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The Vitality of the Gorontalo Language as a Rescue Effort Extinction of Regional Languages

ABSTRACT

Language vitality refers to the sustainability of the use of a language in the broader society and can be understood through the dimensions of status, demographics, and institutional support. This study examines the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay, which is endangered due to various factors. By understanding the vitality of language, effective preservation strategies can be formulated to maintain the sustainability of minority languages amid the threat of more dominant languages. This study uses a survey method with nine vitality indicators from UNESCO, involving 155 respondents in Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency. Data was collected through questionnaires, observations, and interviews, then analyzed quantitatively to assess the vitality of language based on factors such as usage, preference, and intergenerational transmission. The study results show that the vitality of the Gorontalo language is in the Vulnerable category, with an average score of 3.44. Although this language is still used in some areas, there has been a decline in language transmission to the younger generation, exacerbated by Indonesian dominance in the educational and social spheres. Conservation efforts by the Government and the community through educational programs and cultural activities have been carried out. However, challenges such as limited resources, inadequate documentation, and low interest of the younger generation in learning the Gorontalo language still hinder the success of preservation efforts. Therefore, more vital collaboration is needed between the government, educational institutions, and local communities to raise awareness and strengthen the preservation of the Gorontalo language through the development of relevant learning materials, especially in digital form, to maintain the sustainability of this language in the future.

Keywords: language vitality; Gorontalo language; language extinction; language rescue; Tomini Bay

INTRODUCTION

Gorontalo language is a means of communication, a buffer and developer of local culture, and an identity for the people of Gorontalo (Baruadi, 2013). The function of local languages is to support the development of the Indonesian language and national culture (Olii, 2021). The Gorontalo language experienced a decline in use due to the arrival of immigrants who brought their language and culture, transforming Gorontalo into a multi-ethnic society. This encouraged the adaptation of immigrant languages by local communities, triggering the Language Development Agency of the Ministry of Education and Culture to classify Gorontalo as an endangered regional language (Usman, 2008; Zakaria et al., 2021). Language vitality validation data up to 2019 shows that Gorontalo is only spoken by a few speakers aged 20 years and above, causing this language to be endangered, similar to 24 other regional languages in 10 provinces in Indonesia (Purwaka et al., 2020). According to the 2020 Linguistic Statistics, the Gorontalo language is included in the 56 regional languages in Indonesia that are classified as vulnerable to critical (Rahardini & Niswah, 2022).

The vitality of the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay Coastal Area is threatened by the dominance of Indonesian and other ethnic languages, such as Bajo, Javanese, and Bugis-Makassar, as well as foreign languages, especially English, due to globalization and interaction with immigrants. The people of Gorontalo have a tradition of using the Gorontalo language,

which is influenced by Arabic, Portuguese, Dutch, and Malay (Djou et al., 2023). The dominant language influence in global communication and trade now threatens the Gorontalo language in remote areas. Hence, Tomini Bay Coastal Region parents often encourage their children to leave the local language to achieve higher education and success (Firdaus, 2018). The decline in the use of the Gorontalo language can threaten cultural identity and traditional knowledge. Therefore, the importance of this research is to understand the vitality of the Gorontalo language as an effort to save the extinction of regional languages.

The importance of local language as an essential asset plays a vital role in developing Indonesian vocabulary. Therefore, it is crucial to take strategic steps in maintaining, preserving, and promoting local languages (Ntelu, A & Djou, 2017; Ntelu et al., 2022). The study of language vitality is an essential basis for language conservation activities, which support efforts to protect local languages in Indonesia. Therefore, research on the vitality of the Gorontalo language it can be the right step to save the extinction of the Gorontalo language.

Fishman (1972) emphasises the importance of measuring language vitality based on several categories that include aspects such as the number of speakers, diversity of use, adaptability, and relevance in social and cultural contexts (Medeiros, 2017). Applying language vitality in research can help develop effective and sustainable plans to save endangered languages, including ongoing revitalization and preservation efforts (Gobbo, 2021). In the study of language vitality, researchers used a unique measuring tool to assess the condition of the language among its speakers, which later determined the status of the language in several categories (Zhou & Ang, 2024).

Benu (2023), through the results of his research, shows that local languages in Kupang City still have significant vitality with efforts to preserve local languages through the use of language in public signs and essential institutions. Firdaus (2018) shows that the Suwawa-Gorontalo language is considered stable and steady but threatens extinction. Ibrahim (2011) shows that mapping language vitality is the primary key to understanding the linguistic status of tribes in Indonesia. With this vitality mapping, it can be a solution for designing a program to save regional languages from the risk of extinction. Marica dan Duwila ((2017) show that the vitality status of the Ternate Language is in the worrying category. Aritonang (2016) also examined the vitality of the Talondo language by reporting the results of the evaluation of group sub-indices based on respondent characteristics such as gender, age, education, and occupation, which showed that the sustainability of the Talondo language had decreased.

