

ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the declining use of the Gayo language among the younger generation, a trend that potentially affects the survival of the regional language as a cultural identity for the Gayo community. The study aims to describe the family, educational, and digital media factors influencing this decline, as well as the role of the younger generation in preserving the Gayo language in Bale Atu Village, Central Aceh. A descriptive method with a qualitative approach was employed, grounded in Fishman's concept of "Domains of Language Use." Data were gathered from 14 informants comprising 10 young people, two parents or community figures, and two teachers through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The data were subsequently analyzed using a process of reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The study yielded 40 data points: 11 regarding family factors, 6 regarding educational factors, 6 regarding digital media factors, and 17 regarding the role of the younger generation. The findings indicate that Gayo language usage is declining within the family domain; meanwhile, in the educational and digital media domains, the language is still used albeit in specific situations and not yet as a habitual practice. The younger generation contributes to language preservation through positive attitudes, the use of Gayo within family and educational settings, and the utilization of digital media. These findings demonstrate that the continuity of the Gayo language is shaped by habits prevalent across various domains of life.

Keywords: *Gayo language, language preservation, younger generation, language shift, domains of language use.*

