. (2021). Linguistic aspects in intercultural communication (IC) practices at a higher education institution in Indonesia. *Eroupean Language Scientific Journal*, 14(2), 76-91.