



Language, Identity, and Intergenerational Transmission Strategies: The Linguistic Practices of Bugis Families in West Kalimantan, Indonesia

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[Abstract]

This study explores linguistic practices, intergenerational language transmission, and the construction of ethnic identity among Bugis families in West Kalimantan in a diasporic context. Focusing on Mempawah and Pontianak, it adopts a linguistic ethnographic approach and applies the Family Language Policy (FLP) framework to examine Bugis language maintenance in a multilingual setting. Data were collected through interviews with 12 diasporic families, observations, and documentation, and these were analyzed using the interactive model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings of this study indicate that the Bugis language is used selectively in emotional and intergenerational contexts, particularly those involving grandparents. Grandparents and community ties play a central role in preserving the Bugis language among peoples in the

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diaspora. Nevertheless, the Bugis language retains symbolic significance as a marker of ethnic identity and community belonging. The study highlights that the vitality of the Bugis language is sustained through strong community ties, the role of elders, and a supportive sociocultural ecosystem. These insights contribute to the field of minority sociolinguistics and are valuable for developing policies that support local language preservation in Indonesia's multiethnic diaspora settings.

Keywords: Family Language Policy, language transmission, Bugis diaspora, ethnic identity, West Kalimantan, linguistic ethnography

I . Introduction

Language is a fundamental component of community life, particularly within multiethnic settings. Linguistic practices not only serve as a visible marker of identity but may also function to conceal identity, depending on the context. Numerous studies have illustrated this phenomenon, including the works of Nazari, Seyri, and Karimpour (2023), Bagiyan, Shiryaeva, Tikhonova, and Mekeko (2021), Gonzales (2021), Kusumaningputri (2024), and Park and Chung (2023), all of which affirm that language maintenance within communities is closely tied to family dynamics. The preservation of heritage languages within domestic spaces forms a central theme in the study of Family Language Policy. This area of research is crucial to understanding how ethnic languages are transmitted in diasporic communities, as it encompasses language ideologies, home language practices, and intergenerational transmission strategies (Spolsky 2004; Curdt-Christiansen 2016). Recent Indonesian studies similarly show that language, ethnicity, and identity are negotiated not only through explicit language choice but also through social adaptation within multicultural environments and through religious-cultural affiliations (Waldan, Latip, Aisyah Ya'kob, and Zarkasi 2025; Khotimah, Rosidi, and Embong 2025).

The linguistic practices of Bugis communities in West Kalimantan are particularly relevant to this framework. The Bugis

have long played an important role in the historical development of West Kalimantan (Alamsyah 2022; Yusriadi, Munawar, Agustini, Muttaqin, Mujiono, and Ichwan 2023; Panjaitan, Rahmadani, Fajri, Akbarini, and Caiping 2025; Tirtosudarmo 2022), having migrated from Sulawesi (Pelras 2006). According to Patmawati (2016), there were two waves of Bugis arrivals in West Kalimantan, beginning in the 17th century and continuing into the 21st century (Sarapang 2017; Leirissa 1996). These movements influenced how the Bugis interacted with communities across West Kalimantan (Erman 2022; Salim 2024; Mardiyanti, Ramadhan, and Kurnia 2023; Ilyas and Gallop 2024).

Pelras (2006) noted in his ethnographic work that migration is an integral aspect of Bugis identity. Migration is not merely a physical relocation but represents an effort to expand social, economic, and political networks while maintaining cultural connections. The Bugis diaspora is characterized by a strong ability to adapt to new environments while preserving their traditions and language as cultural symbols. While this pattern is also evident in other diaspora communities, such as the Chinese (Lai 2004; Smart and Hsu 2004; Tan and Liu 2022; Wu 2025) and Indians (Kumar and Pillay 2021; Sahoo 2022; Mohapatra and Tripathi 2021), the Bugis community in West Kalimantan exhibits a distinctive pattern of adaptive integration. Unlike some other diasporas, they do not maintain a visibly exclusive identity and thus may not be immediately recognizable as a distinct ethnic group.

Despite their historical prominence, including the roles of Bugis leaders in royal lineages such as Opu Daeng Manambon in Mempawah and his descendants in the Sultanate of Pontianak (Irwin 1986; King 1993; Rahmat 2021), Bugis identity is not always publicly expressed. Some individuals of Bugis descent are more commonly identified as Malay, as they live in Malay cultural environments and speak the Malay language. This pattern corresponds with Maksum (2022) who asserts that ethnic identity in such settings often blends into the broader Malay cultural framework.

