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## The Shift of Acehnese Language: A Sociolinguistic Study to Preserve Regional Languages

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### Abstract

*This study uses a case study research method with a qualitative study design. The aims of the study were to find out the domains of Acehnese language shifts in Langsa and the reasons why Acehnese teenagers are shifting their language. Five districts in Langsa, one of the cities in Aceh, Indonesia, became the research location. They were Langsa Kota, Langsa Barat, Langsa Timur, Langsa Baroe and Langsa Lama. The respondents were Acehnese young adults within the age range of 18 to 21 years old. There were 10 respondents from each district, making a total of 50 respondents. The instruments used in this study were observations, a questionnaire, and interviews. Simple statistics were used to analyse the questionnaire, meanwhile the data analysis for the observations and interviews followed an interactive model from Miles and Huberman, namely: data reduction, data display, verification of data, and conclusions. The results showed that the domains of education (30 respondents) and of friendship (27 respondents) had the largest number of shifters. Meanwhile, the family domain had the least shifts, so it was concluded that shifts rarely occurred in this domain. Finally, there are three fundamental factors that influenced the shift: environment, habitual usage, and choice of language.*

**Keywords:** Language shift, regional language, domain, choice of language.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Language is crucial for people as a means of communication. We need to express our emotions, ideas, feelings, and thoughts using sounds, gestures, and signals. Language also shows the existence of people and of cultures. A language grows and

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develops because of the community that uses it, that is why life and behaviour cannot be separated from the use of language. And so, language and the identity of a culture are closely related to each other and to save the identity of a culture, the people must strive to save their language. When a language is lost, the world perspective of that culture will also disappear. Language is a carrier of different aspects of a culture, and accordingly a language is threatened when it is not passed down to the children especially when a more dominant metropolitan language starts to be used in daily life. When a local language is forgotten or lost, the unique identity of the tribe that uses that language is also lost. [Aziz and Amery \(2016\)](#) construe that language signifies culture and transfers culture from one generation to the next.

The loss of a local or regional language is regarded as a cultural loss as well. The use of regional language is important as a mean of communication and interaction for every individual ethnic group in Indonesia and also elsewhere in the world. Language is the main characteristic of human identity. It is a powerful symbol of national and ethnic identity, so a local or regional language represents the identity of a particular cultural and ethnic group which should be maintained. Thus the maintenance of cultural heritage is a strong argument for the preservation of a language. [Gunew and Rizvi \(1994\)](#) have given us a sociological or anthropological definition, which defines culture as “every aspect of life”; thus it includes various elements of everyday life, for example, food and religion. The most important relationship between language and culture, that gets to the heart of what is lost when you lose a language, is that most of the culture is deeply set in the local ethnic language.

The culture and the values that exist in a community are interconnected, one another. As well as that, the cultural values in the Acehese society are closely related to the religious values in the daily life of the community. Due to mass communications the phenomenon in many societies is a shift from the use of the local or regional language to another, more dominant language. Especially amongst young adults as language users who start using the dominant language in various different domains.

Coming from those curiosities about the extinction of local or regional languages; the researchers became interested in finding out more about the shift from Acehese language to Indonesian in Langsa, once of the cities in Aceh province, amongst young adults. This sociolinguistic study is as one of the efforts to acknowledge and to avoid the extinction of a local or regional language in Aceh.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **2.1 Language Shift**

Language shift according to [Fasold \(1984, p. 213\)](#) refers to changes in language use among a community of speakers such as when a community starts to use one language in domains and functions in which its members had previously used another language and also to a shift in the number of speakers of a language. [Weinreich \(1968, p. 79\)](#) similar to [Fasold](#), defines language shift as “the change from the habitual use of one language to that of another”. Furthermore, [Romaine \(2000, p. 49\)](#) says that this shift is unavoidable when two languages compete to be used in the same domain. From these experts, we can see the same red line, that language shift is the change from one

language, used by a minority group of speakers, into another one for the same domain and functions.

