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**The Attitude of the Language of Ex-Combatans and the Victims of Armed Conflict of Aceh Post-MoU Helsinki**

**Sanusi<sup>1</sup>; Azwardi<sup>2</sup>; Rusli Yusuf<sup>3</sup>; Muhammad Iqbal<sup>4</sup>**

*<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Syiah Kuala University, Indonesia*

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## THE ATTITUDE OF THE LANGUAGE OF EX-COMBATANS AND THE VICTIMS OF ARMED CONFLICT OF ACEH POST-MOU HELSINKI

Sanusi<sup>1</sup>; Azwardi<sup>2</sup>; Rusli Yusuf<sup>3</sup>; Muhammad Iqbal<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Syiah Kuala University, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup>Contributor Email: [sanusi@fkip.unsyiah.ac.id](mailto:sanusi@fkip.unsyiah.ac.id)

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### Abstract

*This study aims to describe the attitude of ex-combatants and conflict victim of Aceh post-MoU Helsinki to the use of language, both Indonesian as a national language and Acehnese as one of the dominant regional languages in Aceh. This project is done within the purpose of Indonesian guidance, protection and defense as the language of unity and language of Aceh as one of the mother tongues in the archipelago. The targets of the annual achievements of this research are as follows: (1) scientific publications, both accredited national scientific journals and international scientific journals, (2) papers in scientific meetings, and (3) ISBN textbooks. The result of the research showed that the attitude of the ex-combatants in the post-MoU Helsinki was positively conflicting, both to the Indonesian language as the national and the Acehnese language as one of the regional languages in Aceh.*

**Keywords:** *Attitude of Language, Indonesian-Acehnese Language, ex-Combatants, Victims of Conflict*



## A. Introduction

The substance of this paper concerns the form of language attitudes of ex-combatants of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), such as (1) attitudes related to language loyalty, (2) attitudes related to language pride, and (3) attitudes related to awareness of the norms of ex-combatants and victims of post-MoU Aceh conflict in Aceh. This was done as a step and efforts to develop Indonesian language and regional languages that must be done to foster the Indonesian language as well as maintaining the language of Aceh.

Based on the observed situation, the Indonesian language attitude of the combatants tended to be negative. However, the attitude of the Acehnese language as one of the regional languages in Aceh tended to be positive. This is inversely proportional to the attitude of nationalism of Indonesia as stipulated in the 1945 Constitution. One's nationalism can be seen from the speakers' speaking attitude. If the attitude of language is negative, nationalism against nationality can be doubted. Concerning the function and position of the Indonesian language, in Law Number 24 Year 20009 on the State Symbol, State Symbol, National Anthem, and Bahasa Indonesia it is mentioned that Indonesian language is a symbol of national identity and can be used to integrate one ethnic group to another.

In this regard, ex combatants and victims of the Aceh conflict are people who were in fact experiencing an event full of violence and hostility between the conflicting parties (Adwani, 2012: 98). Based on this, the Indonesian language attitude of ex-combatants and conflict dominantly negative and active and passive. Factors that affect a speaker's negative attitude towards a language are very diverse. One is the psychological influence on a speaker. The armed conflict that struck the people of Aceh from 1976 to 2005 has unconsciously shaped the negative attitude of the Acehnese people, especially ex-combatants and conflict victims to properly speak Indonesian.

This is caused by ex-combatants and victims of the conflict who hold a grudge against the military, both TNI and POLRI who at that time



using the Indonesian language as a means of communication. The paradigm that was formed at that time was that the Indonesian state had taken away his brother (the victim died) so that the thought of speaking Indonesian was a sin. In connection with this condition, Crystal (1987, 15:66) says that language, when we interact with others, will show a variety of identities, such as physical identity, psychological identity, geographical identity, ethnic identity and national (ethnic and national identity), social identity (social identity), contextual identity (contextual identity), as well as stylistic and literary identity (stylist identity and literature).

Furthermore, in this regard, Azwardi (2015) argues that positive attitudes toward language are reflected in his pride in using his national language. Based on that opinion, especially social identity and ethnic identity, it appears very strong on ex combatants and conflict victims related to the use of regional and Indonesian language. Since the realization of peace talks between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and GAM on 15 August 2005 or known as the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of Helsinki has provided a sense of security and comfort to all the people of Aceh.

As stated in the Aceh Government's Qanun, the Helsinki MoU is a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and GAM signed on 15 August 2005 in Helsinki, Finland. After the MoU, the reintegration process was intensively conducted by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia. The process, among others, by establishing the agency of the Aceh Reintegration Agency (BRA). Of the six BRA functions that have been formulated, one of them is the restoring points of civil rights, political rights, economic rights and the social and cultural rights of ex-combatants and conflict victims.

