

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Indonesia has a lot of ethnics groups, for instance Sundanese, Javanese, Sumbanese, and Dayaknese. Within these ethnics, there are those whose ancestors were from China. Thus, there are Chinese Sundanese, Chinese Javanese, Chinese Sumbanese, and Chinese Dayaknese. Based on the 2010 population census, there are 2,832,510 Chinese Indonesian people or 1.20% total of Indonesian citizens whose ancestry were from China (see appendix 1). Out of 2,832,510 Chinese Indonesian, 409,338 people reside in Kalimantan (Na'im & Syaputra, 2011).

Indonesia's national language is Indonesian, but people speak local languages. Those whose ancestors or immediate family members, i.e. the father, mother, aunt, uncle, and grandparents, have a Chinese ancestry or heritage, the languages used among family members are Indonesian and the local language of Kalimantan and Mandarin language. According to Tan (2016), in West Kalimantan there are 6.61% people who speak Mandarin.

A study on language maintenance has been done by Khak who found that there was no language maintenance in West Java. In West Java, people speak different regional languages such as Sunda language, Betawi Melayu language and Cirebon language. Khak (2010) found that there was a language shift in West Java. Chinese descendants in West Java prefer to use local languages / Indonesian

language as daily languages. Only 16.75% husbands who could speak in Mandarin language and only 10.20% wives who could speak in Mandarin language. In addition only 4.80% children who could speak in Mandarin language because only 12.05% parents who taught their children Mandarin language.

Although parents had positive attitude toward Mandarin language, they did not attempt to maintain Mandarin language. They prefer to use Indonesian language or local languages, because not all people in their community are Chinese descendants and able to speak Mandarin language. Based on Khak's study, Indonesian language or local languages are easier to be used rather than Mandarin languages. The respondents also felt more comfortable when using local languages or Indonesian language. The respondents who still used Mandarin language as a daily language were from West Kalimantan who moved to West Java. Besides, the parents wanted to teach their children Mandarin language. They agreed that Mandarin language had become their cultural characteristics (Khak, 2010).

In this research, the phenomena of Mandarin language used in Kalimantan is interesting to study in depth to find out whether the language is still maintained up to now. What is their attitude towards Mandarin language? Have there been extra efforts made by Chinese Kalimantan families to preserve and continue to use in their families? This research wants to find the answers of those questions; in addition to find out what kinds of attitudes the citizens do to pass down the Mandarin language to the children of the family.

1.2 Field of the study

The field of the study is Linguistics.

1.3 The scope of the study

The scope of this study is Sociolinguistics, especially Language Maintenance since the objective of this study is to find out the attitude of Chinese students' parents towards heritage language maintenance and their efforts to maintain Mandarin language.

1.4 Problem formulation

This study attempts to address the following questions:

- a. What are the parents' attitudes towards heritage language maintenance?
- b. What do the parents do to help their children maintain heritage language?

1.5 Objectives of the study

The problems formulated above lead to the following study objectives:

- a. To explore the parents' attitudes toward heritage language maintenance.
- b. To find out what the parents do to help their children maintain the heritage language.

1.6 Significance of study

The researcher hopes that the findings of this research can be used by people in other regions who speak Mandarin language as a reference for further research on language maintenance.

1.7 Definition of terms

The definitions of terms used in this research can be defined as follows:

1. Language maintenance :

“Continuing the use of language in the face of competition from regionally and socially more powerful language” (Mesthrie, Swann, & Deumert, 2000, p. 253)

2. Heritage language:

“Language spoken in the family, but not in the dominant society” (Krashen, 1998)