



## THE MAINTENANCE OF THE SASAK LANGUAGE IN THE SAMAWA SPEECH COMMUNITY: A CASE STUDY OF KARANG ANYAR

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### **Abstract:**

This study examines factors affecting the maintenance of the Sasak language in Karang Anyar amid increasing multilingualism. Understanding these factors is vital for its survival against the dominance of Indonesian and other regional languages. The focus is on the menomene dialect spoken in Karang Anyar Hamlet. Employing a qualitative method, data was collected through observations, interviews, and recordings to analyze the natural use of the Sasak language in daily life. The study highlights social, cultural, and linguistic elements influencing language maintenance, involving various community members from different generations. Data analysis through transcription and classification revealed strong daily use of the Sasak language. The community exhibits multilingual skills, switching among Sasak, Indonesian, and Sumbawa. Factors sustaining this include social, demographic, economic, cultural, family, and attitudinal influences, while political and educational ones are less significant. Although residents preserve the Sasak language well, a dedicated institution is needed to ensure its future preservation and prevent extinction.

**Keywords:** Language maintenance factors, Sasak language

### **Introduction**

Language and society are closely intertwined, with language reflecting a community's social and cultural identity (Wei, 2020). In Indonesia, a multilingual environment is prevalent due to its diverse ethnic groups, with people often using their mother tongue alongside other languages. Indonesia is one of the world's most linguistically diverse countries, ranking second in linguistic diversity globally (Irvan, 2024). The country has 718 regional languages, including those from Java, Bali, Bugis, Batak, Sunda, Sumbawa, and Sasak, highlighting Indonesia's cultural richness (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019). Language maintenance is crucial in preserving cultural identity, particularly in multilingual communities. According to Fishman (1989), language maintenance ensures



linguistic continuity across generations, and this process is influenced by social factors such as family, school, and community interactions, which help sustain the language despite the dominance of other languages (Pauwels, 2005; Ramadhan, 2023).

The Sasak language, primarily spoken on Lombok Island and later spreading to Sumbawa, is one of the regional languages in Indonesia. It is divided into four dialects: Ngeno-Ngene, Meno-Mene, Ngeto-Ngete, and Meriak-Meriku. The migration of Sasak settlers to Sumbawa has a long history, dating back to the kingdom era and influenced by the eruption of Mount Tambora in 1815, which caused widespread displacement (Dweik & Al-Obaidi, 2014; Aldoukhi et al., 2024). These settlers, along with other migrant groups such as Javanese, Maduranese, Balinese, and Bugis, have contributed to the ethnic diversity of the Sumbawa population. Over time, these communities have adapted to their new environment, maintaining their cultural identity and language while integrating with other migrants. The Sasak language remains a key element of their identity, demonstrating the dynamic relationship between language and social integration in rural communities (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2018).

In this research, the study case is in Karang Anyar hamlet, one of six hamlets in Pukat Village, Utan District. The Sasak language, specifically the meno-mene dialect, is predominantly used in this area. However, despite the significant presence of Sasak language in this community, there is a noticeable decline in its use across various domains, particularly among the younger generation. This reflects a broader trend seen in many multilingual communities in Indonesia, where vernacular languages face competition from the national language, Indonesian, and other dominant languages.

Previous studies have emphasized language maintenance in multilingual communities, particularly in urban areas where language contact and competition are well-documented. However, there is a significant research gap regarding how language functions are evolving in rural areas like Karang Anyar, where migration patterns and intergenerational language transmission are profoundly influenced by socio-cultural and geographical factors. The existing literature has largely overlooked the specific socio-cultural challenges faced by rural communities in preserving their linguistic heritage, especially in the context of modernization and the prevalence of the national language.

This study aims to fill this gap by focusing specifically on language maintenance in Karang Anyar hamlet, where the Sasak language faces increasing competition from Indonesian and other dominant languages. Unlike previous studies that focus predominantly on urban settings or high-language-shift contexts, this research will investigate how rural communities, particularly in Karang Anyar, navigate the complexities of language maintenance in the face of modernization and inter-ethnic interactions.