This research differs from some of these studies, especially on the object of the Gorontalo language and locations in the Tomini Bay Area, namely Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolanho Regency. The novelty of this research lies in a specific location, highlighting the unique sociolinguistic and ethnolinguistic dynamics in the Tomini Bay area that affect the vitality of the Gorontalo language, targeting the regional language rescue strategy in the Tomini Bay Area, Gorontalo Province.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vitality refers to the vitality or sustainability of a language in broader society and can be understood through three main dimensions: status, demographics, and institutional support (Dattamajumdar, 2020; Wickström, 2023). Language vitality is beneficial for developing effective strategies for preserving language and strengthening group identity. It is also crucial in designing intervention policies that support the maintenance and development of minority or endangered languages (Clément & Norton, 2021; Coluzzi et al., 2013). The vitality of a language reflects the ability of a language group to remain spoken in society, which is supported not only by the number of speakers but also by the institutional support and social recognition they receive

(Ding, 2023; Landry et al., 2022).

Language vitality is measured by factors such as usage, dominance, preference, attitudes, motivations, and language ability, which are especially important in a multilingual society because interlingual interactions have a significant influence on social and cultural dynamics (Rohmah & Widya Nur Wijayanti, 2023; Stern, 2017; Ying et al., 2015). Understanding and improving the vitality of languages, especially for minority languages, is crucial in the era of globalization. This is important because the existence of minority languages is often threatened by the more widespread use of more dominant languages (Moring et al., 2011; Zabadi et al., 2023).

Grenoble and Whaley (2006) state that language has high vitality if used by its speakers in daily communication. The use of language in each domain, for example, family, work environment (e.g. Village office), education, and interaction with immigrants. However, if the language is not used in this domain, then the vitality of the language decreases. Holmes (2001) said that if members of an ethnic community live in the same neighbourhood, this can help maintain the survival of their language in the long term, primarily if the language is still spoken in essential areas. Pateda (1987) explained that there is a mutual influence in every realm of social interaction, and more active speakers will dominate. If a language is used more frequently, it will evolve. Conversely, a language that is rarely used will be displaced by a more dominant language, which, if allowed to continue, can lead to the extinction of the language (Malabar, 2015).

In a multilingual society, it is crucial to measure the vitality of a language using a proper evaluation framework to get an accurate picture (Chen, 2023). In assessing the vitality of a language, the UNESCO Language Vitality and Endangerment standard can be used (Moseley, 2010). UNESCO (2011) identified nine factors used to determine the level of vitality of a language, namely: (1) intergenerational language transmission, (2) the absolute number of speakers, (3) the proportion of speakers in the total Population, (4) trends in existing language domains, (5) Responding to New Domains and Media, (6) Materials for Language and Literacy Education, (7) Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use, (8) Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language, (9) Amount and Quality of Documentation

METHOD

This research was conducted in the Coastal Area of Tomini Bay, Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency, Gorontalo Province. The data is sourced from the community according to the respondents' characteristics and the local Government. The respondents in this study amounted to 155 who lived in the coastal area of the Tomini Bay Area. The reason for choosing this research location is that it is predicted that the extinction of the Gorontalo language will occur. The researcher also assumes that the coastal areas of the Tomini Bay Area mostly have contact with ethnic languages, immigrant languages and foreign languages, especially in the location of tourist attractions in coastal areas.

Data collection in this study was carried out using a survey method. According to Wiseman and Aron (as quoted in Mashun (2011), The survey method is a way of collecting data through disseminating questionnaires or a structured and detailed list of questions to obtain information from a large number of respondents who are considered representative of the research Population. The survey on the vitality of the Gorontalo language was conducted using data collected through questionnaires, observations, and interviews. This study's survey was based on nine factors used to measure the vitality of languages formulated by the UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages. These factors are represented in a questionnaire as a table with condition levels from 0 to 5.

Data from observations and interviews complement the data obtained from the survey. A

series of interviews, both formal and informal, were also conducted with all participants. During the interview, participants were asked to provide information about their biographical and linguistic backgrounds, the use of language in various social contexts, and attitudes towards the Gorontalo language. The data obtained were analysed based on nine language vitality criteria described at the UNESCO Expert Meeting in March 2003 (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Lewis, 2009).

According to Mahsun (2011), Data analysis is the process of classifying, grouping, and equalizing similar data, as well as separating and grouping different data. Data analysis was carried out quantitatively. Technically, quantitative data analysis includes (1) describing the analysis techniques used, including descriptive statistics in the form of averages and percentages, (2) presenting the results of the analysis in the form of tables, histograms, bar charts, line charts, or other relevant diagrams, (3) analyzing percentages based on statements obtained from research instruments, (4) providing interpretations of descriptive statistical data, which are generally in the form of averages and percentages, and (5) supplementing data analysis with interviews to understand the problems revealed in the research (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2022).

