CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Remarks

The language problem is more than just the problem of expression of human thought in sound or written symbols, which gives man an extensive means of communication. Language is involved in the totality of the culture of the society and its people. Every word represents a concept in that culture. Thus the totality of the vocabulary of a language realizes the totality of the concepts of those culture-concepts, which are related to each other in an interlocked structure, expressing the value configuration of that culture with its richness of feelings, ideas and ambitions. Therefore we can say that every language is the complete expression of the life or, as is very often said “the soul” of the people.

The problem of national languages and linguistic minorities has especially arisen with the creation of the new nation states in Asia and Africa after the Second World War. The colonial territories of the European powers, which became
independent, were very often populated by various peoples and tribes each with their own language and culture which in many ways differed from each other, so no adequate communication could and can take place between the different groups. In colonial epoch the dominant language for inter-group communication was the language of the colonial power.

Indonesia is a good example. In Indonesia archipelago, which consists of thousands of islands, about six hundred languages and dialects are spoken, the largest of which is the Javanese language, spoken by fifty million people, while some of the other languages are spoken by only a few hundred thousand people. During the colonial period the dominant language was of course Dutch. The Malay language took second place, which was the lingua franca in Southeast Asia for more than a thousand years.

Indonesia was in favorable situation, since its youth discovered very early that the Indonesian people would only be successful in their struggle against the Dutch colonial power if they could be united into a single social and cultural, and
especially political force. That was the decisive meaning of the oath by the Indonesian youth in 1928 for one country, one nation and one language called Indonesian. Even now Bahasa Indonesia is attaining special privilege because it is constitutionally nationalized by the government and regarded as the depository of the composite of Indonesia.

There is of course a striking fact that despite the effort of government to nationalize Bahasa Indonesia, there exists enormous amounts of ethnic languages that live side by side throughout the country. One may ask how that the Javanese population consisting of about fifty million people and the Sundanese of twenty million people gave up their language in favor of the national language, which was for them a foreign language?

The preservation of the aspects of cultural heritage of particular ethnic groups, on the one hand, and its modification in the light of influences emanating from other cultural sources, on the other, may be regarded as process that are mutually complementary. In an ethnically plural society such as
Indonesia, cultures of both the majority and minority groups constitute pools of cultural values from which members can draw to formulate their own personal cultural systems. In the case of language, individuals are in a position to construct dual systems of linguistic values and achieve in society a state of "internal cultural pluralism", as opposed to a situation where society as a whole exhibits pluralism while individuals retain monistic system.

In this way the heritage of the whole ethnic group may be reshaped and revalued through its contact with the cultural values of other groups, especially those of the dominant one. This flexible approach to the ethnic heritage as a living tradition may ensure its continued survival through the conscious nurturing of certain ethno-specific values, such as language, while at the same time introducing new forms in order to meet the demands of the day. This may involve a variety of solutions, such as the acceptance of bilingualism as the most satisfactory outcome at group and individual level while making adjustments to family structure by the use of more than one group's heritage.
However, attempts to homogenize society by whole sale enforcement of the values of the majority upon all groups, regardless of their internal state of development, unbalances the process of tradition, adaptation, and retards, rather than enhances, social resilience. In Indonesia, pressure imposed by government to use Bahasa Indonesia upon its people has resulted in alienation of some ethnic languages not to mention the death of some. The result has been a decrease in resilience, which the current generation is trying to overcome. The results of imposing Bahasa Indonesia as a national language and as a symbol of nationalism and how ethnic languages are used to define ethnic groups identity of its speakers and whether ethnicity has an impact on nationalism in Indonesia especially Medan are the basic principles of research in this study. In other words the writer, in this research, will focus on linguistic consequences of ethnicity and nationalism that happened in Medan.

Medan as the capital of North Sumatra province is the third biggest city in Indonesia after Jakarta and Surabaya and has multiethnic society. This diversity represents the diversity
that occurred in Indonesia that consists of a number of ethnic groups with their own languages. In other words, Medan is a miniature of Indonesia.

The diversity in Medan resulted in two sociolinguistic interactions among the society namely intraethnics’ interaction and interethnics’ interaction. There will be two main constraints as the result of these interactions, language use and language attitude. In intraethnics’ interaction, a single ethnic language will be used in verbal communication, but in interethnics’ interaction Indonesian will be used most of the time with the interference of ethnic words.