Furthermore, this research will contribute to the broader academic discourse on language vitality and sustainability, particularly in remote and rural areas of Indonesia, where language preservation efforts are often overlooked. By

examining the specific socio-cultural and geographical factors affecting language maintenance in these areas, this study will offer practical recommendations for policymakers, educators, and community leaders who are involved in language preservation initiatives. These recommendations will be valuable for supporting language revitalization and ensuring the sustainability of indigenous languages in similar rural contexts across Indonesia and other regions facing similar challenges.

As a member of this community, the researcher is uniquely positioned to explore how local residents maintain or abandon their linguistic heritage in the face of modernization and inter-ethnic interactions. This research will contribute to the understanding of language sustainability in remote areas of Indonesia and provide insights into the factors affecting language vitality.

## **Metode**

The method used in this study was qualitative. It collected and analyzed the data qualitatively. This method explores data inductively, identifying recurring themes, patterns, or concepts and then describing and interpreting the data. So, this study identified, described, and interpreted the language maintenance factors of the Sasak Language in Karang Anyar. This method was suitable for this research because it involved qualitative data transcribed from the subject utterances.

Sources of data will be obtained from observation and interviews with subjects and informants. They are the inhabitants of Karang Anyar, which consists of children, teenagers, and parents. Subjects of this research are Karang Anyar inhabitants who are living in Karang Anyar and they are bilinguals or multilingual. The number of research subjects is 40, and the participants are children, teenagers, and parents who are native speakers of the Sasak language. The subjects of this research are native speakers of Karang Anyar Hamlet. They have experience with the language used in that place. Eventually, the subjects of this research provided proper information about language maintenance in the Sumbawa community in Karang Anyar.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Research Findings**

Karang Anyar is one of the six hamlets in Pukat village, located in the Regency of Sumbawa. It consists of many communities and their languages. Karang Anyar Hamlet is surrounded by five other hamlets. These include: to the east, it borders Pukat Hamlet directly; to the west, it is bordered by the beach; to the south are Labuhan Padi Hamlet and Jerongko Luar and Jerongko Dalam Hamlet; and to the north is Labuhan Bua Hamlet.

The five hamlets have different languages, namely, Labuhan Padi Hamlet with its residents speaking Sumbawa and Bugis languages; Pukat Hamlet with its residents as Sumbawa language speakers, Jerongko Luar and Jerongko Dalam Hamlet both as Sasak speakers, Labuhan Bua Hamlet as Sumbawa language speakers and Karang Anyar Hamlet itself as Sasak speakers (meno-mene dialect).

According to a local community figure, Karang Anyar Hamlet is thought to have been discovered around the 1950s by land clearers. And until now it has been inhabited by the 5th generation.

### Factors that Influence and do not Influence LM in KA

This part reported the first research question about the factors that influence and do not influence language maintenance in the Sasak Community at Karang Anyar hamlet. According to Pauwels' research. A. (2005), factors influencing language retention are Political, Social, Demographic, Economic, Cultural, Linguistic, Psycholinguistic, and Institutional factors. However, not all of these 8 factors are proven, because there are other factors that also affect the Sasak Language in KA as explained in the table below. These are:

**Table 1. Influence and non-Influence Factors**

No.	Influence and non-Influence Factors	Frequency
1	Political	-
2	Social	34 times
3	Demographic	-
4	Economic	-
5	Cultural	4 times
6	Linguistic	-
7	Psycholinguistic	-
8	Institutional	-
9	Family	5 times
10	Religion	1 times
	Total	44 times

**Table 2. The Results of Influence and non-Influence Factors Test**

Value	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Political	1	1.00	0.00
Social	1	1.00	0.00
Demographic	1	1.00	0.00
Economic	1	1.00	0.00
Cultural	1	1.00	0.00
Linguistic	1	1.00	0.00
Psycholinguistic	1	1.00	0.00
Institutional	1	1.00	0.00
Family	1	1.00	0.00
Religion	1	1.00	0.00
Total	10	10.00	0.00

