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## Reviewing Sepa Language Extinction of the Indigenous Peoples of Amahai, Moluccas, Indonesia

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**Abstract.** Threat language can be found in various local languages in Indonesia, including the *Sepa* language of the Indigenous peoples of *Amahai*, Moluccas, where the nationalization of Indonesian is a threat to its extinction. This paper aims to look at the extinction of regional languages from the framework of modernization and contestation of regional languages with national languages. This study is conducted qualitatively, data collection based on interviews, literature study, and observation obtained from *Raja Sepa*, community leaders, customary stakeholders. Research shows that the language in Maluku is almost extinct in line with the narrowing of regional language spaces; the language has been abandoned by its speakers because of the process of modernization and migration. This study shows the need for revitalization of the *Sepa* language through facilitating the mapping of the *Sepa* language comprehensively, making the *Sepa* language dictionary, and integrating the *Sepa* language into the local curriculum.

**Keywords.** Extinction, Sepa Language, Power, Attractiveness

### Introduction

The nationalization of Indonesian on the one hand is an important aspect in maintaining the unity of nation as the unity of language, but on the other hand it becomes a threat to the extinction of native languages. This threat can be found in a variety of mother languages in Indonesia, including the *Sepa* language of the Indigenous peoples of *Amahai*, Moluccas, where the nationalization of Indonesian is a threat to its extinction. The Indonesian Language Agency notes that Indonesia has 728 native languages, Kompas mentions 720, while LIPI records Indonesian native language 749 (Kompas 2015). In a note by Unesco (2016) it was revealed that 139 native languages in Indonesia were threatened with extinction, meaning that some 17 percent of native languages were threatened with no longer having a true speaker and did not have written documentation in the form of grammar (Radjaban 2019). This certainly needs careful attention, so that the native language can be preserved and avoid the threat of extinction.

Indonesian has become an agreement affirmed in the form of Law Number 24, 2009 as a national language that must be used in formal activities for all Indonesian peoples. Likewise, Indonesian as the state language is included in Article 36 of the Constitution of the Republic of

Indonesia. Existing studies tend to look at the phenomenon of the original language from three aspects. First, ethno-historical or linguistic aspects are examined through a historical approach by looking at their use in a structured manner, such as syntax, morphology, phonology and semantics (Mika 2007; Lars 2012; Radjaban 2019). The second aspects is the use of native language in communication as a sign of the user's identity (Pennycook 2010; Riera-Gil 2018). Third, Preservation with a hereditary system through the formal education system in schools that is included in the curriculum as a regional language. Similarly, inheritance in family patterns (Sunindyo et al. 2011; Tardy 2011).

This paper aims to complement the shortcomings of existing studies in looking at the extinction of regional languages from a modernization framework, paying less attention to the contestation of regional languages with the National language that occurs within a framework of nationalism. Correspondingly three questions can be formulated: (a) how the extinction of the *Sepa* language occurred in *Amahai*; (b) what factors cause the extinction of the *Sepa* language; and (c) how the language revitalization model can be formulated as the direction of language preservation.

This paper is based on an assumption that the extinction of a language is a statement of the commitment of the parties in positioning language as a mainstream or periphery in a language constellation that links national languages and regional languages. Three processes can be the factors tested in this study: (a) the extinction of the *Sepa* language is related to the expansion of universal languages, namely Indonesian and Ambonese which fill every communication space; (b) language is a historical construct whose prohibition of using *Sepa* language has occurred since the colonial period up to the present day due to the positioning of *Sepa* in the backward status; and (c) the strong flow of mobilities which in addition to causing languages to be abandoned also causes mixing of regional languages with various languages that enter the *Sepa* language speakers area. At the same time language is not bound by customary structures which are able to bind the existence of language.

## **Literature Review**

### **Local Language**

Over the past three decades, several political theorists, sociologists and sociolinguistics have highlighted that language has value as a communicative tool and a marker of identity (Riera-Gil 2016). Language is socialized and passed on from one generation to another as a way to preserve culture. Language is an important factor in the teaching and learning of languages being a mother tongue or a foreign language or local language. Mother tongue is the language of the closest environment and daily interactions when caring for children in the first four years of life, while local language is the language of the closest or local community (Bühmann & Trudell 2008; Ouane & Glanz 2011). A language contains historical meanings and complex knowledge from humans. Therefore we must maintain language to preserve the history and knowledge of ancestors for the nation's next generation (Sunindyo et al. 2011). Schieffelin (1986) adds that local language is one of the research traditions rooted in linguistic anthropology and which considers language not as a formal code, a medium of communication or repository of meaning, but as a semiotic resource to 'generate social and moral sentiments, collective and personal identities which is bound to places and situations, and a body of knowledge and belief.