RESULT

KEY FACTORS IN LANGUAGE USE

INTERGENERATIONAL LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION

Intergenerational language transmission is an essential factor in the sustainability of a language because it involves the inheritance of language from the older generation to the younger generation through daily interactions and educational institutions. If the regional language is not used between parents and children, language skills will decrease, threatening the continuity of the language. Therefore, intergenerational transmission is a significant benchmark of language vitality, where well-passed languages are more resistant to the threat of extinction than those that fail to be transmitted.

TABEL 1. Factor 1: Intergenerational Language Transmission

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Speaker Population	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	There exists no speaker	0.65%
1	Critically endangered	The language is used mainly by very few speakers of the great-grandparental generation.	3.87%
2	Severely endangered	The language is used mainly by the grandparental generation and up	9.03%
3	Definitively endangered	The language is used mainly by the parental generation and up	51.61%
4	Unsafe	The language is used by some children in all domains; all children in limited domains use it.	8.39%
5	Safe	The language is used by all ages, from children up.	26.45%

The survey results showed that the transmission of the Gorontalo language between generations was at level 3, indicating a decline, with the majority of respondents (51.61%) reporting that the elderly and elderly generations mostly used this language. The gap in transmission, especially among the younger generation, risks accelerating the extinction of these

languages if there are no intensive revitalization efforts. Therefore, conservation strategies that target children and vulnerable areas are urgently needed, such as integrating the Gorontalo language into formal education and increasing access to learning materials.

THE ABSOLUTE NUMBER OF SPEAKERS

The absolute number of speakers is an essential indicator in assessing the vitality of a language because the more native speakers there are, the greater the chances of the language surviving. This indicator covers all age groups and language use in various social, cultural, and economic contexts. The decline in speakers, especially among the younger generation, increases the risk of language extinction. This factor is not assessed by scale but rather by the actual number of speakers in the community, with small populations more vulnerable to threats. While the number of speakers is essential, other factors must also be considered to ensure the preservation of the language.

PENDUDUK PROVINSI GORONTALO Hasil Long Form Sensus Penduduk 2020 55

POPULATION SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION

Tabel 3.2 Jumlah Penduduk menurut Kabupaten/Kota, Daerah Perkotaan/Perdesaan, dan Jenis Kelamin
Population by Regency/Municipality, Urban/Rural Area and Sex

Kabupaten/Kota/ Regency/Municipality	Daerah Perkotaan/Urban			Daerah Perdesaan/Rural			Daerah Perkotaan/Perdesaan/Urban-Rural		
	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Kabupaten/Regency									
Boalemo	15 454	16 118	31 572	60 301	56 653	116 954	75 755	72 771	148 526
Gorontalo	79 933	83 605	163 538	120 750	114 513	235 263	200 683	198 118	398 801
Pohuwato	19 905	20 696	40 601	56 034	52 662	108 696	75 939	73 358	149 297
Bone Bolango	32 310	34 076	66 386	51 240	48 574	99 814	83 550	82 650	166 200
Gorontalo Utara	10 304	11 140	21 644	55 111	51 808	106 919	65 915	62 948	128 863
Kota/Municipality									
Gorontalo	97 018	98 335	195 353	3 025	2 972	5 997	100 043	101 307	201 350
GORONTALO	285 124	263 970	549 094	346 461	327 182	673 643	601 985	591 152	1 193 137

FIGURE 1. Number of Population as a result of the 2020 population census long form

PENDIDIKAN

Tabel 6.4 Jumlah Penduduk Berumur 5 Tahun ke Atas Menurut Kabupaten/Kota, Bahasa Pertama Kali Dikuasai, dan Jenis Kelamin
Population 5 Years of Age and Over by Regency/Municipality, First Language Spoken, and Sex

Kabupaten/Kota/ Regency/Municipality	Bahasa Indonesia/Bahasa			Bahasa yang Pertama Dikuasai/First Language Spoken			Bahasa Asing/Foreign Language		
	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Kabupaten/Regency									
Boalemo	51 755	50 587	102 444	17 521	15 782	33 302	-	-	-
Gorontalo	133 015	133 057	266 072	51 258	49 302	100 560	5	-	5
Pohuwato	55 055	53 525	108 580	14 475	13 548	28 024	-	-	-
Bone Bolango	66 341	66 208	132 549	9 848	9 400	19 248	-	-	-
Gorontalo Utara	50 797	49 597	100 394	9 557	9 230	18 787	-	-	-
Kota/Municipality									
Gorontalo	87 009	88 735	175 744	4 437	4 406	8 843	11	-	11
GORONTALO	444 062	440 985	885 047	107 097	101 567	208 664	15*	-	15*

FIGURE 2. Data on the Number of Speakers from the 2020 Population Census Long Form

According to the UNESCO LVE framework, the data shows that the number of regional language speakers in Gorontalo and Bone Bolango Regencies reflects the "Vulnerable" condition. Gorontalo Regency has 100,560 regional language speakers (30.51% of the total Population), while Bone Bolango Regency only has 19,040 speakers (11.45%). With a total of 119,600 speakers from a combined Population of 495,776 people, the use of regional languages is still significant but vulnerable to extinction, especially in Bone Bolango. Urban areas face a faster decline in language use due to the dominance of national and foreign languages. To maintain the vitality of the language, a continuous revitalization program is needed, primarily through bilingual education and local Government policy support.