Indeed [Holmes \(2001, p. 68\)](#) says that “language shift generally refers to the process by which one language displaces another in the linguistic repertoire of a community”. A language shift means a shift or displacement of a minority language, or mother tongue, to a language of a wider society. Language shift happens when the speech community shifts or replaces their mother tongue with the more dominant language and this usually starts to happen with the younger generation. Furthermore, language shift usually occurs in bilingual or multilingual communities because of many factors such as bilingualism, migration, economic and social factors, political factors, demographic factors, and also because of the values and attitudes of the language users. As [Fishman \(1991, p. 1\)](#) states that language shift typically occurs in a “speech community whose native language is threatened because their intergenerational continuity is proceeding negatively, with fewer and fewer users or uses every generation”. It is obviously clear that language shift can be seen by the loss of users of the native language as it becomes less used in the next generation. Consequently, according to [Holmes \(2001, p. 65\)](#), the fewer the domains of language use, the more potential that language shift will occur, vice versa the more domains in which a language is used, the more potential there is for the language to be maintained. As [Fasold \(1984\)](#) states “language maintenance and language shift are two sides of the same coin which cannot be separated from each other”. He further added that language shift simply means that a community gives up one language completely in favour of another one.

Hence, language shift is significantly different from language change. Language shift is a move from a certain language into a more dominant one. Language change is the manner in which the phonetic, morphological, semantic, syntactic, and other features of a language are modified over time, it is the topic addressed by historical linguistics who look at the past states of a language and seek to explain how the present state came about. An example of language change is the observation in Pohnpei that the “high language” of respect, formerly used by the royal clan and also to address them, is slowly dying out with a diminishing number of people capable of speaking it ([Tawerilmang, 1996](#)). An example of language shift in Canada, by [Milroy \(1980\)](#), is that the third generations of Japanese-Canadians do not use Japanese anymore, they speak only English at home, and these speakers grew up as bilinguals speaking Japanese with their parents at home, and all used English as their main home language at the end.

[Huebner \(1987\)](#) also adds that language shift can be either partial or complete. Complete societal language shift results in the dominant language becoming the mother tongue of a community. A partial language shift results in the displacement of one language by another, only for specific functions. Partial language shift is sometimes accompanied by language skill attrition, the loss of proficiency in one or more of the language skills: writing, reading, speaking or understanding. Language shift can occur rapidly, sometimes within a generation.

## 2.2 Factors Affecting Language Shift

Language shift occurs when a community who shares a mother tongue abandons it, and collectively shifts to another language. It is always preceded by bilingualism.

Someone cannot shift to a new language unless he or she learns to speak it. Fasold (1984, p. 213) says that “bilingualism can ultimately lead to language shift in a society and is often marked by intergenerational switching of the languages”. Beside bilingualism, language shift is also triggered by migration and demographic, attitudinal, economic, social, and political change factors. Those factors will be described in the following sections.

### *2.2.1 Bilingualism Factor*

Bilingualism is the ability to speak two languages, the frequent use (as by a community) of two languages, and the political or institutional recognition of two languages for use in a community. In short, it is a “dual language ability” (Rahayu, 2016, p. 109). Romaine (2000, p. 49) argues if two languages compete for use in the same domain and the speakers are unable to establish the compartmentalization necessary for survival of the low variety then language shift may become unavoidable. Bilingualism does not always mean language competence. The two languages are used freely. Bilinguals may choose the language they like to use in any particular situation. However, this cannot always be performed for a long period. A certain language is gradually likely to dominate in speech acts, which are associated with the dominant language, for instance in religious and education domains.

The dynamics of language shift makes it a competitive process in which the numbers of speakers of each language (both monolingual and bilingual) vary as a function of both of internal recruitment (as the net outcome of birth, death, immigration and emigration rates of native speakers), and of gains and losses owing to language shift. Hence, two models of bilingualism is a basic model in which bilingualism is simply the transitional state for households moving between alternative monolingual states, and a diglossia model in which there is an additional demand for the endangered language as the preferred medium of communication in some restricted sociolinguistic domains, superimposed on the basic shift dynamics (Kandler et al., 2010).