In contrast to other diasporic groups such as the Madurese or

Chinese, the Bugis community has generally remained absent from ethnic-based conflicts and contestations in West Kalimantan (Qodir, Jubba, and Hidayati 2022; Yusriadi 2015; Waldan et al. 2025). While the Bugis community has had a significant historical role in the region (King 1993), scholarly engagement with their linguistic and cultural dynamics remains limited. Aside from the works of Sabaniah (2023) and Patmawati (2016), there has been little exploration of the Bugis within broader multiethnic configurations. Sabaniah's study, conducted in a small coastal village in southern West Kalimantan, offered a limited description of language usage. Meanwhile, Patmawati's study referred to general language practices among diasporic Bugis communities, but did not specify any research sites within West Kalimantan. These studies suggest that many Bugis individuals adopt Malay as their primary language, resulting in dual or hybrid identities.

Consequently, research on the identity, position, and intergenerational language transmission among Bugis diasporic communities in West Kalimantan remains underdeveloped. This study seeks to address this gap by examining how Bugis identity is articulated and negotiated within family settings, using the Family Language Policy framework, analyzing micro-level attitudes and practices concerning the Bugis language. This study offers a different perspective from earlier studies by Sabaniah (2023), and Patmawati (2016).

as it examines how family language policies are practiced and how the Bugis language is transmitted between generations in diasporic families in West Kalimantan, particularly in Mempawah and Pontianak. By focusing on the family sphere, this study seeks to clarify the micro-level mechanisms through which minority heritage languages are maintained or gradually displaced in multilingual environments.

II . Literature Review

Minority languages in Indonesia are generally considered vulnerable, including the Bugis language in Bali. Minority languages are those

used by small communities in heterogeneous environments, and the number of their speakers is declining (Rahardini and Niswah 2022). This situation is not limited to the Bugis language in Bali; across Indonesia, Bugis is considered a vulnerable language due to the low number of speakers among both children and the elderly (Hadi, Sambodo, Anindyatri, and Mas'ad 2020). This suggests that Bugis is still transmitted within diasporic families from parents to their children within the family environment; however, the local dominant language is primarily used in daily interactions (Wahyuddin 2023). However, language transmission within the family and social environment is still maintained, even though Bugis is not the first language among children (Herdiani, Amir, Satriani, Candra Dewi, and Fitri 2025).

Research on the Bugis community in West Kalimantan has been undertaken across several thematic domains, including language, culture, society, and history. Among these, cultural studies dominate, with particular attention to traditional marriage customs, ritual ceremonies, and local wisdom. Cultural practices such as Mappano (pano)-pano, Buang buang, Makan dalam Kelambu, and Mandi Setaman are rituals closely associated with Bugis communities in areas such as Sungai Kakap, Jongkat, and Seruat II (Allahta 2022; Farhan 2015; Hartono 2023; Chayani 2023).

In the domain of language, several sociolinguistic and ethnolinguistic studies have examined forms of address and ritual vocabulary used by the Bugis in Mempawah and Pontianak. These investigations demonstrate the continued relevance of the mother tongue within diasporic Bugis communities (Titi 2022; Veni 2023). The transmission of oral heritage, including ritual incantations such as those associated with Makan dalam Kelambu, has also been documented, showing that genealogical continuity remains significant in these communities (Djarot 2020).

From a sociological perspective, studies have explored identity formation within multiethnic families and societies. These studies reveal the complex relationship between Bugis and Malay identities, often showing how Islamic values are internalized as markers of social identity (Wahyuni 2023; Yusriadi and Muttaqin 2018). It is

noteworthy that statements such as "the Bugis are the same as the Malays" or "the Bugis are now considered Malays" have emerged over several generations, illustrating the fluidity of ethnic boundaries in everyday life.

Historical studies on the Bugis in West Kalimantan have largely focused on the role of Bugis individuals within the power structures of 18th century sultanates, particularly in Mempawah and Sambas. Figures such as Opu Daeng Manambon and the Five Bugis Brothers are regarded as important symbols of political mobility and influence within the Bugis diaspora in Kalimantan (Farhan 2015; Ema and Utami 2017). Additionally, social histories of the Bugis have been compiled by researchers in the publication *Orang Bugis di Sungai Kakap, Kalimantan Barat* (Yusriadi 2015).

Taken together, these studies provide a substantial body of knowledge on the culture and history of the Bugis in West Kalimantan. They also suggest that cultural preservation and the construction of ethnic identity are dominant concerns within existing research. Various theoretical approaches have been employed, including Islamic law, Islamic education, linguistics, and ethnography, contributing to the diversity of research perspectives.

