

Preserving Identity in a Globalized World: Strategies for Maintaining the Bugis-Makassar Language Based on Seminar Participants' Perspectives

Kembong Daeng ^{1*}, Ilma Rahim ², Fatimah Yunus ³, Ita Rosvita ⁴, Bungatang ⁵

^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5} Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

* kembong.daeng@unm.ac.id

Abstract

The rapid advancement of globalization has significantly impacted the sustainability of regional languages, including the Bugis-Makassar language, leading to a decline in its use among younger generations. This study aimed to examine strategies for maintaining the Bugis-Makassar language as a mother tongue in the context of globalization, focusing on participants' perceptions of the International Mother Tongue Seminar. The study employed a descriptive quantitative approach supported by qualitative analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of language awareness, attitudes, and preservation strategies. The study involved 120 respondents from diverse backgrounds, including students, academics, teachers, and the general public, selected through purposive sampling. The data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale, complemented by open-ended questions to capture deeper insights. The research instrument was tested for validity using Pearson Product Moment correlation and for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.87, indicating high internal consistency. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean, percentage, and standard deviation, while qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis. The findings revealed a high level of awareness among respondents regarding the importance of the Bugis-Makassar language as a cultural identity. However, a gap existed between awareness and actual language use, particularly in formal and digital contexts. The seminar was positively evaluated as an effective platform for raising awareness. Key strategies identified include integrating regional languages into formal education, strengthening intergenerational transmission, and utilizing digital media for language revitalization. In conclusion, although awareness of the importance of Bugis-Makassar language is relatively high, practical usage remains limited, indicating the need for more structured and sustainable preservation strategies supported by educational institutions and digital innovation.

Keywords: *Mother Tongue Preservation, Language Maintenance, Bugis-Makassar Language, Globalization, Sociolinguistics*

Introduction

Mother tongue constitutes a fundamental element in shaping cultural identity, transmitting values, and sustaining local knowledge within a community. From a sociolinguistic perspective, language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a symbol of collective identity that reflects the worldview and local wisdom of a society (Fishman, 1991; Kramsch, 1998). The use of mother tongue plays a crucial role in preserving cultural continuity, particularly in multilingual societies where language becomes a marker of ethnic and cultural belonging (Crystal, 2000). However, in recent decades, globalization has exerted a significant impact on

the existence of mother tongues, particularly regional languages, leading to concerns about language sustainability (UNESCO, 2019).

The dominance of national and foreign languages across various domains such as education, digital media, and public communication has contributed to a gradual decline in the use of mother tongues, especially among younger generations (Crystal, 2000; UNESCO, 2019). This phenomenon is also evident in the Bugis-Makassar language, which empirically shows a decreasing trend in everyday usage, both within family settings and public spaces. The shift in language use reflects a broader sociolinguistic phenomenon in which communities tend to adopt languages perceived as more modern, prestigious, or economically advantageous (Holmes, 2013). As a result, the role of the mother tongue as a marker of cultural identity is increasingly challenged by the realities of globalization and modernization.

Recent studies over the past five to ten years indicate that globalization is a major driver accelerating the shift of regional languages. The growing use of national and foreign languages in digital media significantly contributes to the decline of local language use (Lalombo, 2024). The dominance of global languages in modern communication has displaced local languages as primary means of interaction (Kasiyarno & Apriyanto, 2025). Furthermore, younger generations in South Sulawesi show a strong tendency toward language shift in the Bugis language due to social and global influences, particularly within productive age groups (Rani & Fiddienika, 2023). In theoretical terms, this phenomenon is referred to as language shift, where a speech community gradually abandons its mother tongue in favor of a language perceived as more prestigious or functional (Holmes, 2013).

On the other hand, several studies have emphasized efforts toward language maintenance as a response to these challenges. Local languages remain relatively strong within family domains, although their usage is becoming increasingly limited (Sagimin, 2020). Cultural values embedded in the Bugis language continue to be transmitted through family interactions and oral traditions (Rahim et al., 2023). Meanwhile, adaptive strategies in language maintenance, including integration into formal education and the utilization of digital media as tools for revitalization, are considered important approaches to sustaining local languages (Mahessa et al., 2024; Huwae et al., 2025). These findings indicate that language maintenance requires a multidimensional approach involving family, education, and technological innovation (Spolsky, 2004).