Accordingly, Ferguson (1959) in Myers-Scotton (2006, p. 80) defines diglossia as two varieties of a language, existing side by side as distinguished from the usage of two different languages in one common situation (bilingualism). In a diglossia community, the minority language is used for the informal domains while the majority language is used in the formal domains. Romaine (2000, p. 49) states that language shift generally involves bilingualism (often with diglossia) as a stage on the way to eventual monolingualism. The community becomes, transitionally, bilingual as a result of contact with another (usually socially more powerful) group and remains bilingual in the new language until their own, original, minority language is given up altogether. The minority language is usually used in the family domain until that fails to maintain the minority language that is then replaced by the majority language. This is called diglossia leakage and it signals that a minority language shift may happen.

### *2.2.2 Migration Factor*

One potential factor for language shift to occur is migration, which encourages the use of the language of the wider society and the consequent loss in proficiency in the original mother tongue. Holmes (2001, p. 52) states that in general, migrants are

virtually monolingual in their mother tongue, their children become bilingual and their grandchildren become monolingual in the language of the host country. Holmes (2001, p. 52) also states that migrants use their host's language in limited domains and reserve the home domain for their mother tongue, but soon the host language gradually infiltrates their home through their children see the case presented by Rahayu (2016). Children encounter the host languages first on TV and in public and are compelled to use it for survival at school. Then this language becomes their code for communicating with their siblings and friends. Most families eventually shift from using their mother tongue at home to using their hosts' country language, since speaking the majority language is regarded as a sign of successful assimilation into the new environment.

An example given by Thompson (1974), when speaking of Mexican-American loyalty, is that typically in the United States the first generation prefers to speak the non-English tongue, the second generation is bilingual, and the third claims English as their mother tongue. First generation here means the immigrants born in the old homeland, while the second generation is the first generation born in the new homeland. This is also basically what is found in the Arabian community in Medan. In this case, the first generation is *simple bilingual*, meaning that their main language is their original, Arabic as their mother tongue. Then the second generation is *Indonesian bilingual*, meaning that their main language is Indonesian but the mother tongue of the parents is maintained. Next, the third generation becomes *Indonesian monolingual*. Those terms are taken from the terms proposed by Veltman (1983) on the degrees of bilingualism in the USA.

### 2.2.3 Economic and Social Factors

The economic and social goals of individuals in a community are very important factors in accounting for the speed of language shift. As Holmes (2001) states, job seekers see the importance of learning a majority language which is widely used in business. The high demand from industries for employees with fluent English has successfully encouraged job seekers to equip themselves with English besides mastering Indonesian as the national and official language.

Furthermore, Holmes (2001, p. 58) also states that rapid shift occurs when people are anxious to fit into a society where knowledge of the second language is a prerequisite for success. People need a language to communicate and interact with others. Hence they will choose the dominant language instead of their first language, which they are fluent in. By speaking the new language, they can build successful communications and assimilate with others in their new community. The inferences are that people will use a dominant language as a means of communication in a larger context and especially for situations to do with work and also for socializing. People use a lingua franca to unite the diversity of the vernacular. .

### 2.2.4 Political Factors

Political factors can affect language shift in a multilingual country, the authorities usually choose one language as the lingua franca to unify various kinds of ethnic groups. Consequently, the number of ethnic language speakers decreases. Holmes (2001, p. 59) states that where a migrant minority group moves to a predominantly monolingual society dominated by one majority group language in all

the major institutional domains – schools, TV, radios, newspapers, government administration and courts, language shift will be unavoidable. For example, the political situation in 1947 led to the partition of India (Bayer (2005)). Sindhi Hindus fled from the Sind. They spoke Sindhi at home but had to adopt to the local language. This process led to language displacement leading to language loss among the Sindhis (Bayer (2005)). However, when the central government in India tried to impose Hindu as the national language, riots in Tamil Nadu and other non-Hindu states caused the government of India to back-track, so now every state in India has their own state language plus English as the lingua franca; so Tamil Nadu has Tamil, Andra Pradesh has Telugu, Kerala has Malayalam and so on as their official state languages plus English.