Language maintenance, shift and loss in the contact of multiethnic society as occurred in Medan are also the starting points of research of this study.

1.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The issue of linguistically different populations coming in contact has attracted the attention of scholars from various disciplines for many years. It is related, on the one hand, to bilingualism, language maintenance and language shift and, on the other, to a variety of social, psychological, cultural and
historical factors. Back in 1933 Bloomfield had noticed this phenomenon, observe what he said in *Language*:

Some people entirely give up the use of their native language in favor of a foreign one. This happens frequently among immigrants in the United States. If the immigrant does not stay in a settlement of others from his own country, he may have no occasion at all to use his native language. Especially, it would seem, in case of less educated persons, this may result, after a time, in wholesale forgetting: people of this kind understand their native language when they chance to hear it spoken, but can no longer speak it freely or even intelligibly. They have made a shift of language, their only medium of communication is now English and it is for them not a native but an adopted language. Sometimes these persons have nevertheless acquired English very imperfectly and therefore are in the position of speaking no language well. (Bloomfield.1933:55)

Bloomfield also pointed out that in extreme cases of perfect foreign language learning, bilingualism, native-like control of two languages may result. Bloomfield, however, did not focus on another aspect of a contact situation where minority groups may engage in conscious and well-directed language maintenance activities. This may result not in a native like control of two languages but a functional separation of them in different domains, and in the growth of mixed varieties.
Faced with the question of the survival of his own native language, Yiddish, in the United States, Weinreich (1953; 1954; 1957) dealt with the problems of language-contact in great deal and formulated principles which have guided most subsequent research on the subject.

He raised some fundamental questions about the relationship between language change and language shift in a contact situation. Do the process of language shift and language interference take place in the same direction? Are their respective times correlated? Does a standstill in language shift imply a standstill in interference or, on the contrary, the crystallization of a new language? Secondly, can interference ever go so far as to result in a language shift i.e. can a bilingual's speech in Language 'A' become by degrees so strongly influenced by Language 'B' as to be indistinguishable from 'B'? Thirdly, does habitual switching within a single sentence or phrase represent a transitional stage in the shift from the regular use of one language to another? Finally, when bilinguals fail to identify the language they use at a given moment as though their distinction between languages undergoes a temporary collapse, can we say this is an
indication towards regular shift? Weinreich (1953) suggested three dimensions along which language maintenance/shift could be studied:

a) Functions of the languages in contact: A group may switch to a new language in certain functions but not in others i.e. 'a partial shift' rather than a 'total shift' may obtain. It will also be important to consider the order in which this shift takes place.

b) The nature of shift should be studied in a contact situation where the mother tongue division is congruent with various other non-linguistic divisions in order to allow for a differentiated response to the new language among various groups.

c) Shifts, like interference, should be studied against time across generations.

Weinreich did not incorporate these suggestions into his own field work. Since he was concerned with all the aspects of a contact situation, he barely touched upon the problems of language maintenance and language shift. He considered the matter of language shift as entirely extra-structural. Haugen (1953) shows a keen awareness of the socio-cultural setting of
Norwegian-English contact, yet his study is primarily concerned with the analysis of the different aspects of borrowing and changes in the structures of the languages involved in contact.

As Fishman (1971) points out, the question of language maintenance and language shift arises when populations differing in language are in contact with each other. The contact situation may give rise to either steady bilingualism which may continue for several generations or language shift where one language is completely given up in favor of the other. Sometimes a community may experience a language shift after centuries of steady bilingualism. For instance, Gal (1979) points out that in an Australian town named Oberwart, after four hundred years of Hungarian-German bilingualism, German is slowly replacing Hungarian not only in the domains of work and education but also at home in everyday interaction.

We may define ‘language shift’ as the shift from the use of one language to the use of another and ‘language maintenance’ as the retention of a community’s native language against social and psychological pressures to the contrary. In practice, either of the two situations rarely obtains in such a compartmentalized way. Often the process of
language maintenance and language shift occurs simultaneously. A minority group may shift completely to the language of the host society in some domains, maintain its own language in a few others while using a mixed code showing varying degrees of mixtures of the two languages in contact in the rest. Even when social and cultural assimilation is almost complete, the native language may still continue to be used in extremely formal situation e.g. rituals and ceremonies, as well as in extremely informal situations e.g. family, while mixed varieties may be used in several informal and semi-formal situations e.g. peer-groups.