THE PROPORTION OF SPEAKERS IN THE TOTAL POPULATION

The proportion of speakers in the total population is a critical indicator in assessing the vitality of a language because the more significant the proportion of speakers, the higher the vitality of the language. If only a tiny portion of the population speaks the language, this indicates a decline in use and the threat of extinction, especially if the dominant language replaces the role of the local language. Understanding this proportion is essential for determining the urgency of language preservation and revitalization, as this factor reflects the percentage of target language users in the context of the overall population.

TABLE 2. Factor 3: The Proportion of Speakers in the Total Population

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Proportion of Speakers	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	None speak the language	1.29%
1	Critically endangered	Very few speak the language.	21.29%
2	Severely endangered	The majority speak the language.	20.00%
3	Definitively endangered	A majority speak the language	25.16%
4	Unsafe	Nearly all speak the language.	21.29%
5	Unsafe	All speak the language.	10.97%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay show that the highest level of the use of the Gorontalo language is in the category of "Experiencing Decline," with 25.16% of respondents reporting that most of the population still uses this language. Although the use of the Gorontalo language is still relatively common in most regions, the decline is noticeable, especially in formal use and among the younger generation. This shows that although the Gorontalo language has not yet reached a critical condition, signs of deterioration have begun to be seen, so more intensive preservation measures are needed.

TRENDS IN EXISTING LANGUAGE DOMAINS

Trends in language use in various domains of life, such as home, school, workplace, and media, are essential indicators of language vitality. If the language is only used at home or among the elderly, while other languages dominate in the formal realm, such as schools and the media, this indicates a decline in use. In contrast, the widespread use of language across various domains shows good vitality.

TABLE 3. Factor 4: Trends in Existing Language Domains

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Domains and Functions	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	The language is not used in any domain and for any function.	0.00%
1	Minimal domains	The language is used only in a restricted domain and for a few functions.	18.71%
2	Limited or formal domains	The language is used in limited social domains and for several functions	10.97%

3	Dwindling domains	The language is used in home domains and for many functions, but the dominant language begins to penetrate even home domains.	23.23%
4	Multilingual parity	Two or more languages may be used in most social domains and for most functions.	22.58%
5	Universal use	The language is used in all domains and for all functions	24.52%

The results of the survey on the vitality of the Gorontalo language in Tomini Bay based on Factor 4: Trends in Language Domain showed that the highest respondents were at level 5 as 24.52% of respondents reported the use of Gorontalo language in all regions and social functions, which reflects the community that is still strong in maintaining this language in the formal and informal realms. However, a downward trend was seen, with 23.23% of respondents reporting that this language was limited to home, and 22.58% of respondents reported the joint use of Gorontalo and other languages, reflecting the situation of diglossia. A further downward trend was reported by 18.71% of respondents who only used this language in limited situations, indicating that the Gorontalo language faces significant challenges under the dominance of Indonesian.

RESPONDING TO NEW DOMAINS AND MEDIA

In the digital era, new media such as the internet, social media, and digital applications provide opportunities and challenges for the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay area. While this media can be used to preserve language through digital content, the dominance of national and foreign languages threatens the use of the Gorontalo language, especially among the younger generation.

TABLE 4. Factor 5 : Responding to New Domains and Media

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	New Domains and Media Accepted by the Endangered Language	Percentage of Respondents
0	Inactive	The language is not used in any new domains.	1.94%
1	Minimal	The language is used in only a few new domains	31.61%
2	Coping	The language is used in some new domains.	21.29%
3	Receptive	The language is used in many domains.	14.19%
4	Robust/active	The language is used in most new domains..	18.71%
5	Dynamic	The language is used in all new domains.	12.26%

The Gorontalo language vitality survey results showed that the highest response was at level 1, with 31.61% of respondents reporting that adapting the Gorontalo language in the region and new media was very limited. This language is only used in a few new contexts, such as digital media or work environments, but it is not yet widespread. This level 1 indicates that the use of the Gorontalo language in dealing with technological developments is still minimal, so there is a risk that this language will not be able to compete in the digital space.

MATERIALS FOR LANGUAGE AND LITERACY EDUCATION

Language education and literacy are essential in preserving the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay. The development of exciting and curriculum-appropriate learning materials, both formal and informal, is urgently needed so that the younger generation can still learn this language. The material must cover various levels, from basic to advanced, and use print, digital, and audiovisual media. Interactive textbooks, dictionaries, folklore, and online platforms will help expand the range of learning.