However, despite this rich body of literature, the issue of intergenerational language transmission within the domestic sphere of the Bugis diaspora remains underexplored. This gap underscores the need to better understand how Bugis identity is negotiated and adapted in response to the dominant sociolinguistic environment. Notably, the influence of family-based language ideologies on the continuity of the Bugis language in the diaspora has not been sufficiently addressed.

This situation contrasts with research conducted among other minority communities. For instance, a study by Idaryani and Fidyati (2022) on the Acehnese community found that parental language ideology was a decisive factor in language shift. When parents prioritized the use of Indonesian for their children's educational advancement and social mobility, the transmission of the Acehnese language was significantly hindered. This finding is consistent with Indriani, Silvhiyany, and Mirizon (2021), who showed that parental

emphasis on early exposure to foreign languages also shaped home language practices and bilingual development in Indonesian families.

In other multilingual contexts, Mukarromah and Zulaihah (2023) documented the presence of code-switching and language mixing between local and national languages, including Madurese and Indonesian, in Banyuwangi's heritage sites. Their study demonstrates the considerable influence of social and cultural contexts on linguistic behavior in public and domestic spheres.

Within studies of minority languages, Wei (1994) examined Chinese communities in the United Kingdom and observed a decline in the use of heritage languages within family domains, primarily due to external pressures and national education policies. He emphasized the importance of the family as the primary domain for natural language transmission.

Caldwell (1994) and Sall (2009) further explored the role of national policy in language maintenance. In France, centralized policy measures weakened regional languages, while in Senegal, official multilingualism presented both opportunities and contradictions in language preservation efforts.

Romaine (2013), Bang and Døør (1993), and Bang and Trampe (2014) raise concerns about global language endangerment, advocating for greater community involvement in language revitalization initiatives. Dekeyser, Puschmann, and Agirdag (2020) add that multilingual competencies among children are closely associated with the formation of both ethnic and national identities.

Dupré (2014), writing on Taiwan, and Rajapakse (2024), focusing on Sri Lanka, highlight the marginalization of minority languages within formal education systems and state policies. Both scholars note the impact of such policies on family language practices. In a similar vein, Martinez-Alier (2008) introduces the concept of "languages of valuation" to describe how languages carry different forms of social and cultural value depending on their use in wider sociopolitical and ecological contexts.

These studies collectively demonstrate the interconnectedness

of language ideology, family practices, state policy, and identity across different societies. Nevertheless, a comprehensive examination of Bugis language transmission within the family domain in West Kalimantan, especially through the lens of Family Language Policy, has yet to be undertaken.

III. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative fieldwork approach with a descriptive design, grounded in the principles of linguistic ethnography. This approach is particularly appropriate for examining linguistic practices, strategies of language transmission, and the construction of ethnic identity among minority communities in multilingual settings (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2018). By focusing on ethnic language use, linguistic ethnography enables researchers to investigate everyday social interactions and the meanings embedded within linguistic practices (Duranti 2008).

3.1. Research Sites and Participants

The study was conducted in two regions of West Kalimantan: Mempawah and Pontianak. These locations were selected because they represent important Bugis-Malay settlement areas with long-standing historical ties since the 18th century. They also reflect contrasting social characteristics: Mempawah is a semi-rural area with relatively homogeneous interethnic interactions.

Meanwhile, Pontianak, the capital of West Kalimantan province, was founded by Sultan Abdurrahman Alkadrie, an 18th century descendant of Hadralmaut Arabs. Sultan Abdurrahman was the son of Habib Husein, who was the father-in-law of the King of Mempawah, Opu Daeng Manambon. (Rahmat 2021; Ema and Utami 2017; Farhan 2015). As the main city, Pontianak became a trading center that attracted traders and job-seekers from Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi and even China (Hasanuddin, Purwana, and Sulistyorini 2000). Pontianak also became an educational center that encouraged students from other districts and cities in West Kalimantan to come. As the provincial capital, all government affairs were based in

Pontianak. This position has led Pontianak to become a meeting place for communities and cultures, making it a multi-ethnic and multilingual region (Ruslan 2024; Budiastutik, Kartasurya, Subagio, and Widjanarko 2022; Minza 2012; Yusriadi and Muttaqin 2018). The main languages in Pontianak are Pontianak Malay and Indonesian. Meanwhile, other languages used by specific communities include: Sambas Malay, Ulu Kapuas, Kanayatn, and languages from outside the island such as Javanese, Madurese, Bugis, and Khek, Tiochew, as well as Indonesian (Wahyuni 2023).