Depending on their historical and cultural background and the response of the host society, two communities may behave very differently in the case of language maintenance and language shift. On the one extreme is the case of the American Jews whose complete assimilation to the majority community has been called the most striking event of current history, on the other are the German Mennonite farmers who have struggled to maintain their religion and language against heavy odds. Language thus often acts as a shield against complete loss of identity. To quote Lieberson,
Although it is true that groups may retain their identity without a unique tongue, it is difficult to visualize complete assimilation in other areas if their native languages are maintained. (Lieberson, 1970:6)

Language shift does not necessarily occur when two communities are in contact; it also does not necessarily occur between two distinct languages. A shift may occur within the same community; it may not be a shift from one language to another but may occur from one dialect to another.

Hofman and Fisherman (1971) showed that the acquisition of Hebrew and the maintenance of previous mother tongues were not necessarily competitive process: Hebrew had acquired the status of a symbol of an emerging integrated identity of a religious group now consolidated as a nation.

Eersel (1972) showed how in Surinam, Sranan, previously the lingua franca between the Dutch masters and the native population, had become the symbol of a growing consciousness and that claiming Dutch as one’s mother tongue had become a betrayal of national integrity.

When two communities come in contact the possibility of what might happen to their languages may be seen along a continuum. On the one end of the continuum we have the case
of a group, which retains its language in all domains, and on the other a group which completely shifts to the language of the host society. The number of intervening possibilities is very large. Often a community may retain the use of its native language in the domains of home and neighborhood and switch completely to the language of the host society in the domains of education and work. In a complex multilingual setting, a speaker may use several languages in his daily routine, keeping them distinctly separate in some situations and inextricably mixing them in others.

Generally, however, the conditions for language maintenance and language shift obtain when two communities speaking two different languages come in contact, and in studying this we are concerned with

The relationship between degree of change (or degree of stability) in language usage patterns, on the one hand, and ongoing psychological, cultural or social process, on the other....(Fishman, 1971:301)

Lieberson and McCabe (1978) have suggested that in order to understand intergenerational mother tongue shift two fundamental factors, namely, the forces generating bilingualism and the forces affecting the language that bilinguals pass on to
their children must be taken into account. They argued that bilingualism per se need not generate shift since bilingual parents may still use their mother tongue exclusively in addressing their children.

Haugen (1978) traces the origin and growth of studies concerned with language maintenance and language shift. He points out that Fishman’s “Language Loyalty in the United States (1966)” is a monumental study of the ‘self-maintenance efforts, rationales, and accomplishments of non-English immigrants on American shores. Fishman followed up Weinreich’s (1953) theme of language loyalty and collected into one volume an integrated review of the situation in which non-English immigrants had found themselves and their efforts to prevent or retard the extinction of their languages. He adopted the term ‘language maintenance’ as the opposite of ‘language shift’, thereby emphasizing the active self conscious aspects of the process.

The number of historical, cultural, social, political, psychological and linguistic factors involved in the process of language maintenance and language shift is so large and their interaction so complex that the formulation of any
comprehensive model to investigate the phenomenon in all its complexity seems fraught with unprecedented dangers.

Sociologists such as Hofman (1964), Miller (1924) have generally concentrated on the language used in different settings and role relations. Anthropologists such as Barker (1947), Dozier (1951), Barber (1952), Hohental (1955) have studied the significance of cultural, religious and political forces. The linguistic performance has generally been ignored and arbitrary labels have been used for the yet uninvestigated patterns of language behavior. Psychologists such as Herman (1961), Lambert (1963) have sometimes paid attention to language but have generally been interested in measuring language attitudes and speed and proficiency in the languages concerned under very artificial conditions.

As Haugen (1978) points out, the whole field of what has been called 'minority group research' in the United States has focused on the sociological aspects with precious little attention to linguistic aspects. Most of this research was oriented to measuring the degree of assimilation to white Anglo Saxon protestant culture. Gordon (1961) noted that the current theories of assimilation, for example, 'The Melting Pot',
‘Cultural Pluralism’ missed the point that while most groups become more or less acculturated to white Anglo Saxon protestant norms, they maintain their internal structure.

