LINGUA LITERA
Journal of English Linguistics and Literature
http://journal.stba-prayoga.ac.id

An Informal Representation of the Language Spoken by Children from the Nias Ethnic Group in Banuaran

Wisewarna Nazara
Wa'özisökhi Nazara
Oktavianus*

STBA Prayoga Padang
*Universitas Andalas
nazara_2010@gmail.com

Abstract

This research aims to identify the language used by children from Nias ethnic families in Banuaran as well as the reason for using the language. The writers wanted to know what language is used and the possible use of other languages and code-mixing performed by these children in various situations, including at home, in the community of Nias, and in other places. The authors would like to know the reason of the selection and use of the language. The authors used and presented the analysis based on the data obtained is descriptive. The authors conducted observations on the use of language by children at home and in the community of Nias Banuaran Family Association (IKNB). The authors uses several instruments in retrieving data in the form of recordings and the questioner to be filled by children and parents. It was found that children from the Nias ethnic group in Banuaran use Indonesian and Minangkabau language. They use the languages due to neighborhood environment, family condition, and negative perception on Nias ethnic group. This reveals that the children's language choice is functional/motivated.

Keywords: *Language use, mixed language, Indonesian language, Minangkabau language, Nias language, children from Nias ethnic group in Banuaran.*

I. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Problem

Mother tongue or mother language is the language that a person learns to use from the beginning of his/her life. According to Oxford Dictionary, mother tongue is "the language that you first learn to speak when you are a child." It is the very first language in which a child develops his/her speaking capability. One

usually inherits one's mother tongue from one's parents and it usually shows a person's origin. Mother tongue is learned by children unconsciously throughout their early lives and perfected during teenage and adult age. It is done through the process of getting able to know and use a language in the process of language acquisition.

Though the basic assumption is that children will automatically grasp and absorb language knowledge mainly from their parents' communication at home, yet it will not guarantee that the children will be able to use their parents' language as their mother tongue. There are other factors which also determine whether the children will use the mother language of their parents or not. One of these factors is the dwindling of the children's eagerness to learn and use their ethnic group language. When this happens, it leaves the parents' mother tongue without any successor to the language and knowledge it brought. This situation leads to "language death", which is defined by Matthews (1997) as "disappearance of a language, especially when speakers shift progressively to another or others."

In Indonesia as throughout the world, the spread of globalization and the greater chance to communicate with other people force people from different backgrounds, and so languages, to establish communication in between the parties. A problem arises when the languages used by the parties are different. This leaves the parties in a difficulty in sending and receiving other party's message and information. There are two ways in which this barrier of communication may be broken: first, by both parties using a second language that is not the native language of either party; second, by one of the parties acceding to the use of the other party's language and not using their own.

The need for communication with other people affects language acquisition. When a family lives with other families which have different backgrounds in one community, they will communicate in a language they both accept. Thus, they have to use only one language in order to make life effective and efficient. For example, in Banuaran Sub-district, Padang City, West Sumatra Province, Indonesia, there live some Nias ethnic group families. The children of these families grow up in and are exposed to different languages performed by their family, friends, and neighbors. Therefore, they have the opportunity to know and use more than one language in the neighborhood.

This research sets out to investigate whether the children of Nias families in Banuaran use one language for all their communication activity or whether one of the languages becomes the dominant

language or even the only language they master. In addition, it looks at whether they use different languages toward different people. The focus of this research is the language used by children of Nias families in Banuaran for communication both in the family and in society, as well as on finding the reason for the children's language choice.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

The question arises as to whether the children of parents who belong to the Nias ethnic group in Banuaran are able to use the Nias language well. The environments of multiculturalism and the fact that these families live not in their ethnic origins area, are closely related to language acquisition and the code they use in their spoken interaction. The need of interaction with people who are native to other languages will force these children to be able to break the barriers when they communicate.

Based on the background that has been described above, the writers set out two problems related to the language spoken by children of Nias ethnic group in Banuaran as follows:

1. What language(s) do the children of Nias ethnic group in Banuaran speak?
2. What are the reasons for the children to use the language(s) in their verbal communication?

The objectives of this research are to find answers to the research problems stated above. It is firstly aimed to find out the language used by children of Nias ethnic group in Banuaran for their communication. Second, this research tried to reveal the factors that stimulate the children in choosing a certain language in their communication.

II. Review of Related Literature
2.1 The Use of Language(s) in Multicultural Society

According to Treffers-Daller et al. (2016) communication in modern times shows that borrowing, code-switching, and many kinds of use and combination of more than one language in the daily communication is inevitable. She notes that using more than one language at a time is something practiced unconsciously by bilinguals or multilingual speakers and that conscious efforts to genuinely use just one language in their conversation are impossible.