Twelve Bugis families were selected through purposive sampling, with six families from each location. The inclusion criteria were as follows:

- a) Families with both parents of Bugis ethnic background
- b) Families with at least one child of school-going age (between 7 and 18 years old)
- c) Families that have resided in the diasporic setting for more than one generation

Of the 12 Bugis families selected, the informants ranged in age from 25 to 60 years old, all of whom had school-aged children. The informants were born and raised in Mempawah and Pontianak and came from Bugis families that settled in West Kalimantan for more than one generation. In terms of occupation, the informants had diverse backgrounds, predominantly housewives, with a small number working as teachers, traders, and farmers.

Before the interviews were conducted, participants were informed about the purpose of the research; their voluntary involvement and verbal consent were obtained. The names of the informants were redacted and assigned interview codes based on the Mempawah and Pontianak regions. These ethical considerations were taken into account to protect the privacy of participants from possible discomfort in the future.

3.2. Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through multiple techniques. In-depth,

semi-structured interviews were conducted with family members to explore their linguistic practices, language attitudes, and transmission strategies. Participant observation was employed to document linguistic interactions within the household and in community settings. Additionally, relevant cultural artifacts such as family utterances, proverbs, kinship terms, and community events were documented to provide deeper insights into the cultural-linguistic context of the Bugis community.

Fieldwork was conducted from March to May 2025. Notably, two of the researchers had personal connections to the community: one is of Bugis descent from Tanjung, Mempawah, while the other, although not ethnically Bugis, resides in a Bugis-majority neighborhood in Sungai Kakap. These connections facilitated access, built rapport, and enhanced the credibility of the data through culturally informed perspectives and emotional proximity to the research setting.

3.3. Data Analysis

All interviews were audio recorded with the participants' consent, their perspectives transcribed. Transcripts were annotated by region, and examples of code-switching between Bugis, Malay, and Indonesian were coded to reflect everyday language practices. Codes were also assigned to keywords related to the study topic. To ensure confidentiality, all names were redacted and replaced with coded identifiers.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2018), involving three stages. First, data reduction was carried out through the selection and categorization of information relevant to language practices, transmission patterns, and ethnic identity. Second, the data were presented using matrices, narrative descriptions, and direct quotations from informants to highlight recurring patterns and strategies. Finally, conclusions were drawn through interpretative analysis, focusing on the symbolic meanings of language and the construction of Bugis identity within the families studied.

3.4. Data Validity

To ensure the validity of findings, the study employed the triangulation of data and sources (Patton 2002). Interview data were cross-checked with observational and documentary evidence. In addition, expert validation was sought from key informants with academic expertise in Bugis culture and language. These included Dr Patmawati, a prominent researcher in Bugis studies; Dr. Ismail Ruslan, an expert council member, and Rahnang, a community leader and senior member of the South Sulawesi Family Association. These triangulation measures strengthened the reliability of the data and enhanced the overall trustworthiness of the study.

IV. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in a multidisciplinary theoretical framework that integrates concepts from family sociolinguistics and linguistic ethnography. Four principal concepts are employed to guide the analysis.

First, the concept of Family Language Policy (FLP), as articulated by Liu and Lin (2019) and Indriani et al. (2021), positions the family as the primary domain for language transmission. FLP encompasses language ideologies, that is, the beliefs and values held by families regarding language use; language practices, which refer to the actual use of language in daily interactions; and parental strategies aimed at either maintaining or shifting the heritage language within the home. These elements are influenced by broader external factors such as educational policy and socioeconomic status, both of which play a critical role in shaping the implementation of FLP in practice.

Second, the concept of “languages of valuation,” proposed by Martinez-Alier (2008), is utilized to analyze the sociocultural and symbolic value of minority languages in multilingual settings. This concept posits that language is not merely a tool for communication, but also a carrier of social, economic, and identity-related value. The perceived worth of a language is

context-dependent and influenced by social hierarchies and institutional frameworks.

Third, the study draws on the theory of linguistic ecology as developed by Romaine (2013), Bang and Døør (1993), and Bang and Trampe (2014) which views language as an integral part of a wider sociocultural ecosystem. From this perspective, the loss of a language has significant implications for social identity and the integrity of local cultural systems. A decline in language use can lead to the erosion of community solidarity, the weakening of ethnic identity, and the displacement of traditional values by dominant languages and cultures.