Language as a local practice has a role as (a) language identity, (b) locality and (c) language practice in integrated social and spatial activities (Pennycook 2010). Viewing language as a practice means seeing language as an activity and not a structure, as something we do instead of the system we use, as a material part of social and cultural life rather than an abstract entity. While examining local language practices can give us insight into what people do with language

(or what they think they do), it is also important to understand what believers must do, that is, the beliefs and values they hold about language and language use (Tardy 2011). UNESCO recorded many local languages became extinct; some of them are completely extinct from the earth, including Indonesian local languages. If there are many extinct local languages from the earth without being able to be saved, this is a big loss for Indonesia and even for all people in the world, because the world will lose its inheritance that cannot be changed. Therefore, systematic efforts need to be made to save and preserve local languages from extinction (Sunindyo et al. 2011).

### **National Hegemony**

The last few year hegemony politics have returned to popularity internationally. Especially at this time, hegemony is basically materialistic, as in the concept of international politics that hegemony and power are reduced to coercive resources, something commonly held, which hinders recognition of the inherent power in language and meaning, both of which produce behavior that is in accordance with the practice of hegemony (Herschinger 2012). National hegemony is related to conceptualization which claims that hegemony is far more than a power relationship based on coercion and realized by the dominant state (Herschinger 2012). Robert (1981) defines national hegemony as a form of domination which is an expression of a broad-based consensus that manifests hegemony in an idea and is supported by material and institutional resources. In other words, hegemony echoes how social classes exert a culture of leadership domination in other classes in maintaining the socio-political status quo, thus persuading subordinate social classes to accept and adopt the values of the ruling class (Kumar 2010). Hegemony is a social order in which the dominance of the class economy is reproduced as political and cultural leadership at many levels from the public sphere to the most intimate domain of private life (Ivanova 2011).

National hegemony aims to show a process effort where the political and economic aspects of society are bound together, not deterministically and automatically, but through tactics and strategic activities (Narotzky 2016). Ivanova (2011) says that hegemony is a form of class domination, which is based on a very specific national and historical context: no the two hegemonies are equal or same. According to Robel, national hegemony can be defined as a form of special leadership where the existence and continuity of relationships depends on (a) hegemonic resources, (b) their willingness to produce and maintain such relationships, (c) their strategic competence to do so and (d) form conscious loyalty among (at least the core group) other countries and/or their respective political and social elites there (in Munro & Brand 2014). Empirically, hegemony in the Western Hemisphere refers to the single regional position of the US for the past two centuries. In connection with US-Latin American relations, the authors analyze the events and processes of macro-hegemony/counter hegemony structures there. For example, the cultural and economic aspects of the United States consistently coexist with widespread and sporadic elite rejection of US hegemonic ambitions (Munro & Brand 2014).

### **Cultural Contestation**

Cultural contestation is talking about identity which expressed in the realm of symbolic society consist of cultural practice, expression, and social engagement (Rodenberg & Wagenaar 2018). Cultural expression is a very important element for group identity. Group identities are strongly related to heritage, cultural practices, and expressions, whether they are tangible like landscapes, monuments, and artifacts or intangible such as rituals, festivals, or languages

(Maags 2018). When this cultural expression is felt to threaten other groups, then there is cultural contestation to maintain identity. Cultural contestation arises between two ethnic groups with different cultures. In this cultural contestation effort, it involves strong interests and strategies. But according to Ross (2017), cultural contestation goes beyond structural approaches or only in the interests of the state. Cultural contestation determines the existence of a group through maintaining identity, one of the most important is the existence of regional languages as cultural expressions.

Language in cultural contestation is caused one of them by cultural contact (Sulaeman et al. 2019; Ridwan et al 2020). The language contact results in a language shift, which is a permanent change in one's language choices for everyday needs or a language change, which is a change in language over a endangered languages; 2) Endangered languages; 3) Seriously endangered languages; 4) Moribund languages; and 5) Extinct languages. The Hamap language in Alor Regency (NTT) is estimated to only have 1,000 speakers included in the classification of potentially endangered languages. A total of 208 local languages in Papua are included in endangered languages because they do not have young speakers.