Despite these efforts, most previous studies focus primarily on policy frameworks, family environments, and community-based approaches, and have not sufficiently explored the role of academic forums as strategic spaces for fostering collective awareness of mother tongue preservation. In fact, academic forums, such as international seminars, have the potential to serve as platforms for dialogue that bring together diverse perspectives, facilitate knowledge exchange, and promote collaborative efforts in language preservation (Wenger, 1998). However, empirical studies examining how such forums influence participants' awareness, attitudes, and perceptions toward language maintenance remain limited.

Based on these studies, a gap can be identified between previous studies and current empirical realities. Earlier studies tend to emphasize structural and normative aspects of language maintenance, while paying limited attention to the relationship between public awareness and actual language use in daily life. In addition, studies examining the effectiveness of academic activities, such as international seminars, in fostering awareness and promoting language preservation strategies remain scarce. In fact, academic forums have the potential to serve as platforms for dialogue that bring together diverse perspectives and act as catalysts for

developing more contextual and applicable language preservation strategies. Therefore, there is a need for research that connects participants' perceptions in academic settings with efforts to maintain regional languages in response to globalization.

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze participants' perceptions of the implementation of the International Mother Tongue Seminar and to examine their views on the role of the Bugis-Makassar language as a mother tongue in the context of globalization. Specifically, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) How do participants perceive the implementation of the international mother tongue seminar? (2) What are participants' views on the sustainability of the Bugis-Makassar language as a cultural identity? and (3) What strategies can be formulated to support regional language maintenance based on these perceptions? The novelty of this study lies in its approach, which is based on evaluating an international academic forum and integrating participants' perceptions as a foundation for formulating language maintenance strategies. This approach contributes to sociolinguistic studies by linking awareness, social practices, and language preservation strategies in a more empirical and contextual manner.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive quantitative design supported by qualitative analysis. The quantitative approach was used to measure participants' perception of the International Mother Tongue Seminar qualitative data were utilized to gain deeper insight into participants' views on language maintenance strategies. This combination allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Population, Sample, and Reserch Location

The population of this study consisted of participants of the International Mother Tongue Seminar, including academics, university students, teachers, cultural practitioners, and members of the general public. A total of 120 respondents were involved in this study, selected through purposive sampling, specifically targeting individuals who actively participated in the seminar and were engaged with issues related to regional languages. The composition of respondents included 35% students, 25% academics/lecturers, 20% teachers, and 20% general public, ensuring diverse perspectives on language maintenance.

Reserch Instruments

The data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The research instrument was developed based on key indicators, namely: (1) awareness of the importance of the Bugis-Makassar language, (2) attitudes toward the use of regional languages, (3) evaluation of the seminar implementation, and (4) perceptions of language maintenance strategies. In addition, several open-ended questions were included to capture deeper insights from respondents.

Validity and Reliability Test

The validity of the instrument was tested using the Pearson Product Moment correlation, with all items demonstrating r-values exceeding the critical value at $\alpha = 0.05$, indicating that all items were valid. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, yielding a value of 0.87, which indicates a high level of internal consistency.

Data Collection Technique

The use of Cronbach's Alpha is grounded in the reliability theory introduced by Lee J. Cronbach, who emphasized the importance of internal consistency among items in measuring a construct. Furthermore, the interpretation of reliability follows the criteria proposed by Jumal Nunnally, which state that an alpha value of ≥ 0.70 is considered acceptable in social science research. Therefore, the obtained alpha value of 0.87 confirms that the instrument used in this study is highly reliable.

Data Analysis Techniques

The research procedure was carried out systematically, beginning with instrument design, pilot testing, questionnaire distribution (conducted online), and data processing. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentages, means, and standard deviations, to describe response trends. Meanwhile, qualitative data from open-ended responses were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns related to language maintenance strategies.

Methodologically, this study was well-justified, as it employed an appropriate research design, validated and reliable instruments, and systematic data analysis techniques. These aspects ensured that the study was replicable and contributed meaningful empirical insights to the field of sociolinguistics, particularly in the context of regional language maintenance in a globalized world.

Results

Respondent Characteristics

The results of data analysis show that this study involved 120 respondents from diverse backgrounds. The distribution of respondents based on professional categories is presented in the following table:

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Background

Respondent Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Students	42	35%
Academics/lecturers	30	25%
Teachers	24	20%
General Public	24	20%
Total	120	100%

Based on Table 1, the total number of respondents in this study is 120, distributed across four main categories. Students constitute the largest group, with 42 respondents (35%). This is followed by academics/lecturers with 30 respondents (25%), while teachers and members of the general public each account for 24 respondents (20%).