### Table 3. Frequency

Value	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
-	6	2.00	4.00
1 time	1	2.00	-1.00
34 times	1	2.00	-1.00
4 times	1	2.00	-1.00
5 times	1	2.00	-1.00
Total	10	10.00	0.00

**Table 2. Test Statistics**

Test Statistics	Chi-square	df	Asymp. Sig.
Influence and	0.00	9	1.000
Frequency	10.00	4	0.040

As shown in the table above, among the eight factors affecting language retention identified by Pauwels, A., only two factors have been validated by research conducted in Karang Anyar: social factors, occurring '34 times', and cultural factors, appearing '4 times'. The remaining factors- political, demographic, economic, linguistic, psycholinguistic, and institutional- lack proven support. However, other factors also contribute to the preservation of the Sasak language in Karang Anyar, including family factors, which occur '5 times', and religious factors, which happen '1 time'.

In addition, there are also unique facts obtained from the results of interviews with several informants, stating that the inhabitants in Karang Anyar Hamlet are people who speak more than two languages or are multilingual. Uniquely, they can communicate using the Sasak language, Sumbawa language, and Indonesian according to the social environment they are in. This can be proven in the interview data below.

**Table 3. The respondents' statements**

Data 164

*I: Papah saq piran doang taoq de kadu maraq bahase Sasak, bahase Semawa, kance bahase Indonesia?*

(When do you use Sasak, Samawa, and Indonesian?)

Data 165

*R6: Sehari-hari **tergantung sai kancen te ngeraos**. Sengaq saq leq lingkungan te ne ndeqn dengan Lombok doang. Iye araq dengan Semawa, Iye araq dengan Bime, Bali no kan kan kadun bahase Indonesia, jari kan otomatis te kadu bahase Indonesia turut ne. Nah, jari saq telu bahase ne baun te kene ye lah te kadu. **Tergantung saq kancen te ngeraos***

(Every day depends on who we talk to. Because in our environment this is not only Lombok people. There are Sumbawa people, Bima people, and Balinese people, who speak Indonesian with us, so automatically we also use Indonesian as well. So, all

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three languages depend on who we speak to)

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Therefore, the conclusion is that the most dominant factor influencing the preservation of the Sasak language in Karang Anyar is the Social factor, with the most frequency of '34 times'.

### **Reasons that Contribute to the Maintenance of the Sasak Language in KA**

The second research question is the reasons that contribute to the maintenance of the Sasak language in Karang Anyar. The things that contribute to maintaining the Sasak language in Karang Anyar hamlet. According to interviews with 40 informants, there are 5 main reasons behind them in using the Sasak Language in Karang Anyar. These are:

**Table 4. Reasons Maintain the SL**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Reasons Maintain the SL</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
1	Demographic	4 times
2	Cultural	3 times
3	Family	17 times
4	Value and Attitude	15 times
5	Linguistic	5 times
	Total	44 times

**Table 5. Reasons Maintain the SL Test**

<b>Value</b>	<b>Observed N</b>	<b>Expected N</b>	<b>Residual</b>
Demographic	1	1.00	0.00
Cultural	1	1.00	0.00
Family	1	1.00	0.00
Value and Attitude	1	1.00	0.00
Linguistic	1	1.00	0.00
Total	5	5.00	0.00

**Table 6. Test Statistics**

<b>Test Statistics</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Asymp. Sig.</b>
Reasons_Maint	0.00	4	1.000
Frequency	0.00	5	1.000

**Table 7. Frequency**

Value	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
15 times	1	1.00	0.00
17 times	1	1.00	0.00
3 times	1	1.00	0.00
4 times	1	1.00	0.00
5 times	1	1.00	0.00
Total	6	6.00	0.00

From the tables above, it is explained that there are only 5 factors that dominate the most reasons for the residents of Karang Anyar to maintain their mother tongue or Sasak language, including Demographic factors with a frequency of '4 times', Cultural factors with a frequency of '3 times', Family factors with a frequency of '17 times', value and attitude factors as much as '15 times', and as much as '5 times' for Linguistic factors. Therefore, from this data, it can be concluded that family is the most important reason for preserving the Sasak language in Karang Anyar. We can see this from some of the respondents' statements below during direct interviews in Karang Anyar.