There are some researchers who distinguish bilingualism from multilingualism by the number of languages a person can communicate through. Treffers-Daller (2016) notes that Bloomfield (1933) claims that "A bilingual should possess "native-like control of two or more languages"", but that "Others, such as Weinreich (1953) and Grosjean (1997) propose definitions that are based

on language use rather than language competence." In this study the writers define both bilingual and multilingual as 'able to speak more than one language', or "able to communicate by using more than one language no matter the languages mastery of the speaker."

2.2 The Reasons for Using Certain Language(s)

The language used by someone depends on several factors. Holmes (1992, p.12) suggests that for speakers, there are four factors which determine how people select their code for communication. The first is the person who speaks and the target person or the addressee. The second is the setting or social context of the interaction. The third is the topic of the communication. The fourth is the function or the motives behind the communication. While these factors are found in adults who are exposed to multilingualism and the importance of selecting their spoken language, it may also happen to the children who have gained their first and second languages.

Humans behave according to the social situation they face. The way people talk with persons from different backgrounds is likely different. Indonesian people have many ways to behave in their speech towards different people of different ages or different social status.

The status relationship between people may be relevant in selecting the appropriate code. Therefore they tend to adjust the language they use to meet the social requirement. Otherwise, they may be judged as impolite, uneducated or uncivilized beings.

The region where people lives also determines the code they choose. When people live in a certain region, of course they are affected by the customs of that region. This includes the way people speak to each other. The region a person grows up in determines that person's, that is, their ethnicity. For example, people who live in Italy master Italian language and customs. People who live in France master French language and culture. Therefore, even though people from different regions of the world may live in the same region, their social backgrounds can be seen in the way they speak. The social and environmental factor of having neighbors who are different in ethnics or language leads people to know and use more than one language in order to bridge the mind between the speaker and the addressee.

In contrast with adult in determining the language used to communicate, children are less able to adjust their spoken language consciously. Instead, they must learn to master at least a language with assistance of the people who have spoken interaction with them. Clark et al. (1985,

p.19) state that the language that will be acquired by children is the language they are exposed to and that is spoken to them. This statement is further emphasized by Hoff (2009) who states that "in order for language acquisition to occur, the environment must meet those abilities by providing children with communicative experience. Linguistically rich and responsive communicative environments promote optimal language development."

According to Dantas et al. (2011, p.53), some parents from certain ethnic groups have a tendency to avoid the use of their native language for their children first language acquisition. This is because they see their ethnic language as impractical for their children in their communication. The concept is that there is another language that would bring more benefits to the children than the parents' ethnic language. Thus, the children will be encouraged to be able to use a language which has broader use outside their ethnic group. Clark et al (1985, p.20) claimed that though a child was born into one community, it does not automatically implicate the child as a native speaker of the community. The native language for a child is basically the language used at home and child's interaction in community. Hence, it is impossible for someone to be proficient to a language without sufficient exposure to the language.

In terms of the transmission of a language from one generation to another, the use of more than one language has significant effects. Dantas et al. (2011, p. 53) found that basically the majority of the parents still want their children to be able to use their native language. However, many of them do not encourage their children to use to their own ethnic language. Therefore, when this happens, the children would have a tendency to have little knowledge of, and little desire to use the language. This is the result the parents' act which does not represent the interest in their own language.

Moreover, contact with other communities may lead into "Speaker Innovation". This is described by Holmes (1992, p. 211) as an act of using other language which is done spontaneously or by imitating speakers from other communities. If speakers introduce innovations and they are accepted and used by their communities, this may lead to change in the speaker's language. Thus innovation from multicultural contact can be seen as a threat toward the maintenance of an ethnic languages. In other words, multiculturalism may cause a language to be influenced by the innovation, change, mixed with other language, or it may even cause the language to become extinct.

While multiculturalism in relation with bilingualism is likely lead into

language change in future generations, it should not be blamed solely for language death or language shift. According to Purwo (1999, p. 47), the willingness from the government and members of the ethnic group to support their language are the main factors for language survival. The ethnic group members have to be creative in making their language as useful as possible and insist that their new generations inherit their language. According to Romaine (2015, p. 32), "Because such a large part of any language is culture-specific, people often feel that an important part of their traditional culture and identity is also lost when that language disappears".

2.3 Previous Studies

Octorina (2014), in her thesis titled, "Code Mixing Found in Cinemags Magazine and Camera Digital Magazine", analyzed code mixing used in magazines. She examined the reasons why the writers tend to mix some language in writing articles in the magazine. She stated that one main reason in which people use two or more languages in delivering utterances towards other people is because the speaker considers another or other languages which he/she added is prestigious. Thus, this research found out that the writers on the magazine use code mixing because it indicates the

"predominance" and "achievement" of the magazine.