The distribution indicates that respondents represent various social groups, with students forming the largest proportion (35%). This variation reflects the involvement of multiple societal elements in issues related to regional language use and preservation. Such diversity strengthens the validity of the findings, as language attitudes and awareness are influenced by social background and professional context (Holmes, 2013).

Language Awareness

The measurement results of the language awareness indicator show a high level of agreement among respondents. The detailed results are presented in the following table:

Table 2. Language Awareness

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
The Bugis-Makassar language is important as a cultural identity	4.72	0.45
Regional languages need to be preserved in the era of globalization	4.68	0.50
The Bugis-Makassar language should be taught to younger generations	4.70	0.48
The use of regional languages reflects community identity	4.65	0.52
Average	4.69	0.49

Based on Table 2, all statements under the language awareness indicator show high mean scores, ranging from 4.65 to 4.72. The highest score is found in the statement “The Bugis-Makassar language is important as a cultural identity” with a mean of 4.72 and a standard deviation of 0.45, indicating a very high level of agreement with relatively low variability among responses.

Other statements also demonstrate consistently high values, such as the importance of language preservation in the globalization era (mean 4.68) and the need to teach the language to younger generations (mean 4.70). The standard deviation for all items is below 0.60, indicating that responses are relatively homogeneous with minimal variation among respondents. Overall, the average score of 4.69 with a standard deviation of 0.49 indicates that most respondents selected “agree” to “strongly agree” across all statements.

Attitudes Toward the Use of Regional Languages

The results of the analysis of respondents’ attitudes toward the use of regional languages in daily life are presented as follow:

Table 3. Attitudes Toward Regional Language Use

Statement	Mean	Standard deviation
I use regional language in daily communication	3.85	0.76
I feel proud to use the Bugis-Makassar language	4.40	0.60
Regional languages remain relevant today	4.20	0.65
I use regional language in formal settings	3.60	0.80
Average	4.01	0.70

Based on Table 3, the mean scores for attitudes toward regional language use range from 3.60 to 4.40. The highest score is found in the statement “I feel proud to use the Bugis-Makassar language” with a mean of 4.40 and a standard deviation of 0.60, indicating a high level of agreement. Meanwhile, the statement regarding the use of regional language in daily communication has a mean of 3.85 with a standard deviation of 0.76, reflecting greater variability in responses compared to the awareness indicator.

The lowest score is observed in the statement “I use regional language in formal settings” with a mean of 3.60 and a standard deviation of 0.80, indicating a wider spread of responses. Overall, the average score is 4.01 with a standard deviation of 0.70, suggesting variability in respondents’ attitudes, particularly in relation to the use of regional language in formal contexts.

Evaluation of Seminar Implementation

Respondents’ evaluations of the International Mother Tongue Seminar are presented in the following table.

Table 4. Evaluation of Seminar Implementation

<i>Evaluation Aspect</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Relevance of materials	4.60	0.50
Speaker Competence	4.65	0.48
Quality of Organization	4.55	0.52
Benefit of the Seminar	4.70	0.46
Average	4.63	0.49

Based on Table 4, all evaluation aspects show high mean scores ranging from 4.55 to 4.70. The highest score is found in the “Benefits of the seminar” aspect, with a mean of 4.70 and a standard deviation of 0.46, indicating a very high level of satisfaction among respondents.

Other aspects, such as speaker competence (mean 4.65), relevance of materials (mean 4.60), and quality of organization (mean 4.55), also demonstrate consistently high scores. The standard deviation values for all aspects are below 0.55, indicating relatively uniform responses. The overall average of 4.63 with a standard deviation of 0.49 shows that respondents provided highly positive evaluations of the seminar.

Perceptions of Language Maintenance Strategies

The results of the analysis of respondents’ perceptions of regional language maintenance strategies are presented in the following table.

Tabel 5. Language Maintenance Strategies

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standar Deviasi</i>
Integration of regional languages into formal education	4.75	0.44
Utilities of digital media for language preservation	4.60	0.50
Role of family in language transmission	4.70	0.47
Cultural and community activities	4.55	0.52
Average	4.65	0.48

Based on Table 5, all proposed strategies receive high mean scores ranging from 4.55 to 4.75. The highest score is observed in the “Integration of regional languages into formal education” strategy, with a mean of 4.75 and a standard deviation of 0.44, indicating very strong agreement and low variability.