TABEL 5. Faktor 6: Materials for Language and Literacy Education

Grade	Accessibility of Written Materials	Percentage of Respondents
0	No orthography is available to the community.	9.03%
1	A practical orthography is known to the community, and some material is being written.	12.26%
2	Written materials exist, but they may only be helpful for some community members; for others, they may have a symbolic significance. Literacy education in the language is not a part of the school curriculum.	18.71%
3	Written materials exist, and children may be exposed to the written form at school. Literacy is not promoted through print media.	27.74%
4	Written materials exist, and at school, children are developing literacy in the language. Writing in the language is not used in administration.	14.84%
5	There is an established orthography literacy tradition with grammar, dictionaries, texts, literature, and everyday media. Writing in the language is used in administration and education.	17.42%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that in Factor 6: Materials for Language and Literacy Education, the highest response was at level 3, with 27.74% of respondents reporting that written materials were available and children were exposed to the Gorontalo language in schools, but literacy in this language has not been widely promoted. This indicates that despite efforts to introduce the Gorontalo language in written form, its spread in the educational environment is still limited. Therefore, more significant efforts are needed to integrate the Gorontalo language into the curriculum and expand the availability of literacy materials.

LANGUAGE POLICY, ATTITUDES, AND URGENCY OF DOCUMENTATION

ATTITUDES AND POLICIES OF GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL LANGUAGE, INCLUDING OFFICIAL STATUS AND USE

The government's language policy greatly influenced the use of the Gorontalo language, especially in Tomini Bay. Despite recognising the importance of regional languages, their implementation at the local level is often limited, with official use of the Gorontalo language generally only in cultural events and informal communication. More substantial support is needed in education and documentation, such as dictionary development and research projects, to keep the language alive amid the dominance of national and foreign languages.

TABLE 6. Factor 7: Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use

Grade	Degree of Support	Deskripsi	Percentage of Respondents
0	Prohibition	Minority languages are prohibited.	1.29%
1	Forced assimilation	The dominant language is the sole official language, while nondominant languages are neither recognized nor protected.	5.81%

2	Active assimilation	Government encourages assimilation to the dominant language. There is no protection for minority languages.	3.87%
3	Passive assimilation	Noexplicit policy exists for minority languages; the dominant language prevails in the public domain.	9.68%
4	Differentiated support	Minority languages are protected primarily as the language of the private domains. The use of the language is prestigious..	28.39%
5	Equal support	All languages are protected.	50.97%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that the government's support for the Gorontalo language was at level 5, with 50.97% of respondents reporting that the language was protected on an equal footing with other languages. Despite the inclusive policy, the use of the Gorontalo language is still more robust in the private sphere than in the public. As many as 28.39% of respondents noted support for the Gorontalo language in the local community, but this language has not been fully recognized as an official language in the formal realm. Challenges remain in strengthening policies that support the use of the Gorontalo language in the public and institutional spheres to ensure its preservation.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THEIR OWN LANGUAGE

The community's attitude towards the Gorontalo language in Tomini Bay significantly affects the continuity and vitality of the language. The community is divided into two groups: those firmly committed to preserving and using the Gorontalo language in their daily lives and cultural events and those more likely to use national or foreign languages, especially in education and employment. The first group sees the Gorontalo language as an essential ethnic identity, while the second group, especially the younger generation, prefers Indonesian or English, which is considered more relevant in the modern context.

TABLE 7. Faktor 8: Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language

Grade	Deskripsi	Percentage of Respondents
0	No one cares if the language is lost; all prefer to use a dominant language	2.58%
1	Only a few members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	9.03%
2	Some members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	10.32%
3	Many members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	19.35%
4	Most members support language maintenance.	31.61%
5	All members value their language and wish to see it promoted	27.10%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that in Factor 8: Community Members' Attitudes towards Their Language, the highest response was at level 4, with 31.61% of respondents reporting strong support from most of the community for the

maintenance of the Gorontalo language. This shows a positive awareness of the importance of language as a cultural identity.

AMOUNT AND QUALITY OF DOCUMENTATION

The quantity and quality of Gorontalo language documentation are significant in efforts to preserve and revitalize the Tomini Bay area, but they are still limited. Existing documentation, such as primary dictionaries and traditional texts, does not cover all aspects of language, including vocabulary and the use of language in cultural contexts. The quality of documentation is also not optimal, with many sources that are difficult to access, and most are still in print format. The improvement of digital-based documentation is very urgent, and linguists and local communities should be involved in collecting, compiling, and disseminating Gorontalo language materials to remain relevant in the era of globalization.

TABLE 8. Factor 9: Amount and Quality of Documentation.