The restoration of civil rights with regard to social and cultural can be elaborated more broadly, among others, through the development of Indonesian language and the language of Aceh. However, in relation to the development of the Acehnese language as one of the regional languages of



Aceh, since the outbreak of the peace process has tended to get less priority from the Government of Aceh and the Central Government. The focus of reintegration that has been intensively done more on things that are physical, or in other words, prioritizes the reconstruction process, while the guidance of the language of Aceh and Indonesian is entrusted entirely to the parties of higher education or education office. In fact, the availability of Acehese local language textbooks and a representative Indonesian language curriculum is minimal. In addition, the content of reading books distributed to students does not represent the local wisdom of the Acehese people (Tabrani. ZA, 2016).

In this regard, it is assumed that there is a possibility that the Acehese, especially former combatants and conflict victims, have a negative attitude towards the Indonesian language caused by the trauma they faced earlier. This is certainly not a good reason to answer the problem and is scientifically unaccountable. In addition, it is also assumed that ex-combatants and conflict victims have a more positive attitude towards the language of Aceh or Malay than Indonesian. However, this also cannot be verified because no related research has ever been done. Therefore, through a study entitled "The Attitudes of Combatants and Victims of Conflict Post-MoU Helsinki" this will be disclosed comprehensively. It is urgent to prove that Indonesian negative attitudes are not deliberate, and the reintegration that has been promoted has not yet touched on the field of Indonesian or Acehese language coaching.

## **B. Method**

The research method used was descriptive method with qualitative approach. The research data was collected through questionnaire whose substance was related to informant identity, language ability, and language attitude. The instrument of this study used a Likert-scale conclusion with a focus on three fundamental questions related to language attitudes, namely language loyalty, language pride, and awareness of the norm. Data processing is done by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) formula.

The hypothesis of this research is that ex-combatants and Aceh conflict victims have negative attitudes toward Indonesian language and have a positive attitude on the language of Aceh. The research was conducted in eleven districts in Aceh, namely Aceh Besar, Pidie, Bireuen, Aceh Utara, Aceh Timur, Aceh Tengah, Aceh Jaya, West Aceh, Nagan Raya, Aceh Barat Daya and South Aceh. The eleven districts are the bases of ex-combatants of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) or conflict areas before the peace talks between GAM and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia. The informants of this research are ex combatants and Aceh conflict victims, who have occupied structural positions in the Aceh government as well as those of ordinary citizens.

## **C. Discussion**

### **1. Language Community**

The language community (speechcommunity) is a concept once discussed by Hudson (1980), Troike (1982), and Braitwaite (1984). Understanding the language community is also very diverse and according to the author's opinion, understanding the relevant language community aboutsee the event speech in Indonesia is an opinion expressed by Blomfield. Blomfield (in Ohoiwutun, 2007: 37) says that the language community is shaped by them (a collection of people who together share the same linguistic rules). From Blomfield's statement it can be concluded that something can be said as a language community if words (words, phrases, and sentences) have been agreed upon and understood by all speakers in a community (conventional). This is similar to the language of the program that developed in Jakarta in 1970.

The language is used by thugs and pickpockets in Jakarta. The language is generally not understood by the general public and the language of the program is understood only by fellow community members who work with it. In Indonesian Dictionary (2008: 924) it is stated that the language community has the sense of a group of people who feel a shared language, who belongs to the group, or who adheres to the same standard language.



The language community may consist of small groups whose relations are prominent or consist of all languages, depending on the level of abstraction to be achieved (Gumper, in MONE, 1995: 162).

In addition, the whole dialect or variant used regularly in a society forms the repertoire of the language of society. The superiority of the concept of language repertoire, the concept allows researchers to link between the social structure and the use of the language of a society under a common relational framework. Therefore, it can be concluded that the language community is an entire speaker who speaks the same mother and has a common diastema in dialectal and sociolect differences.

In accordance with the foregoing, the Aceh province of various ethnic and tribal groups has formed a diverse community of languages. After the Helsinki MoU 2015, with the increasingly conducive conditions of the city, Aceh province is increasingly visited by travellers or job seekers, as the language community in Aceh is increasingly diverse. This research will reveal and examine how combatants and conflict victims' attitudes towards the use of Indonesian language. The results of this study can be a reference in an effort to overcome the problems with regard to language attitudes.

This is in accordance with the statement that Hasan (2001: 153) has found: (1) the language user may be two or more codes used in multilingual communication. In this case people move their codes in a certain pattern to show their identity or express anger; (2) Indonesian speakers move codes so that communicants often cannot communicate as effectively as possible. Nationalism and Psychological Speakers of Language. The Indonesian attitude relates to language-based nationalism.