Table 1 Indicator of Language Strength

Language Strength	Indicator
Language Power	1) Demographics (relating to the number of speakers, including income per capita) 2) Dispersions (equations related to speech areas geographically) 3) Mobility (horizontally related to the number of speakers of X language traveling and distance traveled, vertically (Gunarwan 2011) related to the number of speakers who occupy high positions / social stratification) 4) Economy (refers to economic products produced) 5) Ideology (relating to the use of language as the bearer of ideology, or liturgical media relating to the adherents of the religion) 6) Culture (based on the number of books published in a language)
Language Attractiveness	1) Language Attractiveness Status (referring to the official language status or language mapping of Vitality Languages ..... vernacular) 2) Territorial Language Attractiveness (refers to similarities that make it easy to learn) 3) Language Attractiveness Inter-lingual (referring to location) and Power Press Language (Characteristics of Behavior)
Power of Language Press	1) Characteristics of Behavior (related to the influence of language in various fields) 2) Acculturation of Concepts (measured by certain tests)

Meanwhile according to Lauder (2006), among 208 Papuan regional languages there is one language that is included in the category of extinct languages because the speakers only have



one person left, so they cannot communicate to maintain the language. While Gunarwan (2011) provides another perspectives. In his article mentioned that the effort to see the vitality of a language should reveal four factors, namely sociolinguistic factors, demographic factors, psychological factors, and economic factors. In this case the concept referenced is the Mackey geo-linguistic concept whose indicators can be seen in the following table 1.

The most complete and most recent indicator of language vitality has been formulated by UNESCO in the language vitality and endangerment document. According to UNESCO (2003) the vitality of a language can also be determined based on the following nine factors: (1) Intergenerational language transmission, (2) A large number of speakers, (3) Comparison of speakers with population, (4) Trends in the realm of language use, (5) Responsiveness to new domains and media, (6) Materials for language education and literacy, (7) Language policies by governments and institutions, including official status and usage, (8) Attitudes of speaking communities towards their languages, and (9) Amount and quality of language documentation.

## **Methods**

This descriptive qualitative study was conducted in *Sepa Village*, Amahai, Moluccas. The *Sepa* language in the village of *Sepa* was chosen as the basis of the language developments that were becoming extinct with the number of speakers continuing declined. While the interviews were used to complement the data conducted (Sulaeman et al. 2019) in the *Sepa* language speakers areas. Observations were made by note and recording the facts of the extinction of the *Sepa* language as seen in communication in society, including in various ritual and daily activities. The process of extinction of the *Sepa* language can be mapped through these observations, especially as seen in indicators of internal and external speakers of the *Sepa* language, both speakers are detected individually and collectively. Interviews were used with *Raja Sepa*, community leaders, customary stakeholders, to find out the factors causing the extinction of the *Sepa* language. The various facts observed were then confirmed through informant interviews selected based (Ridwan et al. 2020; Malawat et al. 2021) on the level of representation of language knowledge. Data collection was also carried out using Focus Group Discussion techniques to capture models or strategies for the revitalization of extinct *Sepa* languages in order to formulate the direction of conservation and language sustainability.

## **Results**

### **The loss of the generation of Sepa speakers**

*Sepa* speakers experience a drastic decline. An informant said: "Speakers or users of the *Sepa* language until 2018 disappeared 85 percent of the total *Sepa* population (1,500). *Sepa* Speakers who are still fluent in languages only need 15 percent (Interview with Patty at Amahai, September 21<sup>th</sup>, 2020). This view represents the judgment given by the occupation. Concern over the extinction of the *Sepa* language was expressed by many, as expressed by King *Sepa*:

I really feel that my ancestral language has the potential to become extinct now, because until now I also have not been fluent in using *Sepa*. Thoughtful I was appointed King of *Sepa* because of the inheritance of *Sepa* nobles. *Sepa* language should be one of the cultural heritages of the ancestors, I am obliged to inherit and protect it (Interview with *Raja Sepa* at Amahai, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020).