Tingkat	Label	Deskripsi	Persentasi
0	Undocumented	Nomaterial exists.	5.16%
1	Inadequate	Only a few grammatical sketches, short word lists, and fragmentary texts. Audio and video recordings do not exist, are unusable, or are entirely unannotated.	18.71%
2	Fragmentary	Some grammatical sketches, word lists, and texts are helpful for limited linguistic research but with inadequate coverage. Audio and video recordings may be of varying quality, with or without annotation.	18.06%
3	Fair	There may be adequate or sufficient grammar, dictionaries, and texts, but no everyday media; audio and video recordings may exist in varying quality or degree of annotation.	25.81%
4	Good	There is one good grammar and several adequate grammars, dictionaries, texts, literature, and occasionally updated everyday media; adequate annotated high-quality audio and video recordings.	14.84%
5	Superlative	There are comprehensive grammar and dictionaries, extensive texts; and a constant flow of language materials. Abundant annotated high-quality audio and video recordings exist.	17.42%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that the documentation of this language was at level 3, with 25.81% of respondents reporting that the existing documentation was sufficient to support the research. However, the quality of multimedia and annotation was still limited. Although there are grammar, dictionaries, and some texts, the coverage and quality of audio-visual recordings are still minimal.

DISCUSSION

Based on the UNESCO-LVE framework, a thorough evaluation of the vitality status of a language must consider nine factors in an integrated manner. Table 9 presents a combined scale for all factors, which describes the overall vitality level of the Gorontalo language used in the Tomini Bay Area, Gorontalo Province. (1) intergenerational language transmission, (2) the absolute number of speakers, (3) the proportion of speakers in the total population, (4) trends in existing language domains, (5) Responding to New Domains and Media, (6) Materials for Language and Literacy Education, (7) Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use, (8) Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their

Own Language, (9) Amount and Quality of Documentation

TABLE 9. Gorontalo Language Vitality Assessment Status

Factor	The Vitality of the Gorontalo Language
1. intergenerational language transmission	3
2. the absolute number of speakers	4
3. the proportion of speakers in the total population	3
4. trends in existing language domains	5
5. Responding to New Domains and Media	1
6. Materials for Language and Literacy Education	3
7. Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use	5
8. Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language	4
9. Amount and Quality of Documentation	3
Rata-Rata Vitalitas Bahasa Gorontalo	3.44

According to Dwyer's formulation of language vitality, the following are the categories that are usually used to determine language status based on vitality scores:

1. 0 - 1.4 : Critically endangered
2. 1.5 - 2.9 : Endangered
3. 3.0 - 3.9 : Vulnerable
4. 4.0 - 5.0 : Stable or safe

With an average score of 3.44, the vitality of the Gorontalo language is included in the vulnerable category. This suggests that although the language is still in use, certain factors could threaten its future viability.

The results of the survey on the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay area based on the UNESCO-LVE framework show several essential factors that affect the sustainability of this language. First, the transmission of language between generations is at level 3, indicating a decrease in the use of language among the younger generation, while the dominance of Indonesian and foreign languages in education and daily life is increasing. The older generation tends to speak the Gorontalo language to children no longer, instead encouraging their children to abandon the tribal language in order to achieve higher education and success, resulting in the Gorontalo language being endangered (Firdaus, 2018; Purwaka et al., 2020). The viability of a language is greatly influenced by the social stability of its speaking community and whether the language is still passed on to the younger generation (Pakendorf, 2024). The transmission of language between generations helps in describing the vitality status of a language (Hamzah et al., 2024).

The absolute number of speakers reaching 119,600 indicates a considerable number, but the proportion of speakers in the total population is starting to decline. Language extinctions are often associated with languages that have few speakers. As Krauss states (1992), languages with fewer than 100,000 speakers can potentially become extinct. The use of the Gorontalo language in the social domain is at level 5, which indicates that this language is still maintained in local traditions and culture, although its use in the formal realm, such as government and education is limited. This is as well as research Fitriyani & Subiyanto (2021), which shows that the Gorontalo language is often used in religious and cultural activities, such as in ritual communication in the Dikili tradition. However, the response to the new media is at level 1, which shows the low

adaptation of the Gorontalo language on digital platforms and modern technology, weakening its position among the younger generation.

In the field of education and literacy, level 3 shows that efforts to include the Gorontalo language in the education system are still limited, with a lack of comprehensive teaching materials. The development of exciting and relevant local teaching materials in the Gorontalo language is critical to increasing the use of the Gorontalo language in formal education and strengthening its vitality (Bay et al., 2018). The government's attitude is at level 5, indicating local government support for language preservation, although policy implementation still needs improvement. The community's attitude is at level 4, with pride in the language, especially among the older generation, although the younger generation is starting to be less interested.

Gorontalo language documentation is at level 3, with existing documentation efforts that are still limited in terms of quality and accessibility. The development of two-way translator applications and dictionaries of traditional terms based on computational linguistics shows that technology can increase the quantity and quality of Gorontalo language documentation, facilitate access to learning, and support language preservation in the digital era. This innovation strengthens the vitality of the language by providing relevant documentation accessible to the broader community, including the younger generation (Dako et al., 2015, 2017; Lihawa et al., 2016). The presence of language in the realm of technology can show vitality and protect and promote the language for young speakers (Cunliffe, 2024; Wood, 2024).