Many studies done outside the United States though essentially sociological in character, have helped a great deal in the understanding of different possible factors responsible for language maintenance and language shift. Lowen (1966) explained contradictory tendencies observed among the Maca Indians on the one hand and the Chamacoco tribe on the other, in terms of cultural vitality. The former, in spite of being involved in frequent interaction with Spanish and Guarani in Paraguay on which they depend for their livelihood, retain their native language. They have scrupulously avoided even Spanish and Guarani loan words. Thus such urban names as “the street car”, “buses”, “neon lights” etc have been given descriptive Maca names.

On the other hand, Chamacoco tribe, though not as dependent, has either lost its language or borrowed extensively from Spanish and Guarani. Loewen suggested that cultural vitality and in-group solidarity of Maca Indians help functional distribution of languages and lead to language maintenance.
Brass (1974) explained language shift in terms of political and religious reasons. He showed how in the linguistic conflicts of Punjab, Punjabi was the primary loser as Punjabi speaking Hindus opted for Hindi and Punjabi speaking Muslims for Urdu.

Both Friedrich (1962) and Kohn (1967) emphasized the significance of political factors determining the course of language shift. Friedrich pointed out that a shift in political hegemony can lead very rapidly to language shift. At the same time closer juxtaposition of linguistic minorities through the process of urbanization and industrialization may not be very favorable to linguistic uniformity. In contact situations where languages have been functionally separated, retention of mother tongues has a greater chance.

Neale (1971) showed how the Asians in Nairobi have four functionally distinct languages, the choice in each case depending upon the context. In the United States, in spite of the freedom to use one's language, the pressures to assimilate to the language and culture of the host society are very powerful. Fishman (1964) noted the feelings of several language loyalists who felt that their languages shriveled in the air of freedom while they had apparently flourished under
adversity in Europe. Yet the process of assimilation invariably carried with them seeds of revival. To quote Fishman,

In general, ethnicity and culture maintenance appeared to be much more stable phenomenon than language maintenance. On the one hand, most immigrants become bilingual much before they embark on deethnization or seriously contemplate the possibility of biculturalism. On the other hand, marginal but yet functional ethnicity lingers on (and is transmitted via English) longer after the mother tongue becomes specially dormant or is completely lost. Curiously enough the lingering of marginal ethnicity prompts and supports respect, interest, and nostalgia for the ethnic mother tongue, causing language loyalists to entertain renewed hopes for revitalization even though displacement is far advanced. Thus the very resultants of deep reaching socio-cultural change carry with them seeds of further change and of reversal. (1964:339)

Fishman (1971) formulated a very comprehensive model for a systematic enquiry into the field of language maintenance and language shift. He proposed three major topical subdivisions, namely:

(a) Habitual language use at more than one point in time or space under conditions of inter-group contact.

(b) Antecedent, concurrent or consequent psychological, social and cultural processes and
their relationship to stability or change in habitual language use, and

(c) Behavior toward language in the contact setting, including directed maintenance or shift efforts.

The first topical subdivision which concerns habitual language use at different points in time or space necessitates the location and measurement of bilingualism. This makes linguistic analysis of the speech of bilinguals an integral part of Fishman's model. The second subdivision focuses on the past and present experiences of the migrants and their relationship to language use. The last subdivision is concerned with attitudes towards and stereotypes of languages in contact.

1.3 Hypothesis

When people speaking different languages come into contact, there could be a wide variety of outcomes. In some cases, a few words are borrowed, in others whole new languages may be formed. The result of such contact differ according to several factors, including the length and intensity of contact between the groups, the types of social, economic,
and political relationship between them, the function which communication between them must serve, and the degree of similarity between the languages they speak.

Indonesia, especially Medan has a rare set of language contact phenomena from sociolinguistic point of view. Although Bahasa Indonesia has been nationalized by the government through a constitution, enormous amounts of ethnic languages exist and are still being spoken. This multi-ethnic country seeks a super-ordinate ideologized sentence commonly termed as nationalism for its socio-ethnic identity. Nationalism serves a unity function, it unifies and ideologizes nationalities in multi-ethnic nation. So the use of Bahasa Indonesia is seen as the way to unify and ideologize people that belong to different ethnic spread across the archipelago.