The condition of threatening the intensity of *Sepa* language speakers was not only stated by the *Sepa* king, but also felt by Saniri members as representatives of members of the royal structure

in the country of Sepa. The threat of the Sepa language is said by members of the Sepa kingdom as a Customary Stake:

The language of the Sepa region is very worrying for our children and grandchildren here, they no longer want to speak using the Sepa language", (we were the eldest only) '*katong-katong sa*' are still using language *Sepa*' (Interview with Saniri Sepa at Amahai, July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020).

Further researchers and linguists talking about speakers of extinct languages are discussed in the Collins paper when the Regional Language Revitalization Conference in Ambon 2018 which said that:

It is time to endeavor to preserve local language, it is possible that changes in language loyalty will apply more quickly and the fading of the liveliness of traditional languages and cultures imagined in increasingly disappearing vocabulary will occur unexpectedly, without being aware of. Hopefully the revitalization effort is not too late. In fact, the circulation of the times will not wait for people who are slow in carrying out their duties to preserve the legacy of the imagination and conceptualization of the ancestors (Collins, Ambon 2018).

Similarly, the view of language observers expressed by Chong Shin in the implementation of the Regional Language Revitalization Conference in Ambon 2018:

The younger generation in Negeri Sepa prefers to use Indonesian and Ambonese Malay rather than the local language. Now it is necessary to revitalize languages because there has been a shift where local languages have been abandoned by speakers (Shin & Collins, Ambon 2018).

### **Narrowing of Regional Language Spaces**

The *Sepa* language is not used by almost all Sepa residents in various forms of speech acts. They are fish fishermen when bringing home their catches, they are assisted by mothers with 'thousands of' trading fish transactions on the seafront or buyers '*manggurebe*' (scrambling) to choose fish. The language used by them is no longer the *Sepa* language, but the Indonesian language which has been mixed with the local language of the Moluccas dialect. Similarly, when farmers clove, pepper, nutmeg, and vegetables in the transaction with the '*cukong*' under a tree or in a plantation. They no longer use Sepa in their interactions with the sale and purchase of their plantation products. Among children, they are also no longer fluent in the local language. They are more familiar and choose the national language as the language of communication with others (Sulaeman et al. 2019; Ridwan et al. 2020). In fact, they are considered old-fashioned if they speak using the language of their ancestors. Those who use the local language are considered by their colleagues not "level", do not follow the current development of the current era and are considered low status among the people.

Table 2: The Extinction Factor of Sepa Language

No.	Written	Oral
1.	Has no Literacy	Family
2.	Script	Trading
3.	Literature	Lecturer
4.	Curriculum	

5.	Nationalization	Ceremonial customs <i>Saniri</i> meeting
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*Sepa* language is not found more references with the form of ancient manuscripts containing literary strands, songs or custom messages that have been recorded or hung in the electoral event or in the *Sepa* language speech contest when *Sepa* children join in celebrating the Republic of Indonesia's independence every August 17<sup>th</sup>. Likewise, there were also no manuscripts of *Sepa* language dictionaries, published books, and textbooks at all educational levels. Speakers were met during a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in *Sepa*. The *Saniri* said that they did not have a collection various forms of ancient manuscripts. Even though they should be the culture holders chosen by the indigenous people to record and collect the traditional messages that are always expressed by the traditional elders during the procession of traditional ceremonies opening and closing '*Sasi*'.

Lecturers or preachers also no longer use *Sepa* when giving lectures or sermons at mosques. When the preacher explained his sermon material more smoothly and familiarly and was more confident in using Indonesian with a Malay accent, even though members of the mosque congregation were attended by the *Sepa* community itself. The community from the elderly, actually more prefer if the sermon material is presented by using the *Sepa* language. Likewise, evangelists in the colonial era, they were interfered with by colonialism to learn and master the Ambonese language. They are trained to translate and communicate the contents of the Gospels and then be forwarded to members of their congregations.

### **Families Who Are Supposed To Be a Language Use Space, But No Longer Use *Sepa***

The *Sepa* language is not used in the house like when they eat with the whole family in the dining room. Communication between family members is more familiar when using Ambonese language. They each family member ate individually and chose food according to his taste. Their father or mother is not accustomed to teaching their children to use the language of their ancestors from an early age. Parents when instructing or giving orders to their children to do an activity may choose the local language or *Sepa* language. His child understands his parents' commands. But when their children give answers to the commands of their parents, they prefer to reply to commands using Ambonese. For example, '*Ose pi bali sabun cuci di pondok do?*' (You go to buy laundry soap at the store huh?). They answered "let's go mama" or "yes mom". Likewise command words in other activities, parents always try to give orders to their children through *Sepa* Language, but their children always prefer to use slang or more trendy languages.