Finally, linguistic ethnography as outlined by Duranti (2008), serves as the methodological foundation for the study. This approach examines language within its natural social context, enabling a deeper understanding of the meanings embedded in everyday linguistic practices. Through this lens, individuals are understood as active agents who use language to construct, maintain, or renegotiate social relationships and cultural affiliations

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the study examines not only the structural and pragmatic dimensions of language use, but also the symbolic, ideological, and ecological dimensions that influence how language functions within the Bugis diaspora in West Kalimantan.

V. Findings and Discussion

This section presents the linguistic practices and intergenerational transmission patterns observed among Bugis families in two principal areas of settlement in West Kalimantan: Mempawah and Pontianak. The data are synthesized according to several key aspects, including dominant home languages, contexts of Bugis language usage, transmission patterns, the role of grandparents, social environments, perceptions of language and ethnic identity, and concerns about language vitality among younger generations. These dimensions are summarized in <Table 1> which outlines the

differences between Bugis communities in Mempawah and Pontianak, and are subsequently examined thematically in the discussion that follows.

<Table 1> Differences between Bugis Communities in Mempawah and Pontianak

Aspect	Mempawah	Pontianak
Main Language	Mixed use of Malay and Bugis remains relatively active, especially in Bugis communities such as Sungai Ruan.	Malay is highly dominant. Bugis is used only occasionally during contexts of humor, anger, or large family events.
Context of Bugis Usage	Used for humor and expressions of anger. Also used during village ceremonies and community meetings.	Used only within the nuclear family or occasionally at extended family gatherings.
Intergenerational Transmission	Some families still actively teach Bugis vocabulary to children (2M, 4M, 5M).	Transmission is minimal. Most children are not taught Bugis and are more fluent in Malay.
Role of Grandparents	Still relatively active in some families. They play a vital role in teaching cultural terms and language.	Declining, especially in mixed-ethnic families or those not residing in Bugis communities.
Social Environment	Some strong Bugis community environments still exist in specific villages or subdistricts (e.g. Sungai Ruan).	Urban and heterogeneous environment. Interaction is dominated by Malay and other ethnic groups.
Language and Ethnic Identity	Bugis is seen as an important ethnic marker and symbol of community solidarity.	Bugis identity is more ritual-based, rather than language-based.
Concerns about Language Vitality	There is concern that younger generations feel ashamed or reluctant to speak Bugis at school.	Although there is concern, many parents accept that while their children do not speak Bugis, they must understand the customs.

Based on the table above, the following discussion focuses on three central issues related to this topic: (1) the language practices of Bugis families, (2) strategies for intergenerational transmission of the Bugis language, and (3) language practices and Bugis ethnic identity in the diaspora in West Kalimantan.

5.1. Linguistic Practices within Bugis Families

Data from interviews and participant observations reveal that, in both Mempawah and Pontianak, daily communication within Bugis families predominantly takes place in Malay and Indonesian. The Bugis language is used only in specific contexts, often informally or within emotionally charged interactions. This aligns with Patmawati's (2016) findings, which suggest that the Bugis community in West Kalimantan primarily employs Malay in everyday communication.

However, field observations indicate that the Bugis language is still used in a limited number of settings, such as giving instructions to children, joking, or speaking with grandparents. For example:

Kalau di rumah ni cuma nenek jak yang pakai bahasa Bugis. Paling kalau pas balik ke rumah, barulah ngomong Bugis sama nenek. Kalau Ayu tak terbiasa ngomong Bugis, tak keluar. Paling sepata dua jak (10P, Interview, 03/05/2025).

At home, only my grandmother speaks Bugis. At most, when I return home, I speak Bugis with my grandmother. If Ayu is not used to speaking Bugis, she doesn't speak it. She usually only says a few words (10P, Interview, 03/05/2025).

Kalau anak, anak yang pertama pandai bahasa Bugis karena dia besarnya di rumah neneknya, di sana kami pakai bahasa Bugis. Tapi, anak kedua padandai bahasa Bugis, tapi tidak terlalu lancar, masih bentok-bentok kayak bapaknya. Kalau yang bungsu tak paham sama sekali, dia cuma paham joka siba mandre (8P, Interview, 27/04/2025).

As for the children, the first child is fluent in Bugis because he grew up at his grandmother's house, where we speak Bugis. However, the second child is also fluent in Bugis, but not as fluent as his father. The youngest child does not understand Bugis at all; he only understands joka siba mandre (8P, Interview, 27/04/2025).

Ngomong pakai bahasa Bugis tu kadang cuma sama orang tua dan mertua, tapi kalau sama suami dan anak-anak full pakai bahasa Melayu... mereka terbiasa dengar nenek mereka ngomong pakai bahasa Bugis kalau ade keluarga yang datang. Paling mereka cuma

duduk diam mendengarkan, kadang ngeluh karena tak paham apa-apa (2M, Interview, 08/03/2025).