Research done by Suandi (2013) showed the malformations in the language used by ethnic Chinese speakers in the city of Padang. The Chinese people in Padang are descendants of Chinese immigrants to Padang but they do not belong to the native group of this region, the Minangkabau ethnic group. Therefore, in the interaction with other people, they have to do something to be able to communicate with others. After generations, the Chinese people in Padang are heavily influenced by Indonesian language and Minangkabau language in terms of borrowing, code mixing, and code switching. The majority of ethnic Chinese people in Padang cannot speak, write, or even understand utterances of Chinese language. However, their spoken communication is still affected by their ancestor dialects. This is reflected in vowel changes that occur in the language they use. In many examples Suandi shows in his research, the languages they borrow from Minangkabau language are sometimes a bit different from the language used by common Minangkabau people in Padang.

There are several reasons why there are variations in the use of the language among the ethnic Chinese in Padang. First, the geographical condition of Pondok area

was very strategic as the economic hub and one of the culinary centers in Padang. Second, the lacks of openness of Chinese ethnic population itself against people of different tribes separates them socially. Ethnic Chinese in Padang tend to prefer communicating and interacting with fellow Chinese rather than with people from other ethnicities. They usually live in area which is populated by ethnic Chinese. The Chinese people in Padang are also less eager to do activities outside the Pondok area. Third, the Chinese people have trouble pronouncing the letter 'p' and 'r' in the dialect of their ancestral heritage. All these factors contributed to the language variations they use.

Similar research was done by Pai (2005) concerning the relation between multilingualism and multiculturalism in the education system of Indian children in Mumbai city, India. He found out that in the city people use three official languages and sixteen major languages. This multiculturalism is attributed by the presence of immigrants from the region itself and other areas in India. The effect of multiculturalism was so heavy that children had been exposed to at least four languages since the very beginning of their childhood. In order to accommodate this diversity in language, the school used several Indian native languages as well as English, as their lingua franca. However,

he also found that although the children are exposed to and use other languages outside the home, many families successfully transmitted their ethnic language to the children. Therefore, the effect of this multiculturalism was the code switching demonstrated by children at home and in the school. Code mixing was present due to the incomplete understanding of their parents' language while attempting to speak in another language. The cross ethnic communications also involved the act of borrowing utterances from other languages which were difficult to express in certain languages.

The research concluded that there are three factors of the children's ability to use several languages in addition to their native language while being native speaker of their own ethnic language. The first is that even though they lived with other ethnic groups in the region and they have to adjust themselves to others, they keep their original language and take pride in it. This prevented further language change. This was largely attributed to the willingness and insistence of the parents to use their ethnic language for communication at home. Second, there was a constant pressure on the children to be able to use English language and to learn it from the start of their study since this language is considered prestigious and

a necessity. Third, in the educational system for children in India, the schools tried to adjust to the children languages. This means that even though English is taught in every school, the school itself has the right to use several languages, mainly those spoken by the majority of students in the learning process to ensure that the children grasp the materials.

III. Methods of Research
3.1 Type of Research

The research in this study is qualitative rather than quantitative. Qualitative research, as defined by Creswell (2009, p. 4), "is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem." Human problems include, among other things, language, which, as formulated by Cruz-Ferreira and Abraham (2006, p. 1) is "a system of human communication which uses arbitrary signs (e.g. voice sounds, hand gestures, or written symbols) in combination, according to established principles or rules."

Qualitative research is charactized by natural setting, where data are gathered directly by talking to people and watching them behave; the researcher is the key instrument; various sources of data are collected, such as interviews, observations, and documents, rather than a single source.

Qualitative research is also characterized by the researcher's interpretation of what he sees, hears, and understands.

Atmazaki (2007, p.208) states some characteristics of qualitative research which are similar to those set out by Creswell. According to Atmazaki, qualitative research is type of research in which the data is collected by direct observation and analysis of the data. Therefore, besides collecting the data from interview and being involved in natural situation of the informant, the researcher has to interpret the phenomenon he gets through the data. According to Zacharias (2012, p.9), the purpose of qualitative research purpose is to understand human behavioural phenomena. This is further explained by Stainback et al (1988, p.12) saying that the purpose of qualitative research "is geared toward gaining and increased understanding of the ideas, feelings, motives, and beliefs behind people's actions".