Although Indonesia has many vernacular languages, the government has ruled that Indonesian is the only national language to be officially used in politics, administration and the judiciary. This followed on from the Youth Pledge, adopted in 1929, “*One people, one nation, one language*” which adopted Indonesian Malay as the lingua franca along the Malay Straits as a language to unify Indonesia. Hence, Indonesian become an important factor in uniting Indonesians during their fight for independence from the Dutch from 1945 on. It is the language of legislation, politics, campaigns, national and local governments, court proceedings and the military in Indonesia. Hence, Indonesian has become the majority language that is used in almost every society in Indonesia. This mean that the government policies concerning language use in all institutional domains has had significant implications for language shift.

The Indonesian education policy allows Indonesian to be used as the medium of instruction for all subjects in all schools. Whilst there are also English schools and Islamic boarding schools or *pesantren* which obliged their students to master English and Arabic as well. However, the Islamic boarding schools are specific purpose schools to train Islamic scholars only. If their students want to work as doctors, engineers or lawyers, etc., they must then continue their education to other regular schools. Furthermore Myers-Scotton (2006, p. 100) has stated that when a younger generation is exposed to a more dominant language than their first language (L1) (through schooling and school peers), it is hard to stop a shift to that second language by the next generation.

### 2.2.5 Demographic Factor

Demographic factors also play a role in the process of language shift. When members of a community of speakers move to a region or a country whose language is different from theirs, there is a tendency to shift to the new language. Every time immigrants learn the dominant language of their new region they will try to pass it down to their children in place of their old mother language.

According to Holmes (2001, p. 59), there are three demographic factors which are relevant in the acceleration of language shift. The first is urbanization. Urbanization tends to make language shifts go faster. Second is the size of the community of speakers. If there are a large number of speakers of the minority language in a community, then language shift will be slower. The larger the group is the more social pressure there will be to speak the ethnic language. The smaller the

number of speakers in a group, the more potential there will be for these speakers to shift to the language of the dominant group. Language shift tends to occur faster in a group with a small numbers of speakers than in a group with a large numbers of speakers. The third factor is intercultural marriage or different ethnic marriage. This is also supported by Romaine (2000, p. 54) who says that the extent of exogamous marriage is a factor in language shift. Mothers tend to influence language change to their children either by accelerating it towards the dominant language or by slowing it down if their native language is that of the minority.

### *2.2.6 Attitudes and Values*

Negative attitudes and values towards a language can also accelerate language shift. This occurs when the ethnic language is not highly valued anymore and is no longer seen as a needed symbol of identity. Holmes (2001, p. 61) has pointed out some aspects that contribute to language shift when it is not highly valued as a language and when the language is not seen as a symbol of ethnic identity. She also assumes that positive attitudes of speakers will support efforts to continue to use the ethnic language in a variety of domains; these attitudes help people resist the unconscious pressure from the majority group to shift to their language. And she also states that young people are the fastest to shift to a new language.

Language is an important marker of identity (Yusuf et al., 2013). Identity is the way in which people express themselves through their particular language. Attachment to language will be strong if people regard themselves as a prestigious social group, which is influenced largely by how the larger society regards them. A negative ethnic identity will contribute to low prestige amongst the ethnic group. If the ethnic group does not value their language highly, it will fade because of the low status of the minority language. Moreover, if the group describes its language as useless then people in the group will have no need to learn it. Finally, the ethnic group will not use its minority language in a large variety of domains as it shifts to use the language with higher prestige.