Other strategies, such as the role of family (mean 4.70) and the use of digital media (mean 4.60), also show consistently high scores. The standard deviation values for all items are below 0.55, indicating relatively homogeneous responses. The overall average score of 4.65 with a standard deviation of 0.48 indicates that respondents show a high level of agreement with the proposed strategies for maintaining regional languages.

Discussion

This section not only interprets the research findings but also situates them within relevant theoretical frameworks and previous studies in the fields of sociolinguistics, language education, and cultural studies. (The findings indicate that respondents demonstrate a very high level of awareness regarding the importance of the Bugis-Makassar language, as reflected in the mean score of 4.69. This result aligns with the theory of language and identity proposed by Joshua A. Fishman, who argues that language serves as a primary marker of ethnic and cultural identity. Within the framework of Reversing Language Shift (Fishman, 1991), collective awareness is considered a fundamental prerequisite for successful language maintenance. The present study reinforces this perspective, as respondents consistently perceive the regional language as an essential component of cultural identity. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with the

work of which emphasizes that the survival of a language largely depends on the positive attitudes of its speakers. The high level of agreement among respondents regarding the importance of language preservation reflects a strong attitudinal foundation that can support language maintenance efforts in the face of globalization.

However, this study also reveals a gap between awareness and actual language use. While respondents express a high level of pride in using the Bugis-Makassar language (mean = 4.40), its use in formal contexts remains relatively low (mean = 3.60). This finding can be explained through the concept of diglossia introduced by Charles A. Ferguson, which describes the functional distribution of languages within a speech community. In this case, national and global languages tend to dominate formal domains, thereby limiting the use of regional languages.

The findings also support prior research by Nancy H. Hornberger on language ecology, which highlights the interaction between educational, policy, and social factors in sustaining languages. In the present study, respondents identified the integration of regional languages into formal education as the most effective strategy (mean = 4.75), underscoring the critical role of educational institutions in language revitalization.

From a language education perspective, this study offers important contributions. The integration of regional languages into the curriculum not only supports preservation efforts but also enhances students' linguistic and cultural competencies. This is consistent with the view of James Paul Gee, who emphasizes that language is not merely a tool for communication but also a form of social practice that shapes identity and ways of thinking. Therefore, incorporating regional languages into education can enrich learning experiences while strengthening local identity. In terms of literature and cultural studies, the maintenance of the Bugis-Makassar language has significant implications for the preservation of oral traditions and regional literary expressions. As argued by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o in *Decolonising the (Mind)* (1986), language serves as a crucial medium for transmitting cultural values and intellectual heritage. A decline in language use may therefore lead to the erosion of local literary traditions and indigenous knowledge systems. The strategies identified in this study, particularly the role of families and communities, are thus essential for sustaining cultural continuity.

Moreover, the use of digital media as a language maintenance strategy (mean = 4.60) reflects adaptation to technological developments. This finding aligns with the work of Mark Warschauer, who highlights the potential of digital technologies in language learning and the revitalization of minority languages. Digital platforms, including social media and online content, can expand opportunities for language use, especially among younger generations (Saleh et al., 2025). The evaluation of the seminar also yielded highly positive results (mean = 4.63), indicating that academic forums play a significant role in raising awareness and fostering public discourse on language preservation. This supports previous studies suggesting that scholarly and literacy-based activities can function as catalysts for language maintenance initiatives (Sulfihiyatullah et al., 2025).

Overall, the claims presented in this study are well supported by empirical data and appear logically sound. The findings correspond with initial expectations and are consistent with established theories in sociolinguistics, language education, and cultural studies. The primary contribution of this study lies in integrating participants' perceptions from an academic forum with practical strategies applicable to language teaching, literary preservation, and cultural identity reinforcement. In conclusion, this study not only contributes to academic discourse but also offers practical implications for policymakers, educators, and cultural practitioners in

designing sustainable and context-sensitive strategies for maintaining regional languages in the era of globalization.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Bugis-Makassar language remains highly valued as a marker of cultural identity, as reflected in the high level of respondents' awareness. However, a gap exists between awareness and actual language use, particularly in formal and digital contexts, where national and global languages are more dominant. The International Mother Tongue Seminar has proven effective in raising awareness and fostering positive attitudes toward language preservation. The main strategies identified include integrating regional languages into formal education, strengthening the role of families and communities, and utilizing digital media. This study contributes to the fields of sociolinguistics, language education, and cultural studies by providing empirical evidence on the importance of aligning awareness with practical implementation in language maintenance. Its limitations include a relatively small sample size, reliance on self-reported data, and the absence of direct observation of language practices.