**Table 8. The respondents' statements**

Data 290
<i>I: Kembeq ampoq de kadu bahase Sasak kance anak de? Ape alesan de?</i> (Why do you use Sasak with your son? What are the reason?)
Data 291
<i>R14: Ye ampoq te kadu bahase Sasak <b>sengaq iye bahase pertame leman kodeq sampe ne beleq</b>. Jari ye lah ampoq te kadu bahase Sasak.</i> (Why do we use Sasak language because it is the first language from childhood to adulthood. Hence, that's why we use Sasak language)
Data 416
<i>I: Ape alesan de ampoq de kadu bahasa Sasak atau bahasa Lombok?</i> (What is your reason for using Sasak language?)
Data 417
<i>R22: <b>Alesan ya langan turun temurun</b>. Wah laeq wah.</i> (The reason is because it has been hereditary. Since long time ago)

There is also an interesting fact: some parents choose to teach Indonesian since childhood to their children, and when their children are teenagers they are taught or invited to communicate using the Sasak language every day. In addition, the people of Karang Anyar assume that people use languages other than the Sasak language such as Indonesian. Thus, they assume that the man is a police officer as quoted in the interview below.

**Table 9. The respondents' statements**

Data 258
<i>I: Kenapa ndak, maraq dengan toaq nani no siq kekinian siqn ajah bahase Indonesia?</i> (Why not teach Indonesian?)
Data 259
<i>R12: Dari memang bahasa Indonesia kita ajarkan, setelah da dewasa baru kita ajak bahasa Lombok</i> (Indeed, we teach him Indonesian, after he grows up, we teach him the Sasak language)
Data 210
<i>I: Ape alesan de kadu bahase Sasak?</i> (What is your reason for using Sasak?)
Data 211
<i>R9: Alasan kadu bahase Sasak ite dengan Sasak, mudah ten dah ngeraos no. Kebanyakan dengan te no lamun te kadu bahase Indonesia no, "aidah, polisi tie!"</i> (The reason I use Sasak language is because we are Sasak people, easy to communicate. Most people here if we use Indonesian are considered police)

### How do Individuals Actively Maintain the Sasak Language in KA?

The last research question concerns how individuals maintain the Sasak language in Karang Anyar. Many ways have been done by the residents of Karang Anyar so far so that the Sasak language can still be found easily and the number of speakers is still large. The following is a frequency table that displays some of the steps the people of Karang Anyar took to maintain their mother tongue.

**Table 10. Individuals Maintain the SL Question**

No.	How do Individuals Maintain the SL	Frequency
1	Optimistic	6 times
2	Teach the Sasak Language to all the family members from an early age	5 times
3	Keep using Sasak Language whenever and wherever	24 times
4	Live in hometown and marry a Sasak person	1 times
5	The Sasak Language in KA have been mixed with Samawa Language	1 times
6	Create a special forum	3 times
	Total	40 times

**Table 11. Individuals Maintain the SL Test**

Value	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Optimistic	1	1.00	0.00

Teach the Sasak Language to all the family members from an early age	1	1.00	0.00
Keep using Sasak Language whenever and wherever	1	1.00	0.00
Live in hometown and marry a Sasak person	1	1.00	0.00
The Sasak Language in KA have been mixed with Samawa Language	1	1.00	0.00
Create a special forum	1	1.00	0.00

**Table 12. Frequency**

Value	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
1 time	1	1.17	-0.17
1 times	2	1.17	0.83
24 times	1	1.17	-0.17
3 times	1	1.17	-0.17
5 times	1	1.17	-0.17
6 times	1	1.17	-0.17
Total	7	7.00	0.00

**Table 13. Test Statistic**

Test Statistics	Chi-square	df	Asymp. Sig.
How_do_Indivi	0.00	5	1.000
Frequency	0.71	5	0.982

From all the language retention ways above, 'Keep using the Sasak Language whenever and wherever' was the most answered by respondents with a frequency of '24 times'. This can be seen from the respondent's statement as below.

