Sigulai: One of Minority Language in Simeulue Island

Ratri Candrasari¹, Harinawati², Teuku Kemal Fasya³

¹,2,3 Universitas Malikussaleh
*Corresponding author. Email: ratri@iunimal.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This article describes the Sigulai language, one of the minority languages on the island of Simeulue. Simeulue Island is a district in the province of Aceh, Indonesia. This province has several speech community groups including the Acehnese language which is still strong because it has the widest speech area, around 70% of the total population of Aceh. Besides Acehnese, this province has at least 9 other regional languages, Gayo language, Tamiang language, Aneuk Jamee language, Kluet language, Haloban language, Singkil language, Devayan language, Leukon language, and Sigulai language. The last three languages are in the speech area group on the island of Simeulue. The Devayan language has the widest speech area with the most speakers in 2/3 of the island area, namely East Simeulue, Central Simeulue, West Teupah, Middle Teupah, South Teupah, Simeulue Cut, and Teluk Dalam. The Leukon language has the least spoken area, which is only two villages in the Alafan sub-district, while the other villages in one sub-district speak Sigulai. Meanwhile, Sigulai is spoken in 3 sub-districts, namely, West Simeulue, Alafan, and Salang. Sigulai has been increasingly marginalized since the island has become increasingly open to sea and air transportation.

Keywords: Sigulai, minority language, simeulue

1. INTRODUCTION

The name of the island of Simeulue, based on oral tradition obtained from several sources, comes from the name of a princess from the island of Simeulue who was brought to Aceh and named Si Melur. Then the Sultan of Aceh married Princess Melur to Tgk. Halilullah, a cleric from Minang who was studying Islam in Aceh before continuing to go on pilgrimage to Arab lands. However, after marriage, the cleric was assigned by the Sultan to spread Islam to the island of Simeulue, which at that time had no name. During the Dutch era, people called it Hook Island (Edge) and people called U (coconut) [1]. So when the ulama and his wife arrived on the island, they named the island Simeulue, taken from the name Si Melur. From here begins the history of the inhabitants of the island of Simeulue until now.

Simeulue Regency is in the form of a large island also named Simeulue, which is located approximately 150 km off the west coast of mainland Aceh, and the capital city is Sinabang and several small islands around it. Previouusly, the island of Simeulue was included in the territory of West Aceh, so it is not surprising that the Aceh language and Jamee language were also spoken in that area, which was brought by immigrants from mainland Aceh, namely the district of West Aceh. In 1999, this region separated from West Aceh and became independent under the name Simeulue district. Figure 1.1 is a map of the location of Simeulue Island in Aceh province. Simeulue Island which is red (dark), and the small islands to the east are islands that belong to the Singkil district, one of which is named Pulau Banyak, which also has a Devayan-speaking community with different dialect variations. The following is the location of the island of Simeulue which is on the map of the province of Aceh.

Picture 1.1 Simeulue Island

Simeulue Regency is an archipelago consisting of 147 large and small islands. The total area of the island is 1,838.09 km² or 183,809 ha. The largest island is Simeulue Island. In addition to Simeulue
island, there are other islands including: Siumat island, Panjang island, Batu island, Teupah island, Mincau island, Simeulue Cut island, Pinang island, Dara island, Langeni island, Linggan island, Leukon island, Silaut Besar island, island Silaut Kecil (outermost island), Edge island, Ina island, Alafulu island, Turtle island, Tinggi island, Kecil island, Khalak-khalak island, Asu island, Babi island, Lasia island, and other small uninhabited islands. Figure 1.2 is a picture of the island of Simeulue which is located at the coordinates of 20°15' - 20°55' North Latitude and 95°040' - 96°030' East Longitude.