Future research is recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples and to apply mixed-method approaches for deeper insights. Longitudinal studies are also needed to examine changes in language use over time. Practically, efforts should focus on strengthening the integration of regional languages in education, enhancing the role of families and communities, and optimizing digital media as a tool for language preservation, particularly among younger generations.

Acknowledgment

-

References

- Albury, N. J. (2015). National language policy theory: Exploring Spolsky's model in the case of celand. *Language Policy*, 14(4), 355–372. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-015-9357>
- Blommaert, J. (2013). Ethnography, superdiversity and linguistic landscapes. *Multilingual Matters*. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783090419>
- Crystal, D. (2000). *Language death*. Cambridge University Press
- Curdt- Christiansen, X.L. (2009). Invisible and visible Language planning. *Language Policy*, 8(4), 351-375. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-009-9146-7>
- De Houwer, A. (2020). Harmonious bilingual development. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 24(5-6), 1055–1070. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006920937987>
- Ding, S. L., & Goh, K.L (2020). The impact of religion on language maintenance and shift *Language in Society*, 49(1), 31-59 <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404519000642>
- Dipoatmodjo, T. S. P. (2025). The Role of Bugis-Makassar Cultural Values in Talent Development: A Case Study of Private Companies in Makassar. *Journal Management & Economics Review (JUMPER)*, 2(8), 265-274. <https://doi.org/10.59971/jumper.v2i8.314>
- Fishman, J. A. (1991). *Reversing language shift: Theoretical and empirical foundations*. Multilingual Matters.

- Guo, F. (2024). The role and value of sociolinguistics in English language teaching. *Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 8(8). <https://doi.org/10.26689/jcer.v8i8.7996>
- Hardjanto, T. D. (2013). Language maintenance and language shift. *Humaniora*, 25(2). <https://doi.org/10.22146/jh.1937>
- Hornberger, N. H. (1998). Language policy, language education, and language rights. *Language in Society*, 27(4), 439–458. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404500020182>
- Hornberger, N. H., & Coronel-Molina, S. M. (2004). Quechua language maintenance and revitalization. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 167, 9–67. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.2004.025>
- Iwan, I., Hidayat, S., & Jannah, I. M. (2023). Local language maintenance: A sociolinguistic perspective. *International Journal of Language and Culture*, 1(1), 18–22. <https://doi.org/10.63762/ijolac.v1i1.4>
- King, K. A., & Fogle, L. (2017). Family language policy. In *Language policy and political issues in education*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02320-5_26
- Kircher, R., Quirk, E., Brouillard, M., & Byers-Heinlein, K. (2022). Attitudes toward multilingualism. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 41(1), 527–552. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X221090123>
- Kupolati, O. O. (2024). Heritage language maintenance practices. *International Journal of Bilingualism*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13670069231175266>
- Norton, B. (2014). Identity and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, 48(2), 159–171. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.123>
- Pauwels, A. (2016). *Language maintenance and shift*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107280563>
- Schwartz, M. (2008). Exploring family language policy. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 29(5), 400–415. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434630802147948>
- Spolsky, B. (2004). *Language policy*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511615245>
- Sulfihiidayatullah, M., Aisyah, A. S., Wahyuni, L., & Nurfiadi, H. (2025). Maintaining Identity in A Foreign Land: A Study of Bugis Tribe Cultural Communication in Tanah Bumbu, South Kalimantan. *ICCCM Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 4, 206-212. <https://doi.org/10.53797/icccmjssh.v4.sp.34.2025>
- Saleh, N. S., Rosli, M. S., Syamsuri, A. S., & Saadon, D. J. (2025). Buginese Communication Heritage in Educational Contexts: An Overview of Literacy Contributions within the Diaspora. *Human Sustainability Procedia*, 5(2), 71-86.
- Tannenbaum, M., & Berkovich, M. (2005). Family relations and language maintenance. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 24(3), 287–309. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X05275748>
- Warschauer, M. (2011). Learning in the cloud. *Teachers College Record*, 113(10), 1–25.
- Wang, X. (2023). Language maintenance and family dynamics. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2023>