3.2 Data Sources

According to Stainback et al. (1988, p.15), data sources of qualitative research are subjective data. The data are present in people's minds. It is typically expressed or visible in natural language. In order to get appropriate and representative results, the writers selected certain data sources based on the two research questions presented in

Section II. In line with this, the writers chose ten children from the Nias ethnic group in Banuaran aged from 6 to 18 years old as the primary data source. This is based on writers' assumption that up to 18 years old, children are still in the process of acquiring their first language and shaping it into adult language proficiency. The children in the study have at least one parent who speaks the language. The data collected involve spoken communication with adults, especially their parents at home. The writers also wanted to note the way the children spoke with other adults in their own ethnic community. The writers gathered data from interactions between parents and children as well as between the children themselves. The sources and information were selected specifically to answer the research questions stated in Chapter Two.

3.3 Data Collection

The writers collected the data needed according to the qualitative research data collection method. As Atmazaki (2007, p. 209) states, "in a qualitative approach, usually, data are collected through interviews, direct observations, or reading and reconstruction of the text." In line with this, the researchers observed and recorded the communication process during the writers' visit to the children's houses. In addition, the writers observed and recorded interaction between adult and children in annual monthly meetings for Nias ethnic group in Banuaran, Ikatan Keluaraga Nias Banuaran (IKNB). The writers interviewed both the parents and the children to try to understand the conscious reason for the children's usage and choice of language. During the research, the writers tested the children's ability to use their ethnic language; whether the children understood utterances in Nias or not. The writers used three instruments in gathering the data: voice recording, note taking, and a set of questions.

In order to get valid data, the writers recorded and transcribed the conversations that involved children during the monthly gathering of the Nias family ethnic group organization in Banuaran (Ikatan Keluarga Nias Banuaran or IKNB translated as Banuaran Nias Family Community). Unfortunately, there was trouble with the recording device that the writers had not realized before which resulted in almost completely unclear recordings of one of the four meetings held between March and July.

Another problem was that the three remaining recordings though hearable, are also not easy to transcribe. The overlapping conversation makes identification of speakers and speeches difficult to understand. Another problem

that occurred was the dominance of conversation and speech of adult members. Children may not speak louder than the adult does since it is considered impolite. They are obligated to respect the adult who is delivering his/her speech or ideas. As the result, the children's voices are difficult to hear and keep track of. In addition not all the recordings were completely transcribed due to the length of some of the meetings.

The writers also conducted direct interviews and observation by going to the Nias family houses. Before coming to the interviewees' houses, the writers had prepared a questionnaire for children and parents. One or two children and parent(s) were given similar questionnaires. The questionnaire's purpose is mainly for documentary. It contains several questions concerning the identity of interviewee. Then there are several questions related to this research. The children's questionnaire had a small test to examine the children's knowledge of Nias language. It consists of 24 simple Indonesian words that have to be translated into Nias equivalents. In addition, there are 5 questions that have to be answered in Nias language

The writers first greeted the adults and children in Nias language and asked several questions in Nias language to the children mainly about their identity and condition. The writers asked several

questions as stated in questionnaire before handing the questionnaire to the children. The writers also recorded the whole process through voice recording while asking the children several questions based on the questionnaire. It must be noted that some children left some questions in the questionnaire unanswered so the answers were written down by the writers to help those children who were not able to write by themselves.

1.4 Data Analysis

After collecting all of the data required to do the analysis, the writers compared the data. Then the data were sorted into categories according to the language the children use. After that, these data were compared, with the research that has been done by previous researchers and theories proposed by experts as presented in chapter two of this research, and then interpreted, discussed and presented according to qualitative descriptive manner.

IV. Findings

In this section, the writers present the findings of research, and discuss them. The findings and discussion focus on two main points. The first point is about the language used by the children of Nias ethnic group in Banuaran, namely whether the children use their parents' native language (Nias language) or the

Minangkabau language (as the language of native people in Padang and one of the languages used in the neighborhood), or Indonesian (which is the national language and used in formal situation and obviously used at school). This means that the writers will identify whether the children prefer the use of one language over the others. The second point is the findings about and discussion of the reason for the children's use of the language.

4.1 Language Used by Nias Ethnic Group Children in Banuaran.

Children of Nias families in Banuaran live in diversity. Banuaran itself was transformed from paddy field, swamp, and forest into housing complex in the 1990's. Therefore, most of the inhabitants are new settlers. While the majority of population in Banuaran belongs to the Minangkabau ethnic group, there are significant numbers of other ethnicities in the sub district. The children have interaction with people who are different in background. The interactions undoubtedly influence the children's speaking ability and language knowledge.

Based on writers observation, Nias ethnic children in Banuaran mainly use Indonesian language as their native language or their chosen language of speech. This is seen clearly in the transcriptions of the recordings and the questionaires. The children use Indonesian language in their neighborhood almost all the time. They use it to greet and talk to guests, to play with other children in their neighborhood, and to shop at *warung*, minimarket or certain store. If the persons with whom they interact use Minangkabau language, then most children replies are in Indonesian language.