**Table 14. The Respondent's Statement**

**Data 190**

*1: Berembe care upaye de dalem mempertahankan bahase Sasak ne adeqn saq seterusnya ne te kadu siq bai baloq de sampe eraq? (How do you keep the Sasak language in use until your great-grandchildren?)*

**Data 191**

*R7: Salaq sopoq siq te pertahenan bahase Lombok ne adalah liq kalen te ngeraos baik laiq acara-acare kekeluargaan, acare rapat, acare adat, baik laiq yaq te umuman tipaq masyarakat ntah apepun juaq tentang pemerintahan, selalu te gunaan bahase Lombok. (One way to maintain the Sasak language is when we communicate both at family events, meetings, traditional events, or when announcing to the community whatever it is about government, we always use the Sasak language)*

Uniquely, even though other tribes have marital relations with Sasak men or women in Karang Anyar, surely all of them end up communicating using the Sasak language.

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Data 572

*I: Seande ne di suatu masa ye luntur bahase Sasak leq dusun KA ne, kire-kire berembe upaye side Ustadz dalam mengatasi hal tersebut?*

(If one day the Sasak language in Karang Anyar hamlet fades, how do you overcome it?)

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Data 573

*R33: Klaupun terjadi suatu ketika, tapi saya rasa tidak akan mungkin. Karena komunitasnya masih banyak Sasak di dusun ini. Akan tetapi jika pun terjadi perubahan bahasa sehingga menjadi bahasa Sumbawa atau campuran, jadi kita himba kepada warga masyarakat Sasak agar supaya tetep mempertahankan bahasa dan kita harus tetep kadu bahasa Sasak dalam komunikasi walaupun suku apapun tame jok dusun Karang Anyar. Contoh ne timak araq suku Samawa, Bugis, bahkan Bima merarik jok dusun Karang Anyar selalu pada akhirnya mereka menggunakan bahasa Sasak.*

(Even if it happens one day. But I don't think it's possible. Because there are still many Sasak communities in this hamlet. However, even if there is a language change so that it becomes Sumbawa or mixed language. So we appeal to the community to maintain the language and we must continue to use Sasak language in communicating even if any tribe enters this hamlet. For example, even though there are Samawa, Bugis, and even Bima tribes marrying into the hamlet of Karang Anyar, always in the end they used Sasak language)

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## Conclusion

The majority of Karang Anyar residents are multilingual, mastering Indonesian, Sasak (Meno-Mene dialect), and Samawa. Sasak is the most frequently used language in daily activities, while Indonesian is reserved for formal settings such as village offices, schools, and post offices. The Samawa language is used on special occasions, like weddings or work-related gatherings. Four primary factors contribute to maintaining the Sasak language in Karang Anyar: social, cultural, family, and religious factors. Socially, the community predominantly communicates in Sasak in everyday life. Culturally, the language is essential for traditional events such as begawe, merarik, and nyongkolan. Family-wise, parents consistently teach Sasak to their children as the primary language, considering it easy to understand and a vital part of their heritage. Indonesian is taught as a second language, mainly for school and professional use, while Samawa is used occasionally. Religious factors also play a role, as Sasak is used in prayer during death ceremonies.

The reasons for maintaining Sasak include demographic, cultural, family, values and attitudes, and linguistic factors. Efforts to preserve the language include teaching it to family members from an early age, using it consistently, living in the hometown, marrying a Sasak person, and creating a special forum for language preservation. Despite strong efforts to preserve Sasak, researchers

emphasize the need for an institution or forum to manage the language's continued use and prevent its extinction in the future. This forum would help ensure that the Sasak language remains vital for future generations, securing its place in the community's identity and cultural practices.

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