The study also shows that the UNESCO-LVE framework provides a comprehensive evaluation of the vitality of the Gorontalo language. However, further studies are needed, especially in multiethnic and urban areas, to understand the dynamics of the Gorontalo language in different socioeconomic contexts. Language vitality indicators must clearly explain how changes in people's attitudes towards a language occur. Suppose this indicator is not able to provide a strong explanation for the change in language attitudes in society. In that case, the measurement or analysis of language vitality will only be an academic activity that does not have a natural or practical impact on language preservation efforts (Gobbo, 2021). The assessment of the vitality of languages has been of particular concern for the past 20 years, spearheaded by UNESCO, which affirms that linguistic diversity is a valuable part of human heritage and that the loss of languages is a loss to all of humanity (Webster, 2022). Therefore, this research is part of an effort to preserve the endangered Gorontalo language, especially in the coastal area of the Tomini Bay Area, Gorontalo Province.

CONCLUSION

The vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay, especially Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency, is in a vulnerable status with an average vitality value of 3.44. which shows that although the language is still used, there is a threat to its continuity, especially among the younger generation. The main factors contributing to this vulnerability are the decline in intergenerational transmission and the dominance of the Indonesian language in the educational and social domains. Although the government and the community have made efforts to preserve the language through education and cultural activities, challenges such as limited resources, documentation, and the younger generation's interests still hinder conservation efforts. Stronger cooperation between the government, communities, and educational institutions is urgently needed to strengthen the vitality of the Gorontalo language.

In facing this challenge, collaborative efforts are needed between the government, the community, and educational institutions to strengthen language transmission to the younger generation and expand the use of Gorontalo language in digital media. The development of more comprehensive learning materials, as well as language documentation in digital form, will be an

essential step in maintaining the sustainability of the Gorontalo language.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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**2. Bukti Konfirmasi Review dan Hasil Review dari
Editor
(30 Desember 2024)**

A. Bukti Konfirmasi Review dan Hasil Review dari Editor

7/7/25, 9:36 PM

Email Universitas Negeri Gorontalo - [GEMA Online®] Editor Decision [79684 - The Vitality of the Gorontalo Language as a Res...



Asna Ntelu <asna.ntelu@ung.ac.id>

[GEMA Online®] Editor Decision [79684 - The Vitality of the Gorontalo Language as a Rescue Effort Extinction of Regional Languages]

Dr. Anis Nadiyah Che Abdul Rahman <aniscar@ukm.edu.my>

30 Desember 2024 pukul 14.55

Kepada: Miss Asna Ntelu <asna.ntelu@ung.ac.id>

Cc: Dakia N Djou <dakiadjou@ung.ac.id>, Sayama Malabar <Sayama.malabar@ung.ac.id>, Jafar Lantowa <jafar.lantowa@ung.ac.id>

Miss Asna Ntelu:

We have reached a decision regarding your submission to GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies, "The Vitality of the Gorontalo Language as a Rescue Effort Extinction of Regional Languages".

Our decision is: **Revisions Required**

Suggested Keywords for revisions:

Citation Style: Verify that all citations conform to APA style guidelines.

First-Source Citation: Consider emphasizing first-source citations where appropriate. This will strengthen the credibility of your arguments and provide readers with direct access to original research.

Factors Identification: Clearly delineate the key factors relevant to your study. This will help readers understand the critical elements being investigated and their significance. (the nine key factors)

Methodology Enhancement: Expand the methodology section to provide a more detailed explanation of the research design and techniques employed. This should include justifications for the chosen methods and how they align with the study's objectives.


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We would appreciate it if you could nominate 3 potential reviewers for the article.

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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The Vitality of the Gorontalo Language as a Rescue Effort Extinction of Regional Languages

ABSTRACT

Language vitality refers to the sustainability of the use of a language in the broader society and can be understood through the dimensions of status, demographics, and institutional support. This study examines the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay, which is endangered due to various factors. By understanding the vitality of language, effective preservation strategies can be formulated to maintain the sustainability of minority languages amid the threat of more dominant languages. This study uses a survey method with nine vitality indicators from UNESCO, involving 155 respondents in Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency. Data was collected through questionnaires, observations, and interviews, then analyzed quantitatively to assess the vitality of language based on factors such as usage, preference, and intergenerational transmission. The study results show that the vitality of the Gorontalo language is in the Vulnerable category, with an average score of 3.44. Although this language is still used in some areas, there has been a decline in language transmission to the younger generation, exacerbated by Indonesian dominance in the educational and social spheres. Conservation efforts by the Government and the community through educational programs and cultural activities have been carried out. However, challenges such as limited resources, inadequate documentation, and low interest of the younger generation in learning the Gorontalo language still hinder the success of preservation efforts. Therefore, more vital collaboration is needed between the government, educational institutions, and local communities to raise awareness and strengthen the preservation of the Gorontalo language through the development of relevant learning materials, especially in digital form, to maintain the sustainability of this language in the future.