On the other hand, the use of ethnic languages in Indonesia especially in Medan is seen as the way to define characteristics of ethnic group membership. In Medan, there are native speakers of a number of ethnic languages, including such major ethnic languages as Batak Toba, Mandailing, Batak Karo, Melayu, Java, Minang, and Chinese. In most cases, individuals will identify themselves as belonging to a particular
ethnic group or tribe based on their mother tongue (although the majority of inhabitants are bi- or multi-lingual). The different ethnic groups therefore maintain their separateness and identity as much through language as anything else.

The writer assumes that Bahasa Indonesia in Medan, not only functions as a national language but more often it functions as a recognized lingua franca. The intensity of contact between different ethnic groups has resulted in creating bi- and multi-ethnic linguals among the inhabitants, not to mention how these bi- and multi-ethnic linguals easily indulge in code switching or code mixing during their conversation.

The writer is also of the opinion that it is presumably easy to identify to which ethnic group a speaker belongs when he speaks Bahasa Indonesia due to the influence of ethnic languages on the way of his speaking Bahasa Indonesia. Another important point that needs to be mentioned here is that these bi- and multi-ethnic linguals in Medan are created due to socio-political and economic reasons. Socially, Java language is spoken by people who are subordinate and generally holding lower class of job such as house maids, skill laborers, and so on, whereas Melayu (which is the indigenous language in
Medan) has a minor role to play nowadays. Historically, Medan and its surrounding areas (previously known as Tanah Deli or Land of Deli) was ruled by Sultan of Deli and has used Melayu as an official language, but later the Melayu people seem to be sided into peripheral by the immigrants. People who do not belong to Batak ethnic tend to learn and use Batak languages mostly because of the administrative posts and higher class of job which are generally held by Batak peoples. Although Chinese are minority in number, amazingly the wheel of economy in Medan is run by them. It is one of the reasons for people outside this ethnic to learn and speak Chinese, in other words, if you want to have a successful business in Medan, you must be able to speak Chinese.

The writer also assumes that the intensity of ethnic languages contact in Medan has influenced Medanese style in speaking Bahasa Indonesia. It can be identified by apparent borrowing of ethnic vocabularies, structure and accent.

1.4 Aims

For many years, invasion and conquest have been major forces in bringing different language speaking groups in
contact. When languages come in contact, three principle outcomes are possible: a population may decide to continue using their native language for all functions, choose to use the newly introduced language instead of the native language in all functions or choose to use the native language in some domains and the additional language in others.

The phenomena of language contact, maintenance and loss have not attracted scholars in Indonesia, moreover, the projection of Bahasa Indonesia as a national language did not take into consideration the cultural conservatism of ethnic languages. In this way the writer is trying to find acceptable solutions in such a way that the nationalization of Bahasa Indonesia on one hand can reach the utmost goal while on the other hand the minority languages (ethnic languages) can still flourish and become a special identity for the young generation.

The researcher hopes that this study will highlight the socio-linguistic consequences resulted from language contact in Medan, such as language maintenance and language loss, code switching and code mixing also the phenomena of bilingualism and multilingualism.
It is hoped that this study will become a kind of contribution for more sensitive language planning efforts in the future.

1.5 Scope

Although the writer realizes that a large number of ethnic languages are spoken in Indonesia, this study is concerned only with the language contact between ethnic languages that occurs in Medan, the capital of North Sumatra province. Realizing that in Medan there are also a number of ethnic languages, therefore the writer limits his study only to the ethnic languages which have a great influences in socio-politic and economic, such as Batak Toba, Mandailing, Batak Karo, Melayu, Java, Minang, and Chinese. More focus has also been placed on the socio-linguistic consequences resulting from these phenomena related to ethnicity and nationalism.

Language maintenance and language loss in a given country cannot be explained or attributed solely to one factor. There are various social, political, economic, and socio-psychological reasons for language maintenance and language loss in a society. This study only attempts to explain the role
of ethnicity and nationalism in the processes of language loss or language maintenance, but does not pretend to offer this as the sole explanation for the current language situations in Indonesia especially in the province of North Sumatra where Medan is situated. Consequently, the analysis of factors such as attitude towards the national language i.e. Bahasa Indonesia at an individual or personal level were not considered but may well have contributed to language choice at a group level.

It is necessary to mention here, that the writer uses the term 'language loss' and not 'language death', because he realizes that the phenomena of language contact in Medan has resulted in a situation in which there is a gradual loss in using ethnic language among younger generation though they have ability to understand it.