The father as the head of the family no longer gave a short lecture or a kind of traditional advice and religious philosophy using the *Sepa* Language in the prayer room. Not bad if parents are busy taking care of their work. It is my father's habit to rush to the sea early in the morning using 'colleagues' complete with fishing rods and nets to look for fish in the sea. Their mothers are accustomed to the '*jibu-jibu*' carried over their heads using '*parten*' (*basin*) containing various merchandise such as fish, vegetables, herbs and spices through the halls to be served in their customers. When their father was already busy with his canoe (*cole-cole*), and while Mother was already frenzied with her '*jibu-jibu*', at the same time Father and Mother no longer cared about whispering religious messages or traditional advice using the *Sepa* language to her sons and daughters. If parents have forgotten to transfer cultural or ancestral language to their children, so the language will be potential threat of persistence to habits becomes a reality. The implication could be the language concerned in the future gradually no longer exist its speakers.



Mothers no longer use *Sepa* as they walk in the hallways of the house carrying 'jibu-jibu' with various kinds of fish and vegetables while shouting 'ikang, sayor' (fish, vegetable). Fish and vegetables mean to be shouted as a symbol to call the buyer of his merchandise Likewise, when her mother washes their clothes in the riverbank. Also when they rubb their clothes with a brush after being covered with hand soap. They talked with other mothers using Ambonese or Indonesian. Indeed, mothers have forgotten their ancestral heritage.

The parents when discuss on the terraces of the house do not also use *Sepa*. Moluccas are like other citizens in Indonesia who like political debate. When they discuss the position of the fighters who take part in the parliamentary or other public spaces, they tend to communicate with Ambonese. They are free to argue with opponents when using one of the two languages rather than communicate with the *Sepa* language as the ancestral language. If the routine conditions experienced by such a family group for days, months, and years; then sooner or later the survival of the *Sepa* discussed in the family is on the verge of extinction.

Their children also do not enjoy using *Sepa* when playing in the home page or on the playground. According to him, "using Ambonese is easier and more familiar communicated when playing with friends rather than using *Sepa*" (Said 2020). They prefer and are busy playing games on Google Play via their mobile phones with various forms of commands using modern language rather than playing 'mutel' or marbles, jumping rubber, playing 'asen' or a kind of folk game using the *Sepa* language. Children's games with commands using the local language have been difficult to find in various regions of Moluccas. Even though one culture can also be a medium of cultural survival and local language is children's play. Therefore, if the condition of the survival of the *Sepa* language experienced by children has also shifted and co-opted into regional, national and international contestation, then gradually the next generation of language culture will become lost as well, so that in the end the seeds of the survival of *Sepa* language in the future cannot expected again.

### **Discussion: Why *Sepa* Language Extincted?**

There are two great power languages. Firstly, the too strong flow of the use of the Ambonese language is communicated by all migrants and natives with various forms of speech acts in the middle of *Sepa*. Secondly, the expansion and interference of Indonesian as a National Language communicated by all levels of society. The *Sepa* language should be a pillar to support the empowerment of local cultural resources and elevate the image of the *Sepa* traditional ancestral messages, then provide support for linguistic enrichment to the two great powers developed by the currents of the Ambonese and Indonesian languages. The language community in the *Sepa* should not let the language hit by the wave of expansion of the two forces so that speakers of the *Sepa* language inevitably have to communicate with their National Language, especially speakers of the State Civil Apparatus, Teachers, and *Saniri* officials in following up on their various activities.

The diversity of regional languages was played by the *Sepa* language becomes the power of conservation and cultural glue in the *Sepa* village. This is shown within all speech acts in various activities that have been played for years by the apparatus, educators, and local wisdom stakeholders. Even though this role already exists, it is not instilled in the inheritance of an unstructured and comprehensive managerial pattern of ancestors, thus weakening the sharpness of the implementation of concepts and actions to the cultural heirs themselves. Plus the power of interference or expansion by two major powers, so that resulted in being one of the triggers of the isolation of various local languages in Moluccas. That fact then indicates that diversity is not a guarantee to strengthen and enrich an intensity of language culture. On the contrary, it will further complicate the atmosphere of mysticism, the survival of the *Sepa* language itself.