Beside negative attitudes, there can also be positive attitudes (Bell, 2013). The positive attitudes for using the language or loyalty to the mother tongue by its users will have an extremely positive effect for the continued existence of the mother tongue in communication. The higher the loyalty of the mother tongue users, the more the existence of the mother tongue can be ensured which means that the mother tongue will be difficult to shift in the society because use of the language will be maintained. Vice versa, the lower the loyalty to the mother tongue by its users, the more potential there will be for language shift to occur.

### *2.2.7 Domains of Language Use*

Romaine (2000, p. 51) says that by looking at the language choice made by different groups of speakers in the community and seeing which language was used for a given category of interlocutor, e.g. to grandparents, age-mates, government officials, etc., it is possible to get a picture of the shift taking place. Kouritzin (1999, p. 14) further mentions that the first generation of immigrants is monolingual in the minority language. The second generation develops bilingually, learning the ethnic language first when their parents use it. However, language shift to the majority

language begins with the advent of schooling in the third generation. Kouritzin (1999) says that the first generation speaks only their first language (L1) or the minority language; the second generation speaks both their L1 and the second majority language (L2) and the third generation usually speaks only L2 but may still understand the L1. In fact, Holmes (2001, p. 59) states that young upwardly mobile people are likely to be the first and the fastest to shift. This is the effect of the young people having to get on and succeed in their society so they have to use the dominant language. Myers-Scotton (2006, p. 100) also argues that the children acquire networks that are more complex as they get older and move from parent-oriented networks to peer-oriented ones.

Consequently, language use can be analyzed using five domains according to Fishman (1972) in Holmes (2001, p. 21) which he identifies as family, friends, religion, education, and employment, where each domain has its own constellation of factors, such as location, topics and participants. Therefore, for instance, under the domain of education, an expected interaction would include a teacher and students as participants, school as the location, and how to write a composition or solve a mathematics problem as the topic.

**Table 1.** Examples of domains of language use (from Fishman (1972) in Holmes (2001, p. 21)).

<i>Domain</i>	<i>Addressee</i>	<i>Setting</i>	<i>Topic</i>
Family	Parent	Home	Planning a family party
Friendship	Friend	Beach	How to play beach tennis
Religion	Priest	Church	Choosing the Sunday liturgy
Education	Teacher	School	Solving a maths problem
Employment	Employer	Workplace	Applying for a promotion

Holmes (2001, p. 70) states that the more domains in which a minority language is used, the more chances there will be to maintain it. This means that the fewer domains a minority language is used in, the more chances there are it will shift. The family domain represents the last defense against the influence of the language of the majority. The inference is that the pattern of language shift can be seen through the domains in which the minority language, the L1, is still used.

### 2.3 Effects and Reasons of Language Shift

The language of a culture, its art and its history will die when all the people who speak that language die. Language shift can lead to the death of a language totally, leaving no speakers of that language or to the death of the language in a specific community only. Holmes (2001, p. 56) argues when all the people who speak a language die, the language dies with them. Many migrants shift their minority languages to the language of the majority in two to three generations, but that does not constitute the death of their ethnic language so long as it continues to be spoken and used by the majority in their place of origin.

In order to understand the reasons a person shifts into a dominant language, it is better to understand firstly the role of language as a means of communication in the society and the role of language in nationalism. When a language shift occurs, it is usually a shift towards the dominant language. According to Holmes (2001, p. 56), the

dominant language is associated with status, prestige and social success. It is used in glamorous contexts in the wider society, for formal speeches on ceremonial occasions, by news readers on television and radio, and by those whom young people admire: pop stars, fashion models and disc jockeys. It is scarcely surprising that many young minority group speakers should take advantage of opportunities that require them to use the major language and to abandon or neglect their own L1 language.