While they speak mainly in Indonesian, the children do understand Minangkabau language. Sometimes some of the children do use Minangkabau language to talk to Minang ethnic who speak Minangkabau language or Non-Minang ethnic who speak Minangkabau language to them, mainly still mixing it with Indonesian words. Thus, children who are barely able to speak Minangkabau language use Indonesian with some Minang word inserted. Some others do code switching with their neighborhood, depending on whom they talked to. Amid these facts, the writers' interviews and observations showed that children of the Nias ethnic group in Banuaran prefer Indonesian language to the Minangkabau language or Nias language for their general communication in their neighborhood.

For their conversation at schools, children utilize Indonesian language for their interactions toward their schoolmates and during the lesson. However, one of the

boys admitted that he uses Minang more often than Indonesian for the interaction with his close friend at school. This is different from girls. All girls the writers interviewed insisted that they use Indonesian language in almost any situation and with any person they faced. While the result varies, from the writers' direct observation as well as the children's confessions, it is obvious that most Nias children in Banuaran prefer to use Indonesian language for interaction at school. It is noteworthy that even when they encounter other Nias ethnic children at school, they do not use Nias language.

The interactions with parents yield the similar results. Almost all children use Indonesian language for their communication with their parents. Some of the children, notably boys, may sometimes use Minang words and expression such as *"Maleh mah"* which is translated as *"I am not interested to do that"* or *"I do not want to do that"* and a few other words for informal communication. This exception is mainly to express negative things such as: rejection and disagreement. Surprisingly, the children would not use Nias language to reject or expressing disagreement. This fact is in line with Daller et al. (2016) that communication shows that borrowing, code-switching, and any kinds of the use and combination of more than one

language in the daily communication is inevitable.

The children's language choice for their brothers or sisters showed no difference. For most of the time, children use Indonesian language toward their siblings. In spite of this, children do sometimes use Minang words, not merely as a sentence but for insertion or code mixing with Indonesian language.

For the rest of the discussion the writers refer to the father's name by using the term *ama* followed by the name of the oldest child as is common in Nias, and *ina* for the mother. For example, in Ama Cristin Laoli's house, there was a sentence spoken by the oldest child, namely Cristin Laoli, complaining that the youngest child, Wilman, about his attitude. The sentence is: *"Ma, Si Wilman 'ni lari-lari se. Mada bana anak 'ni la!"* In this sentence, *mada* 'stubborn' and *bana* 'really' are Minang words. However, this was the only use of a Minang word of the children that the writers encountered during the visit.

Nias people greet each other by saying *"Ya'ahowu"* which should be replied to by *"Ya'ahowu"* also. Upon arrival, the writers also greeted the family with *"Ya'ahowu"*. However, when the writers asked about the children's condition by saying *"Hadia duria?"* which means *"How are you?"* in English, about half of the children failed to answer

properly. The answer should be *"Turia si s ökhi"* means *"I am fine"*. As the writers observed throughout the interviews, all children answered a question either in Nias only or Indonesian only. For interaction with people who use Nias language, children would not use Minangkabau language.

All of the findings above are from children who were born out of Nias Island, specifically, all were born in Padang. A different finding is apparent in only one participant who was a native, born and raised in Nias Island with both parents being Nias ethnic. She was a 15 years old informant, and had spent less than a year in Padang. She is very fluent in Nias language and correctly answered the entire questionnaire in the test in Nias. She speaks Indonesian with a Nias accent. The girl came to the writers' house with her aunt and both spoke in Nias language without any difficulty. She was apparently very confident in speaking in Nias language whenever possible and she admitted it.

In short, almost all children who were born out of Nias Island mainly use Indonesian language for inter-family communication. Although there is only a small occasion of code mixing between Indonesian and Minangkabau language, it did not happen with the Nias language. No children speak Nias language combined with Indonesian language or Nias language with Minangkabau language. In other words, there is no code-switching or code-mixing between Nias and Indonesian or Nias and Minang. Some of the parents claimed that they occasionally use Nias language toward their children. Children admit that they do understand some Nias words in sentences spoken by their parents but choose to reply in Indonesian instead.