Picture 1.2 Districts in Simeulue Island

Simeulue Regency is divided into 10 sub-districts, namely: South Teupah, East Simeulue, West Teupah, Central Teupah, Central Simeulue, Teluk Dalam, Simeulue Cut, Salang, West Simeulue, and Alafan. The district capital is located in Sinabang which is in the East Simeulue region. Alafan, West Simeulue, and Salang sub-districts are the 3rd furthest sub-districts, which are 13, 75 km, 93 km, and 70 km from the center of the district capital, because the district capital is at the eastern end and the three sub-districts are at the western end of the island of Simeulue.

The largest population is East Simeulue and followed by West Simeulue. Meanwhile, South Teupah sub-district has the largest number of villages, the population is only about 10 percent of the total population of the district. The smallest population is in Simeulue Cut sub-district. The composition of the population when depicted on a pie graph will describe the state of the population more clearly, as shown in diagram 1.3 below:

Picture 1.3 Composition of Simeulue Population

The diagram above shows that the population in East Simeulue sub-district is the largest, followed by West Simeulue sub-district, and then South Teupah as the top 3 with the largest population. In the next order are the sub-districts of Salang, West Teupah, Central Simeulue, Central Teupah, Teluk Dalam, and the smallest population is Simeulue Cut sub-district.

1.1. Traditions

The arts in Simeulue Regency are very basic, namely Nandong and Rafai Debus. These two arts are owned by the entire district and almost every young man tries to learn them. Nandong and Rafai Debus' performances at all events / Kenduri / Parties even welcoming tarnu are still displayed. Nandong art with its very unique rhymes describes descriptions of overseas, love, profit, advice and so on. The Nandong pantun was originally composed in the herbal language, for example:

- Ala Pandam palito kape
- Ambikan minyak panyalonyo
- Ala jauh di lauik lape
- Buikan surek panjapaiknyo

In addition, Simeulue and Sigulai rhymes also developed, for example:

- Teen bilah — bilah mawi
- Lametik asal mulone
- Teen Nitarein Mawi
- Man sekesih asal mulonyo

Another art form is Debus, which is an artistic activity that combines art and incantations or prayers. In addition to Rafai as a tool for his sounds, Debus also uses sharp weapons, namely: Rencong, knives, machetes, chains, bambos and even chainsaw machines that are stabbed or beaten into the body. This art is the pride of the people of Simeulue in every event such as weddings and welcoming guests.

In addition, there are other arts in the form of dances which are also characteristic of the residents of this district but are performed by some Simeulue residents who come from various regions, which at the same time have their original arts carried over and developed in Simeulue, namely:

1. Andalas Dance
2. Kuala Deli / Tanjung Katung Dance
The use of Sigulai language is only as an oral language, there is no written language in the form of books or literary works. In informal areas such as family and neighbours, Sigulai language is still actively used, but in the realm of public communication, Indonesian is mostly used.

G1 (> 50th) and G2 (30-50th) language attitudes show a positive attitude towards the future of the Sigulai language, but G3 (13-29) and G4 (1-12th) show concern because they plan to teach Indonesian as their first language to their children when they are married[5].

3. WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION

According to [6] there are six efforts that can be made to restore the use of language, namely:

1. Learn a few words, such as slams and introductions or short conversations.
2. Collect linguistic publications, field notes and voice recordings as part of creating community-based resources and archives,
3. Developing a writing system and making community-based dictionaries and pedagogical grammar,
4. Make audio or video recordings of the remaining speakers with the aim of documenting and archiving examples of their use of the language by creating a corpus of various types of material,
5. Take a language class or language camp,
6. Conduct full immersion (schools where the language of instruction is a threatened language) for children in communities that have the resources to support them.

From the description above, it can be concluded that the success of the revitalization still depends on Sigulai speakers, but the central and local governments, in this case the Aceh government and the Simeulue district government, as language policy makers are very responsible for maintaining and preserving the Sigulai language.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank to Universitas Malikussaleh Institution of Research and Community Service LPPM Unimal) for the opportunity and fund to do the research.

REFERENCES