The status of national languages is reinforced by universal education, as well as by conscription, economic mobility and other forces that mix up the population. Whereas the separatist function refers to the feelings of the members of an ethnic group that are different and separate from other ethnic groups who speak other languages. [Harrison and Thomas \(2009\)](#) points out that one of the most fundamental ways we have of establishing our identity, and of shaping other people's views of who we are, is through our use of language. Because language is so important in the construction of individual and social identity, it can also be a powerful means of exercising social control. When a person identifies herself as belonging to a particular group or community, this often means adopting the language and the linguistic conventions of that group. This can be referred to as social success.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This research was carried out in Langsa, one of the cities in Aceh province, Indonesia, and used a qualitative research design. According to [Bogdan and Biklen \(1992, p. 62\)](#), qualitative research is frequently called naturalistic because the researcher frequents places where the events he or she is interested in, naturally occur. There are five sub-districts in Langsa: Langsa Barat, Langsa Timur, Langsa Lama, Langsa Baro and Langsa Kota.

The subjects in the study were Acehnese who were teens or young adults in the age range of 15-26 years. The researchers selected ten young Acehnese from each sub-district by casual random sampling, so the total number of respondents was 50 Acehnese. Data was collected using observations, a questionnaire and interviews. The techniques used for getting the results had four steps, they were:

1. The researchers prepared a questionnaire which had deep open-ended questions following on from answers to the first simple questions to get deep answers from the informants.
2. Next, the researchers transcribed the data from the interviews.
3. Then the researchers analysed the data from the questionnaires.
4. Finally, the researchers made conclusions from the data.

### **4. RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Data Analysis**

The analysis of data is related to the language shift from 50 young Acehnese occurring in Langsa. Results for the shift of language from Acehnese to Indonesian is set out in Table 2.

**Tabel 2.** The ability to use Acehese for all topic of communications.

<i>District</i>		<i>No</i>	<i>Shift (Complete)</i>	<i>Bilingual (Partly)</i>
1	Langsa Kota	10	6	4
2	Langsa Timur	10	6	4
3	Langsa Lama	10	3	7
4	Langsa Baroe	10	5	5
5	Langsa Barat	10	3	7
Totals		50	23	27

Table 2 shows that twenty-three respondents, 46%, had shifted completely from Acehese, while twenty-seven others, 54%, were still bilingual in both Acehese and Indonesian. Hence, for communicating, an almost equal number/percentage have completed the language shift to Indonesian and remained bilingual in both languages. This can be a benchmark for language enhancement amongst teenagers that must be anticipated by language speakers and observers of language, especially of Acehese, which shows that Acehese is on the brink of extinction as proposed by Grimes (1996).

These symptoms, of potential language extinction spoken of by Grimes (1996), should get full attention to encourage the use of the mother tongue or Acehese by the younger generations. Grimes (1996) mentions the extinction of a language will occur if there is a neglect or cessation of the mother tongue by young speakers and if the last generation of speakers (i.e. the youth) are no longer able to fully use the mother tongue, meaning they only have passive mastery of the language, where passive means some understanding without the ability to fully speak the language. It is clear that the younger generation is the most powerful group of speakers who can cause a language to become extinct by ignoring the use of the mother tongue, as well as by shifting to the majority language.

#### 4.2 Domains of Language Shift

According to Fishman (1972), the use of language can be analyzed using five domains: family, friendship, religion, education, and work (Fishman in Fishman, 2006; Holmes, 2001, p. 21). Each domain has its own factors, such as locations, topics, and users. Because most of these young people from Langsa are not yet working, so the language shift analysis only covers four domains of language use, namely: family, friendship, education, and religion. The results from the interviews are shown in Tables 3 and 4.

**Table 3.** The domains of language shift the five sub-districts of Langsa.

<i>Sub-Districts Domains</i>		<i>Shift Condition</i>		
		<i>Shift</i>	<i>Maintain</i>	<i>Bilingual</i>
Langsa Barat	Family	4	5	1
	Friendship	6	3	1
	Religion	4	4	2
	Education	6	2	2
Langsa Timur	Family	2	-	8
	Friendship	4	-	6
	Religion	3	-	7
	Education	9	-	1

Table 3 continued...