During the gathering of Nias ethnic family in Banuaran, the writers observed the way children communicate in their communities. The children used Indonesian language almost all the time they interact with other people. The interactions between parents and children were done in Indonesian language, not using any Minangkabau words or Nias words. An example is one IKNB gathering on February when the writers took note in this occasion and watched a father asking his children to pass an amount of money from the mother. The conversation between father (call name: Ama Litus), mother (call name: Ina Litus), and Child (call name: Sovia) is as follows:

> Ama Litus (whispering and gesturing to Ina Litus): "Uangnya."(*The money.*")
>
> Ina Litus (to the child): "Kasihkan (uang) ini sama papa. "(*Give this (money) to your father.*")
>
> Sovia (giving the money to Ama

Litus): "Pa, titipan mama." ("*Dad, from mom.*")

The use of Indonesian language was encounted not only in the occasion mentioned above. Indonesian language was also used in other occasions, in interactions between adults and the children. Adults or parents seemed unwilling to use Nias language when they communicate. Adults did not use Minangkabau language either, though they have knowledge and ability to speak it. The adults tend to use Indonesian language. The influence of their ethnicity during their speech to the children is very limited to the tone of their speech sound.

The interaction among children during the meeting was also done in Indonesian language. Children spoke to each other by using Indonesian language. They rarely inserted Minang words. Another finding was that during March through July meeting, the writers observed that children never used any Nias language among themselves. Not even a single Nias word was spoken during child-to-child conversation.

4.2 The Reasons on Why Nias Ethnic Group Children Use a Language

Children of Nias families in Banuaran use Indonesian language for their daily communication. They use Indonesian language at home, in the neighborhood, at school, and in the Nias ethnic family gatherings. Even when their parents talk to them in Nias language, children would answer in Indonesian language. The children lack knowledge of Nias language and prefer to use Indonesian language for their communication. Based on the questionnaire, interview, and direct observation that the writers have done, the writers are going to discuss the reasons behind the phenomena revealed in the previous section about the language spoken by children of Nias ethnic group in Banuaran.

The first reason is the environmental influences in which the children are living. The writers found out that all children who are not able to speak Nias language fluently were born and grown up outside Nias Island, the native land of Nias people. Almost all children correspondents were born in Padang. They confirmed this fact in the questionnaire as well as when the writers asked orally. This is similar to what Suandi (2013) found for the ethnic Chinese in Padang who do not speak Chinese. The reason for the change in code used for communication after generations was the need of using the language used by common people in the region in order to communicate with the majority of population and the need to interaction with other ethnicities.

Most of the interactions between Nias children and their neighbors were mostly done in Indonesian Language. This factor is in line with the theory that the writers have stated in section II. Holmes (1992, p.12) said that the choice of the language for communication depends on the languages understood by both the speaker and the addressee. On some occasions children used Indonesian language with the insertion of Minang words or Minangkabau language in response to their neighbor's speech in Minangkabau language. The use of Indonesian or Minang in these environments contributes to the lack of children's Nias language skills and language.

All Nias children who participated in this research had visited Nias Island at least once. Of these children, no one had ever stayed in Nias for a year. In addition, all Padang-born children have never lived for more than a year in a situation in which Nias people are the majority. Most children's motives staying in Nias for a period of time is only because they had family events such as visiting sick relative, attending wedding ceremony, funeral, or for visiting their family's origin region. No family brings their child to Nias island to live and grow up there. In short, the Nias children family in Banuaran are not used to living in neighborhood in which Nias is the majority language for long enough to influence their language skills.

The environment where most children grew up for a long time is in Banuaran Sub-District, Padang city, the capital of West Sumatra province. In Banuaran, ethnic Nias people live in disperse groups. The people to whom they speak in the block do not use Nias language and do not have knowledge about Nias language. This results in the need to use language other than Nias. This is also happening to some children who had lived in nearby sub-districts in the city before moved in Banuaran. As a result, they use Indonesian language since they know that the other party must have knowledge and skill in it.

The next motive on parents' use of Indonesian language toward their children is that they believe that children mastery in Indonesian language will bring significant opportunity for the children in the future. This statement was mentioned by Ama Tessa. He said that parents put a priority to make their children fluent in Indonesian backed by the fact that Indonesian language is the language that every Indonesian should master, especially if they are going to work as professionals. Therefore, the children have to be fluent in Indonesian before entering their first education, whether it is kindergarten or

primary school. According to Christensen (2007, p. 3), the immigrant ability to use language of instruction has impact on whether the child succeeds in the future because it is used in situations of work, in formal institutions and at school. If an immigrant child wants to get better understanding at learning material at school, they have to try to master that particular language.

Another motive on why parents and children interactions mainly use Indonesian language at home is the practicality. A parent admitted that they give up speaking in Nias language because they getting tired of hearing the answer in Indonesian. On the other hand, the children do not have enough vocabulary to understand the full sentence and to answer it in Nias language. Therefore, using Nias language is not practical and may prolong the process of delivering the message. Parents had to translate it into Indonesian if the children do not understand the meaning. This fact is in line with Alyazed (2016, p. 263), "One of the most important factors causing immigrant students' native language loss in immigrant family is parents' choice of home languages." Due to the lack of interaction in Nias language at home, children became unable to speak and understand the language.