Speakers who are positive towards the Indonesian language automatically nationalism against the Republic of Indonesia is very high. In accordance with that proposed by Fishman (in Sumarsono, 2002: 168) the role of language in nationalism is very clear. Language will be a problem for the nationalism of two areas, namely the field of government administration and education.



Nationalism consciously seeks to build a language that was originally a regional or social body that is used without consciousness and does not emotionally bind its speakers into a more authentic, unified, authentic, modern language that must be used consciously. Nationalism contradicts ethnicity. According to Sumarsono (2002: 168) for nationality, the strength of the group maintains and demands the use of the group's language, and for ethnicity, the strength of the group is prepared to resist and release it.

As described in the previous section, language attitudes are a representation of the inherent experience of a speaker, then implemented with language. In other words, language attitudes are relevant to the psychology of language speakers. Particularly in the province of Aceh, the Acehnese are capable of mastering two languages at least the Acehnese and Indonesian languages. A bilingualism certainly faces three psychological situations when speaking with others, namely (1) personal needs, (2) situations of immediate discussion, and (3) background situation situations (Sumarsono, 2002: 2010).

Furthermore, Sumarsono also points out that there are several variations of choice that may occur if a speaker interacts with people from outside his group. First, the most convergent behavior is to use the other person's language and strive to display a similar utterance with the speech of the native speaker as well as the interschool. Second, the less convergent behavior occurs by using the language of the interrupter but the accent may be more severe. Third, speakers use the language but with a slow tempo to honor the opponent of speech, which may lack the understanding of the language used. Fourth, speakers use the language at normal speed, allowing the other person to understand his speech as much as possible.

Related to this, Alkaidar (1999) (in Hutagalung, et al 2013: 9) also states that the post-MoU Helsinki social state of society is the same as after the war in 1873-1913 which received many "wounds" on the physical memorable in the soul. Later, Reid (2008) also described the situation as a



mental and mental collapse. Furthermore, the results of research Hutagalung, et al. (2013) also proves that armed conflict and tsunami disaster have provided trauma to adolescents although still in moderate category.

## **2. Attitude of Language**

Language attitudes are relatively long-term beliefs about a particular language, about the object of language that gives a person a tendency to act in a certain way with his likes. According to Anderson (Sumarsono, 2001: 363) attitudes are divided into two, namely language attitudes and non-linguistic attitudes, such as political attitudes, social attitudes, and aesthetic attitudes. Furthermore, the attitude of this language can be detailed again into two, namely positive attitudes and negative attitudes. A positive attitude is the attitude of language spoken by the speaker by maintaining both structure and meaning in accordance with the rules applicable in a particular language without mixing it with other languages. Negative attitude of language is the attitude of language applied by speakers who contradict the positive attitude of the language or in other words confuse the use of the language.

In this regard, Hasan (2001) argues that attitudes and beliefs towards language are decisive for linguistic behavior, and they must be studied intensively and comprehensively. In this case, sociolinguists, anthropologists, must analyze not only the linguistic and behavioral situations, but also the value that society provides to the languages. The speaker's attitude to language develops first in the family and community and then extends to the school level to bring out his personality.

The attitude of the language is closely related to language typology (language typology). Hassan (2001: 92) specifies the typology of language into four, namely (1) by region, geographically irrespective of its structure, (2) structurally based, features of language structure, i.e. phonologically, morphologically and syntactically, (3) based on genealogy, heredity, genealogy of language, and (4) based on function, function in society. As a means of communication between citizens and as

a means of succession of science and technology, the Indonesian language has met the demands of the life of a modern society.

Attitudes related to language loyalty are positive language attitudes in maintaining the independence of the language, even if necessary to prevent the influx of foreign languages. Furthermore, attitudes related to language pride are positive language attitudes in encouraging a person or group of people to make their language a symbol of their personal or group identity and at the same time to differentiate themselves from other people or groups. Then, attitudes related to awareness of the norms are positive societal attitudes in the awareness of using language in accordance with applicable rules, such as true, logical, systematic, meticulous and polite. Awareness is a very decisive factor in speech behavior in the form of language use (language use). Language loyalty, language pride, and language awareness are the observable positive features of a user of a language. Language Attitudes of Combatants and Victims of Post-MoU Conflict Helsinki.

### **3. Pride of Language**

Based on the result of the research, it can be concluded that the attitude of the ex-combatants and the post-MoU Helsinki conflict in Aceh is included in positive category. Although there are differences in the value of statements of language pride, respondents generally prefer and proudly use the Indonesian language and Acehese language in daily communication. Similarly, the respondent's answer to the Indonesian language learning statement is one manifestation of maintaining a national identity, generally respondents said strongly agree. On the other hand, the diversity of opinions on the statements in the instruments illustrates that the pride of language in each respondent varies. Likewise, if viewed from the pride of the Indonesian language can show a personal identity and I am proud to see my children communicate daily, both formal and non-formal using the Indonesian language, some respondents agreed and disagree.