We sometimes speak Bugis with our parents and in-laws, but with our husbands and children, we speak Malay all the time... they are used to hearing their grandmother speak Bugis when relatives come to visit. Mostly they usually sit quietly and listen, occasionally saying that they do not understand the conversation (2M, Interview, 08/03/2025).

The motivation for using Bugis in these interactions often stems from a sense of respect and politeness, particularly when addressing elder family members. In contrast, Indonesian is preferred with children due to its broader societal utility and educational relevance. As a result, in some cases, children do not acquire fluency in Bugis or, in the words of an informant: children only understand a little Bugis, which contributes to a significant generational language shift.

Viewed through the framework of Family Language Policy (Liu and Lin 2019), these findings reveal a clear gap between parents' language ideology and their everyday language practices. Many parents expressed positive attitudes towards Bugis as an ethnic marker, citing the importance of the Bugis language as a Bugis identity and their hopes for the survival of the Bugis language within the family environment. However, their actual language management within the household prioritized Malay or Indonesian. They had pragmatic reasons for using the dominant language, particularly in terms of language comprehension or proficiency, the school environment, and broader social integration interests. From an ecological perspective, this pattern reflects the strong influence of the surrounding linguistic environment, where the dominant language shapes family choices and gradually marginalizes minority languages in everyday interactions.

This pattern supports previous research that identifies family domain language shift as a consequence of dominant societal language pressures in heterogeneous environments (Dupré 2014; Rajapakse 2024). It also affirms the applicability of the Family Language Policy framework (Liu and Lin 2019), which emphasizes

the influence of parental ideology and external structural factors in shaping language use within households. In these Bugis families, pragmatic considerations tend to outweigh ethnic language ideologies.

The findings of this study align closely with the Family Language Policy (FLP) framework, which emphasizes the interaction between language ideologies, language practices, and parental management strategies within the home (Spolsky 2004; Curdt-Christiansen 2016). Although Bugis parents in both Mempawah and Pontianak expressed strong ideological support for the Bugis language as a marker of ethnic identity, their daily language practices overwhelmingly favored Malay and Indonesian, demonstrating what Spolsky (2004) terms an “ideology–practice gap.” Parents’ preference for the dominant languages reflects pragmatic considerations tied to education, social mobility, and the wider communicative environment, a pattern consistent with FLP studies in other multilingual Indonesian and Asian contexts (Liu and Lin 2019; Indriani et al. 2021). The study also shows that explicit language management is limited and inconsistent, with grandparents functioning as the most influential transmitters of Bugis—an observation widely supported in heritage-language research (Tannenbaum and Cohen 2018; Dekeyser et al. 2020).

From the perspective of linguistic ecology, these findings illustrate how Bugis families are embedded within a broader sociolinguistic environment that shapes, constrains, and sometimes displaces minority-language practices. The dominance of Malay and Indonesian in schooling, peer interaction, media, and urban public life creates ecological pressures that marginalize Bugis and reduce its functional domains, corresponding with what Romaine (2013) describes as shrinking “ecological niches” for minority languages. Meanwhile, rural or kinship-dense environments such as Mempawah provide more favorable ecological “hosts,” enabling the language to survive through ritual functions, elder authority, and dense community networks (Bang and Trampe 2014). Taken together, the FLP and linguistic ecology perspectives demonstrate that Bugis language maintenance is not only a matter of family choice but also a product of dynamic interactions between parental

beliefs, household practices, and the wider sociocultural ecosystem in which diaspora families negotiate their linguistic identities.

Nonetheless, in certain communities such as Sungai Ruan and Gedung Intan in Mempawah, where Bugis networks remain relatively strong, families continue to use the Bugis language in daily interactions (4M, 5M, 8P). In most other families, however, Malay is the dominant medium of communication, chosen for its accessibility and local acceptability (3M, 9P, 11P). These circumstances have given rise to frequent code-switching between Bugis and Malay, a practice shaped by context and interlocutor. As a result, Bugis individuals are sometimes perceived linguistically as part of the broader Malay community.

This code-switching behavior can be understood through the lens of linguistic ecology (Romaine 2013; Bang and Døør 1993; Bang and Trampe 2014) which views language as a component of a dynamic sociocultural ecosystem. A shift in linguistic practice within a community not only affects patterns of communication but also alters the equilibrium of cultural identity and heritage.