Unlike the Indonesian language which is learnt from their parents, children of Nias parents do not learn Minang through communication with their parents. All parents almost never speak and avoid speaking in Minangkabau language with their children. Therefore, the writers assumed that the Minangkabau language knowledge and skills is received through socialization and interaction out of the home. This is in line with the social network theory. O'Grady et al (2001, p. 573) stated that people tend to have similar speech pattern to those who have certain ties of relationship. In this case, the children seem to get their Minangkabau language knowledge from their neighborhood and their friends.

One of children's parents, who has two children at junior high school stage, admitted that many Nias children are not confident to show their origin. He claimed that it is the common attitude from children towards Nias language. He said that there is stigma that Nias people are seen as backward, uneducated, unemployed criminals, and emotional. One father claimed that Nias children do not feel the confidence to speak in Nias language. Of all the children who participated in this research, the writers observed that the child from this family is the only child that the writers saw as too shy to speak Nias language and refused his father persuasions to speak more Nias language at home. The writers know the

father very well as being a good person. Thus the writers assumed that the image of a particular ethnic group has an impact on the children's willingness to learn the language.

As stated above, the stigma related to ethnicity may cause rejection by the children of being associated with that ethnicity's attributes such as language.

Baker (2004, p. 92) found that, "The locally felt status and prestige of a language plays a major part in acceptance or rejection of a language. . . . Even a young child may decide not to use a language because they recognize it has negative associations. . . . When one language is associated with relative material poverty, or a particular ethnicity or religion, then there are occasions when young children reproduce the prejudice, fear, and stereotyping of dominant adults and media messages."

In an IKNB meetings, adults use Indonesian and Nias language for adult to adult conversation and speech. However, when talking with the children, adults almost never used Nias language. This was partly because they know that children are likely not able to understand their message. Rather than trying to explain their speech or translate it to Indonesian, adults deliberately use Indonesian language. In this case, practicality implies on the lack of interaction using parents' native language. This is another reason why the children in Nias ethnic group in Banuaran lack of skills in this language. Even though they were surrounded by people in the same ethnic group as them, they were never involved in conversation in Nias language. Thus, children may assume that they do not need to be fluent in Nias language because they can use Indonesian language to interact with other Nias ethnic people.

V. **Conclusion**

Children from the Nias ethnic group in Banuaran use Indonesian language as their main language of communication. Indonesian language is also the language children use at home with parents, siblings, and other relatives. Moreover, they use Indonesian in formal situations such as at school or public places. Children also use Indonesian language to speak with older persons they meet. In the situation when they were surrounded by several Nias people, children still use Indonesian language. Most children also use Indonesian for same-age interaction including interaction with other Nias children.

Some children of Nias families do understand Minangkabau language. The exposure to Minangkabau language gives them knowledge in this language. However, Minangkabau language is not

used at home. Thus, they use it in limited context outside their family. It is mainly used to reply to another speaker who starts the conversation in Minangkabau language. Some children use Minangkabau language at school, mainly with a close friend.

Except for a participant who was born in Nias, other children from Nias family groups in Banuaran do not use Nias language. Even though their parents are fluent in speaking in Nias language, children who were born in Padang are not able to speak Nias language fluently. Most of them do not have enough knowledge and vocabulary in Nias language to be able to speak it. They do know a few Nias words with varying degrees of knowledge. Parents try to speak in Nias language to their children but fail to make their children reply in the language. In addition, the children also do not use Nias language in the situation where they meet Nias people in group.

There are several reasons why children use Indonesian as their mother tongue rather than Nias or Minangkabau language. The first is the environment: there is a lack of Nias language speakers in the neighborhood. Children do not meet Nias people in the neighborhood who are willing and able to speak in Nias to them. Most people in the neighborhood only understand and are able to speak either in Indonesian or Minangkabau language.

Children also never live in Nias majority neighborhood or live in Nias Island long enough to affect their language.

Second, parents mainly use Indonesian language at home because of the thought of opportunity and practicality. Parents want children to master Indonesian first because they are aware that it is a language of instruction at school and in most professional workplace. On the other hand, Nias language is not used by many people. Even not all Nias people use Nias language. Because of the constant exposure to Indonesian language and the pressure to use Indonesian language, Nias and Minangkabau languages are not used since it is simpler to use Indonesian language, the language children have already mastered.