The above description illustrates that the attitude of language consists of three aspects, namely the components of cognitive, affective,



and konatif. These three components of attitude are interconnected with each other. Nevertheless, in reality in the community it is often the “fun” or “unpleasant” experience that a person makes that the relationship of the three components is not in line. If these three components are aligned with one another, a behavior can show a person's attitude toward a situation. On the contrary, if the components are not aligned, the behavior cannot be used to know attitudes. Behavior does not necessarily indicate a person's attitude. Therefore, despite differences in instrument outcomes, the overall results show that the Indonesian attitude group of ex-combatants and conflict victims post-MoU Helsinki in Aceh generally responds positively to the pride of language, both to Indonesian as a national language, as well as Acehnese language as one of the dominant regional languages in Aceh.

#### **4. Loyalty of Language**

In the loyalty aspect of the researcher gives statements related to the attitude to help maintain the independence of the language from foreign influences. The results show that the loyalty of Indonesian and Acehnese ex-combatants and conflict victims post-MoU Helsinki in Aceh tends to be high on some items. For example, (1) Indonesian is the language of instruction in official situations, (2) learning Indonesian is important because it can make me compete with others to get a job, (3) school children using Indonesian language better than children using language Aceh.

However, in some other statements, there are likely to be differences of opinion given by respondents, for example I prefer to use the Indonesian language in discussing common problems, then the statement of learning Indonesian is important because it can understand the news or various important information in the mass media well. In general, however, the loyalty of ex-combatants and conflict victim's post-MoU Helsinki in Aceh tends to be positive. This can be observed through language behavior or speech behavior.

In addition, loyalty to the Indonesian language is an attitude of obedience which shows a sense of pride in using the Indonesian language



properly and correctly rather than using a foreign language or a word that is not derived from the Indonesian language, for example in the use of the original Indonesian language or that there was not absorption coming from a foreign language. This statement is not exaggerated because it corresponds to data obtained from informants, namely the ex-combatants and victims of post-MoU conflict in Helsinki in Aceh.

## **5. Language Awareness**

The awareness of the norm encourages a person to use the language precisely and carefully in accordance with the rules of language. Such awareness is a very decisive factor in the behavior of language usage. In this aspect awareness of the existence of language norms, the application of rules, the tendency to improve language skills, as well as the development and fostering of language is an important aspect contained in the language awareness items. Based on the results of data processing it is known that awareness of ex-combatants and conflict victim's post-MoU Helsinki in Aceh included in the medium category. This conclusion is based on the overall results of the statements responded by informants. Despite some differences of opinion in giving statements, awareness of ex-combatants tends to be positive. This illustrates that the consciousness of the norm encourages a person to use the language carefully and in accordance with the rules.

## **D. Conclusion**

Based on the results of data processing related to the substance of language attitudes, the attitude towards Indonesian language as the national language and attitude towards the language of Aceh as a regional language, the findings of this study can be concluded on 3 categories, namely (1) attitude related to loyalty to language), (2) attitudes related to language pride, and (3) attitudes related to awareness of the norm. These three attitudes tend to be positively shared by ex-combatants and victims of the post-MoU Aceh conflict.



Based on the above conclusions, the findings of this study should be followed up in the second year to solidify the positive attitude that has been seen in ex-combatants and conflict victim's post-MoU Helsinki in Aceh to enhance their sense of nationalism.

Then, it needs to do a comprehensive coaching and continue to look after. Related to this, the Acehese language Centre supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture Development and Language Agency of the Republic of Indonesia should program the activities of special language coaching to them and provide adequate references through the National Literacy Movement, specifically related to consolidation of consciousness using good and correct language.

The results of the first-year study (2017) show that ex-combatants and victims of post-MoU Helsinki Aceh conflict, both to Indonesian as national and Acehese language as one of the dominant regional languages used by the people of Aceh tend to be positive. In general, they are proud, faithful to use Indonesian and Acehese languages even though the broadcast of the language norm tends to be negative. Based on the findings of the first year of research, in the second year (2018) there will be special guidance to them and their surrounding communities in the area of research object to strengthen their positive attitude toward the language, both Indonesian and Acehese.

The guidance will be facilitated by the research team and informants whose attitude was very positive. Informants who have a relatively strong language attitude generally have a good sense of nationalism against the Unitary Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). They are scattered in every research area. In addition, in the second year, in addition to producing scientific publications, there will also be book writing activities related to Indonesian language defense and Acehese language so that the public will understand the pride, loyalty and awareness of the language, both Indonesian and Acehese.

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