The reduction in Bugis language use is influenced by a combination of social interaction, interethnic exposure, and formal schooling. The educational system prioritizes Indonesian, both formally within classrooms and informally among peers during recreational activities. Consequently, children are socialized into using Indonesian and Malay more frequently, diminishing their engagement with the heritage language.

According to the framework of “languages of valuation” (Martinez-Alier 2008), the Bugis language is perceived as possessing low economic and social capital in the present-day context. It is often valued more for its symbolic role in cultural ceremonies than for its communicative function, which contributes to its marginalization in everyday discourse. This perception has become normalized within Bugis families in both study areas.

5.2. Strategies for Intergenerational Transmission of the Bugis Language

Although many families express awareness of the importance of

transmitting the Bugis language to younger generations, actual implementation tends to be inconsistent. Some parents introduce basic vocabulary in early childhood, such as words for eating (manre), sleeping (tindro), or familial terms like *juang*, *daeng*. These words are often used playfully or in moments of discipline. In some cases, the Bugis language is deliberately used as a “secret language” when conversing in the presence of non-Bugis individuals. As one informant acknowledged: “When discussing confidential matters, we use the Bugis language” (3M, Interview 08/03/2025).

However, once children enter formal education or begin socializing more broadly, the influence of Indonesian and Malay becomes more pronounced. Informant 9P revealed: “Dari kecil sudah saya ajarkan bahasa Bugis. Bahkan saat balita, kalau diajak ngomong Melayu mereka tidak paham. Kemampuan berbahasa bugis mereka pandai hilang sendiri ketika mereka masuk sekolah” (9P, Interview 27/04/2025).

I taught my children the Bugis language from an early age. Even as toddlers, they did not understand when spoken to in Malay. Their ability to speak Bugis disappeared on its own when they started school (9P, Interview 27/04/2025).

The same experience was shared by informants 1M and 3M, who stated that their children lost their ability to speak Bugis once they started school, as the new environment was entirely in Malay.

Most parents do not insist on continued use of Bugis in the home. When children begin responding in Malay, parents tend to follow suit. This dynamic highlights the challenges of consistent language policy at the household level and reinforces the significance of sustained parental commitment, as noted by Indriani et al. (2021).

One of the major obstacles to successful language transmission is the presence of interethnic marriages. In households where one parent is not of Bugis origin, the dominant language used at home often aligns with the broader linguistic environment rather than the heritage language. Children in such households are more likely to adopt Malay or Indonesian as their primary language (6P, 11P). This

finding is consistent with previous research that underscores the influence of mixed-ethnicity households and peer interactions on the success of language transmission (Indriani et al. 2021).

From an ethnographic perspective, language transmission should not be viewed solely as a linguistic process but as a socially embedded activity influenced by power relations, cultural values, and daily routines (Duranti 2008). In the absence of strong familial reinforcement and in the face of dominant external linguistic pressures, the process of transmission often falters.

Nevertheless, a few families in communities such as Sungai Ruan and Gedung Intan report more effective language transmission. Informant 4M said that he uses the Bugis language in his family, with his children and grandchildren, so that all his children and grandchildren can speak Bugis. Another one says: "When his grandmother comes to the house, she usually encourages me to speak Bugis. The children who hear the conversation usually ask what it means. That is also where the children can learn the Bugis language" (2M, Interview 08/03/2025). According to the informant, some of his cousins were even beaten for not speaking Bugis with their *fuang*.

In these cases, grandparents play a pivotal role, often insisting on using Bugis and expecting their grandchildren to respond in kind. Their authority and presence in the household reinforce the continuity of linguistic norms. The vitality of the Bugis language in these areas is thus maintained through a combination of family structure, intergenerational ties, and strong community networks.

Romaine (2013) refers to such contexts as forming part of a cultural ecosystem that supports the survival of minority languages. Where collective cultural practices and rituals are still actively observed, language serves as both a vehicle and a reflection of ethnic continuity.

5.3. Language Practices and Bugis Ethnic Identity in the Diaspora

Participants in both Mempawah and Pontianak acknowledged the symbolic value of the Bugis language in affirming their ethnic

identity. For families that actively preserve the language, Bugis functions as a marker of kinship, solidarity, and adherence to ancestral customs (2M, 4M, 7P, 8P). These attitudes are consistent with the findings of Dekeyser et al. (2020) and Tannenbaum and Cohen (2018), who argue that heritage language proficiency contributes meaningfully to the construction of ethnic identity.