Finally, the structure of the *Sepa* language it was not supported by an established cultural and leadership structure, so that the diversity of languages in Moluccas has implications in facing the bleak future of language.

The implementation of the inequality of the bureaucratic structure of the *Sepa* language is not hierarchically co-opted in the *Saniri* custom, especially decisions based on common sense opinions that do not have adequate linguistic knowledge. Early research on the structure of language in *Sepa* follows the logic of linguistic thinking that is not constructive, so that it now has implications for students at the level of primary to high school who do not understand patterns of language use, whether seen from diachronic or chronological framing. The effect of the lack of speakers' knowledge is related to the structure and aesthetics of the speaker's love of the language, so that in *Elpaputi* Village (Paulohi) and also in *Haruruyang* village there are no traditional language speakers. Different symptoms but equally worrying about their impact in several villages in Moluccas, the *Asilulu* language on the northwest coast of Ambon Island is communicated by all the *Asilulu*, *Ureng*, and *Hena Lima* communities with a population of 10,000 people; similarly residents in several locations on the north coast of *Seram* Island, such as *Kasi'e*, *Sawai*, and *Besi*, learn the *Asilulu* language. Due to the strength of the expansion of these two great power languages, now *Asilulu* residents under the age of 25 rarely use the *Asilulu* language and because it is not adequately supported by morphological and lexicon abilities. The same situation also occurs in villages on the east coast of Ambon Island, such as *Tulehu*. Impressionistically, the situation also has occurred in *Latu* and *Sepa* villages on the southern coast of *Seram* Island. So that gradually, the use of regional languages in Central Moluccas and other regions in Moluccas province is declining drastically.

In some villages, there are restrictions from parents or teachers to their students not to use the local language in their village or school. They parents consider their children who use the local language, in the future considered less sociable at the top level. The parents in the village who have been using *Sepa* for decades in their country considered economically backward, so they forbade their children from using their local language. They told their children to study at a higher level outside the city to achieve the expectations of their parents.

In the colonial era, colonialism at that time forbade native Ambonese people from using their local language. Even the evangelists are forced to learn to master the Ambonese *Malay* Language and then are told to socialize the contents of the Gospel to members of their congregation. Most Moluccan Christians during the Dutch colonial occupation, they were intervened to master and use Malay. Besides using *Malay* as *Lingua Franca* in the Trading Market, they are also trained to become Bible translators.

In the context of the mobility of the *Sepa* community, such as when they hold weekly, monthly, and annual conferences or meetings with '*Saniri*' officials or Indigenous Elders in a Village, in Ambon, it is still maintained by *Saniri* members in accordance with the agenda carried by state officials. Likewise the fishermen community is still actively going to sea during the fish season and the farmers also continue to take care of their plants on the plantation. Mothers carry out the task of helping the family economy through the media '*Jibu-Jibu*' selling merchandise on the shoulders of his head while shouting '*ikan*', '*sayur*' (fish and vegetables) to invite customers. Even the integrity of the public community is still maintained maintaining '*Sasi*' as one of the customs and traditions of the village in the form of customary rules or laws to safeguard sea and plantation products or in carrying out various actions to preserve the natural environment. Even though such mobility is maintained by the community, the overall mobility makes the speaking community forget to take care of and conserve to maintain the potential for language extinction.

## Conclusion

The extinction of the Sepa language occurred by three forces which undoubtedly caused a language to be defeated by a change in civilization. The migration that takes place, especially the one that pulls the population out of their language area, generates an inevitable generation gap. Migration occurs in a high intensity which not only encourages the departure of residents but also opens the entry of the National language and Ambonese language into the community. At the same time triggering the natives as language users increasingly marginalized. Modernization also occurs inevitably seeing the increasingly complex conditions of transformation of human civilization but still unstructured, while opportunities for opportunities increasingly gnawing on the actors of civilization itself. Unfortunately it will have implications for the extinction of languages that do not have an established structural structure. The expansion of national and Ambonese language currents has made the Sepa language increasingly marginalized. Thus, the status of small languages with a limited number of speakers always risks extinction in the ongoing civilization contestation.

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