Another reason for the lack of use of Nias by children is fear of negative stigma. The children want to avoid the stigma of being part of negative image brought by other members of the ethnicity in the past of being uneducated, unemployed, criminal and low. Children try hard to get better position by using other language. The use of Indonesian brings a neutral connotation since it is used by people from different ethnicities. Some children, however, do use Minangkabau language to assimilate with their friend and society

References

Alzayed, Norma Nawaf Yousef. (2015). *Preserving Immigrants Native Language and Cultural Identity in Multilingual and Multicultural Societies*. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Vol.5, No.2; February 2015. p.263

Atmazaki.(2007). *Kiat Kiat Mengarang dan Menyunting*. Padang: UNP Press. p.209, 212s

Baker, Colin. (2004). *A Parents' and Teachers' Guide to Bilingualism: 4th Edition*. Bristol: Short Run Press Ltd. p.92

Christensen, Gayle; Stanat, Petra. (September, 2007). *LANGUAGE POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR HELPING IMMIGRANTS AND SECOND-GENERATION STUDENTS SUCCEED*. Migration Policy Institute and Bertelsmann Stiftung. p. 3

Clark, Virginia P.; Eschholz, Paul A.; Rosa, Alfred F. (1985). *Language Introductory Readings 4th Ed*. New York: St. Martin's Press. p.19, 20

Cognition. (2008). *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cognition. (2008). *Merriam-Webster Advanced Learner English Dictionary*. Springfield: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated.

Cognition.(2010). *Mother Tongue*.Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 7th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.995. Retrieved from: http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/mother-tongue

Cognition.(1996-2016). *Verbal Comunication*. Your Dictionary.com: LoveToKnow, Corp. Retrieved from: http://www.yourdictionary.com/verbal-communication

Creswell, John W. (2009). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (3rded.). Sage Publications, Inc.: California.

Cruz-Ferreira, Madalena and Abraham, Sunita Anne. (2006). The Language of Language: Core Concpets in Linguistics Analysis (2nd ed.). Prentice Hall: Jurong.

Dantas, Maria Luiza;Manyak, Patrick C. (Eds.). (2011). *Home-School Connections in a Multicultural Society: Learning From and With Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families.* New York: Routledge. p.53

Friederici, AD. (Oct 2011). *The Brain Basis of Language Processing: From Structure to Function*. Physiol Rev 91 (4): 1357–92. doi:10.1152/physrev.00006.2011. PMID 22013214.

Fussell, Susan R. (Ed.). (2002). *TheVerbal Communication of Emotions: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Oxon: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. p.80

Holmes, Janet. (1992). *Learning about Language: An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Harlow Essex: Longman. p.6; 10-11; 12; 26; 28; 29

Hoff, Erika; Bridges, Kelly.(2009). *First (Primary) Language Acquisition.* Retrieved from: http://www.education.com/reference/article/first-primary-language-acquisition/

Matthews, P. H. (1997). *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

O'Grady, William; Archibald, John; Aronoff, Mark; Ress-Miller Janie. (2001). *Contemporary Linguistics; An Introduction, 4th ed.* Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.p.573

Oktorina, El Siska (2014). *Code Mixing Found in Cinemags Magazine and Camera Digital Magazine.* Padang: STBA Prayoga Padang.

Pai, Pushpa. (2005). *Multilingualism, Multiculturalism and Education: Case Study of Mumbai City*. ISB4: Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium on Bilingualism, ed. James Cohen, Kara T. McAlister, Kellie Rolstad, and Jeff MacSwan, (p.1794-1806). SNDT Women's University. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press. Retrieved from: http://www.lingref.com/isb/4/141ISB4.PDF

Purwo, BambangKaswanti (ed.) (1999). *Panorama Bahasa Nusantara*. Jakarta: Referensia – MasyarakatLinguistik Indonesia. p.47

Romaine, Suzanne. (2015). *The Global Extinction of languages and Its Consequences for Cultural Diversity.*Springer International Publishing. Pp.32

Sridhar Kamal K. 2002. '*Societal Multilingualism and World Englishes; Their Implications for Teaching ESL' in Indian Journal of Applied Linguistics, vol. 28*, New Delhi: Bahri Publications.

Stainback, Susan; Stainback, William.(1988). *Understanding & Conducting Qualitative Research.* Dubuque: Kendal/Hunt Publishing Company. p.12, 15

Suandi, Vincentius. (2013). *Language Variation Used by Chinese in Padang; The Study from Sociolinguistic Aspects.* Padang: STBA Prayoga Padang

Treffers-Daller, Jeanine. (2016). *Bilingualism / Multilingualism.* Southampton: LLAS Centre for Languages, Linguistics, & Area Studies - University of Southampton. Retrieved from: https://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/gpg/142

Zacharias, Nugrahenny T. (2012). *Qualitative Research Methods for Second Language Education: A Coursebook.* Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. p.9.