



THE MAINTENANCE OF THE HELONG LANGUAGE IN KOLHUA URBANVILLAGE, KUPANG CITY

Festif Rudolf Hoinbala^{1*}, Alfred Snae², Erny S. N Hambandima³
Universitas Kristen Artha Wacana^{1*, 2, 3}
*festifrudolf@gmail.com

Abstract:

Language maintenance plays a vital role in preserving both linguistic diversity and cultural identity, particularly for minority languages that face challenges from globalization and the dominance of national and regional languages. This study focuses on the maintenance of the Helong language in Kolhua Urban Village, Kupang City, where speakers strive to retain their linguistic heritage despite the increasing influence of Indonesian and Kupang Malay. Utilizing qualitative research methods, using questionnaires, this study explores the key factors that contribute to language maintenance, such as intergenerational transmission within families, community engagement, and the role of cultural practices in sustaining linguistic identity. The findings indicate that while Helong remains actively spoken among older generations, younger speakers exhibit a noticeable shift towards Indonesian and Kupang Malay due to formal education, economic opportunities, and broader social mobility. This shift poses a significant threat to the continuity of the Helong language, as younger generations prioritize languages with higher economic and social value. However, local initiatives, such as cultural festivals, community-led language programs, and government-supported revitalization efforts, have emerged as critical mechanisms for sustaining Helong. These initiatives not only foster a sense of pride among speakers but also create environments where Helong can be actively used and transmitted. This study highlights the urgent need for sustained community participation, educational reinforcement, and policy intervention to prevent further language decline. By examining the interplay between societal factors and language practices, this research contributes to broader discussions on language preservation strategies for endangered languages. Ultimately, the study underscores that the survival of the Helong language depends on a collaborative effort involving families, educators, policymakers, and the wider community to ensure its continued use and transmission to future generations.

Keywords: Helong language, language maintenance, Kolhua Urban Village, linguistic identity.

Author's profile:



Festif Rudolf Hoinbala is an Assistant Professor and lecturer at the English Language Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Artha Wacana Christian University (2010 to present). Festif completed his BA in English Language Education at Artha Wacana Christian University (2007), MA in Applied Linguistics at the University of Groningen (2013), and PhD in Language Teaching Research at Münster University (2022). His research focuses on English Language Learning, Language Assessment, and Sociolinguistics.

Alfred Snae, S.Pd., M.Pd. is a lecturer at the English Education Study Program at Artha Wacana Christian University, Kupang. He earned his Bachelor of Education from Artha Wacana Christian University in 2013 and his Master of Education from Nusa Cendana University in 2016. His research interests focus on teaching and learning strategies, as well as linguistics, aiming to contribute to the development of effective educational practices and language studies.

Erny S. N Hambandima, S.Pd., M.Pd is lecturer the English Education Study Program at Artha Wacana Christian University, Kupang. She completed her master's in English Education at Nusa Cendana Nusa Cendana University. Her research expertise lies in teaching methodology and learning strategies. The Publication record can be accessed via the following links:

Google: https://scholar.google.co.id/citations?user=ac5Ge_4AAAAJ&hl=en

Orchid: <https://orchid.org/0009000367064869>

Sinta : <https://sinta.kemdikbud.go.id/authors/profile/6157940/?view=researches>

Email: ernyhambandima@gmail.com