Langsa Baroe	Family	4	<b>4</b>	2
	Friendship	4	2	4
	Religion	5	2	3
	Education	6	3	1
Langsa Lama	Family	3	3	4
	Friendship	5	3	2
	Religion	7	2	1
	Education	8	2	-
Langsa Kota	Family	5	3	2
	Friendship	7	-	3
	Religion	5	2	3
	Education	8	-	2

**Table 4.** Domains of language shift in Langsa in total.

<i>Domains</i>	<i>Total Respondents</i>
Family	18
Friendship	27
Religion	20
Education	41

Tables 3 and 4 shows that shifts were most common in the domain of education, followed by friendship, religion and then by family.

### 4.3 Reasons for language Shift

Theoretically there are three common reasons for language shift and language maintenance, namely: cultural identity, the value of a language and prestige, however this study found three other reasons for language shift: environment, habitual language usage and choice of language. The initials are the subjects of this study who are kept anonymous.

**Table 5.** Reasons for language shift.

<i>Sub-Districts</i>	<i>Environment &amp; Choice of Language</i>	<i>Language Choice &amp; Habitual Language Use</i>	<i>Environment &amp; Habitual Language Use</i>	<i>Environment</i>	<i>Choice of Language</i>	<i>Habitual Language Use</i>
Langsa Kota	CK, SA	TM	IF, FY, DS	ST	DL, DK, SR	-
Langsa Lama	-	-	ID	ES, NA, SS, SQ	VS	TD, PB, U, RI
Langsa Baroe	RA			AM, AR	RN, IN, NW	AM, MA, NA, MZ
Langsa Timur				IW, MA, AA, NM, TH	MW, AP	VB, CP, AH
Langsa Barat				FA, SF, RY, NR	JI, RM, RG, IU, PR	RA
Totals	3	1	4	16	14	12

From Table 5 above, it can be seen that from the fifty respondents, three of them said that the reason for their shift of language was due to their environment and choice of language, as mentioned by respondents CK and SA who came from Langsa Kota and Langsa Baro sub-districts, as explained in the following interview transcription (R refers to Researcher and other initials are the subjects):

*R: Why don't you use Acehese? What are your reasons?*

*CK: Hmm, it comes from my parents, because my parents never made me, so I can't speak Acehese.*

*R: Is there any reason you don't use Acehese?*

*SA: What?*

*R: I mean, you said before that you don't speak Acehese, I mean what's the reason? Do you feel ashamed, or proud, or some other reasons?*

*SA: Maybe because many of our neighbors don't speak Acehese, yea, so eventually (we're) like this (laugh) we're not clever...can't (speak it) any more....many words we can't understand so we don't try to speak it.*

Other reasons that were found in the interviews were choice of language plus habitual language use. The respondent's environment and their choice of language became their main reasons for shifting their vernacular language as these speakers had a tendency to use Acehese only in certain situations and conditions.

Some respondents also said that they would adjust to their interlocutors when speaking with other people. Those who had the ability to speak both Acehese and Indonesian well would adjust their use of both to the needs of their interactions with the community. These typical respondents can be grouped as bilingual speakers, who can use both languages well in accordance with the situation and the conditions.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

The domains of education and friendship were the domain with the most shifters, namely, education with 30 and friendship with 27 respondents. Meanwhile, the family domain had the least shifters. So it can be concluded that language shift occurs least in the family domain. Moreover, there are three fundamental factors that influenced the language shift: the environment, the language habitually used and their choice of language. The predominant factors that influence teenagers to shift from their vernacular language in each domain were their environment and their choice of language.

From the results of this research, it is recommended that Acehese parents encourage positive attitudes and continue practice of Acehese with their children to maintain their childrens' use of Acehese. It is also recommended that other researchers pay more attention to the use of local languages and show more interest in studying local languages as part of cultural heritage. Finally, the local Acehese governments should promote local language studies and that they play an active role in preserving local languages by holding various local activities using the local languages in Aceh.

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