However, when linguistic practices are examined more closely, there are clear differences between Mempawah and Pontianak. In Mempawah, the Bugis language is still relatively active in family and community settings. The presence of extended families and the density of Bugis kinship networks allow children to be exposed to this language from an early age. In this context, the Bugis language is not only understood as a symbol of identity, but also functions as a tool for everyday communication that supports more sustainable intergenerational transmission.

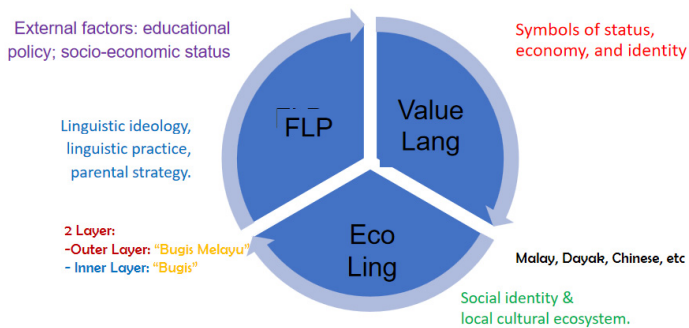
In contrast, in Pontianak, the Bugis language tends to experience a narrowing of space and function. Although recognized as an important part of ethnic identity, its use is more often limited to symbolic spaces and situations or certain interactions, such as conversations with parents or certain Bugis families. In everyday life, Malay and Indonesian are more dominant as pragmatic choices for family communication and children's education.

However, the actual linguistic competence of younger generations often falls short of these ideals. Phrases such as “a Bugis who cannot speak Bugis” or “a Bugis-Malay hybrid” are commonly used to describe this condition. While participants attributed this trend to educational and social pressures, some expressed concern about the implications for long-term identity preservation (1M, 5M, 9P, 11P). These informants shifted their focus to educational pressures and the wider social environment, although some also expressed concern about the long-term implications for the sustainability of Bugis identity.

In such cases, cultural identity is increasingly expressed through ritual practices and community involvement rather than language. Traditional customs, such as *Peno'peno'*, *Robo'robo'*, and *Lesuji*, continue to be practiced even among those who no longer

speak the language fluently (Yusriadi and Muttaqin 2018). The Robo'robo' Festival, once exclusively identified with the Bugis community, is now promoted as part of the regional tourism calendar and celebrated as a shared cultural asset (Effendy, Darajati, and Amalia 2024). The Bugis have not sought to claim exclusive ownership of these traditions, choosing instead to participate inclusively in regional cultural life. This attitude illustrates a dual-layered conception of identity: an outward layer that blends into the broader Malay context and an inner layer that retains a sense of Bugis distinctiveness. This is illustrated in Figure 1 below:

Identity and Bugis Language Transmission in West Kalimantan



<Figure 1> Identity and Bugis Language Transmission in West Kalimantan

This inclusive approach is reflective of the broader social attitude of the Bugis community in West Kalimantan, which tends to avoid ethnic rivalry and adopts a conciliatory stance in interethnic relations. Although language remains a key component of Bugis identity, its public expression is often moderated in order to maintain social harmony and integration. The tendency to maintain social harmony while preserving an inner layer of identity also resonates with studies of identity negotiation in Islamic and multicultural Indonesian contexts, where affiliation is constructed through everyday adaptation rather than through rigid ethnic separation (Khotimah et al. 2025; Waldan et al. 2025). The practice

of the Bugis language and ethnic identity in the diaspora is shaped not only by individual attitudes, but also by socio-ecological conditions that frame language choices and the ways in which identity is negotiated.

VI. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the linguistic practices of Bugis families in West Kalimantan, particularly in Mempawah and Pontianak has undergone a shift in usage, especially in urban environments. Nevertheless, the Bugis language is still considered important as a symbol of ethnic identity and a link to cultural origins. These findings confirm that a decline in language usage does not necessarily mean a loss of the identity attached to it.

Theoretically, this study enriches the study of Family Language Policy in the context of multilingual diasporas. The results of the study show a gap between parents' positive attitudes towards the Bugis language and everyday language practices at home. Family language choices are influenced by language ideology, as well as social pressures, such as school and multiethnic life. This confirms that Family Language Policy is dynamic and highly dependent on the social context in which families live.

In practical terms, these findings emphasize the importance of a more contextual approach to language policy and regional language preservation programs. Efforts to preserve the Bugis language need to be made through the use of language in family and community life, not just at a symbolic level.

Future longitudinal research is needed to examine changes in language practices across generations over time, as well as comparisons with Bugis diaspora communities in other regions, in order to understand the influence of broader contexts on language transmission strategies.

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