Commented [A1]: indicate the indicators here

Keywords: language vitality; Gorontalo language; language extinction; language rescue; Tomini Bay

INTRODUCTION

Gorontalo language is a means of communication, a buffer and developer of local culture, and an identity for the people of Gorontalo (Baruadi, 2013). The function of local languages is to support the development of the Indonesian language and national culture (Olii, 2021). The Gorontalo language experienced a decline in use due to the arrival of immigrants who brought their language and culture, transforming Gorontalo into a multi-ethnic society. This encouraged the adaptation of immigrant languages by local communities, triggering the Language Development Agency of the Ministry of Education and Culture to classify Gorontalo as an endangered regional language (Usman, 2008; Zakaria et al., 2021). Language vitality validation data up to 2019 shows that Gorontalo is only spoken by a few speakers aged 20 years and above, causing this language to be endangered, similar to 24 other regional languages in 10 provinces in Indonesia (Purwaka et al., 2020). According to the 2020 Linguistic Statistics, the Gorontalo language is included in the 56 regional languages in Indonesia that are classified as vulnerable to critical (Rahardini & Niswah, 2022).

The vitality of the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay Coastal Area is threatened by the dominance of Indonesian and other ethnic languages, such as Bajo, Javanese, and Bugis-Makassar, as well as foreign languages, especially English, due to globalization and interaction with immigrants. The people of Gorontalo have a tradition of using the Gorontalo language,

which is influenced by Arabic, Portuguese, Dutch, and Malay (Djou et al., 2023). The dominant language influence in global communication and trade now threatens the Gorontalo language in remote areas. Hence, Tomini Bay Coastal Region parents often encourage their children to leave the local language to achieve higher education and success (Firdaus, 2018). The decline in the use of the Gorontalo language can threaten cultural identity and traditional knowledge. Therefore, the importance of this research is to understand the vitality of the Gorontalo language as an effort to save the extinction of regional languages.

The importance of local language as an essential asset plays a vital role in developing Indonesian vocabulary. Therefore, it is crucial to take strategic steps in maintaining, preserving, and promoting local languages (Ntelu, A & Djou, 2017; Ntelu et al., 2022). The study of language vitality is an essential basis for language conservation activities, which support efforts to protect local languages in Indonesia. Therefore, research on the vitality of the Gorontalo language it can be the right step to save the extinction of the Gorontalo language.

Fishman (1972) emphasises the importance of measuring language vitality based on several categories that include aspects such as the number of speakers, diversity of use, adaptability, and relevance in social and cultural contexts (Medeiros, 2017). Applying language vitality in research can help develop effective and sustainable plans to save endangered languages, including ongoing revitalization and preservation efforts (Gobbo, 2021). In the study of language vitality, researchers used a unique measuring tool to assess the condition of the language among its speakers, which later determined the status of the language in several categories (Zhou & Ang, 2024).

Benu (2023), through the results of his research, shows that local languages in Kupang City still have significant vitality with efforts to preserve local languages through the use of language in public signs and essential institutions. Firdaus (2018) shows that the Suwawa-Gorontalo language is considered stable and steady but threatens extinction. Ibrahim (2011) shows that mapping language vitality is the primary key to understanding the linguistic status of tribes in Indonesia. With this vitality mapping, it can be a solution for designing a program to save regional languages from the risk of extinction. Marica dan Duwila ((2017) show that the vitality status of the Ternate Language is in the worrying category. Aritonang (2016) also examined the vitality of the Talondo language by reporting the results of the evaluation of group sub-indices based on respondent characteristics such as gender, age, education, and occupation, which showed that the sustainability of the Talondo language had decreased.

This research differs from some of these studies, especially on the object of the Gorontalo language and locations in the Tomini Bay Area, namely Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolanho Regency. The novelty of this research lies in a specific location, highlighting the unique sociolinguistic and ethnolinguistic dynamics in the Tomini Bay area that affect the vitality of the Gorontalo language, targeting the regional language rescue strategy in the Tomini Bay Area, Gorontalo Province.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vitality refers to the vitality or sustainability of a language in broader society and can be understood through three main dimensions: status, demographics, and institutional support (Dattamajumdar, 2020; Wickström, 2023). Language vitality is beneficial for developing effective strategies for preserving language and strengthening group identity. It is also crucial in designing intervention policies that support the maintenance and development of minority or endangered languages (Clément & Norton, 2021; Coluzzi et al., 2013). The vitality of a language reflects the ability of a language group to remain spoken in society, which is supported not only by the number of speakers but also by the institutional support and social recognition they receive

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Commented [A3]: This section would benefit from incorporating prior studies on language vitality, beyond merely discussing its importance and significance. Additionally, it should provide a detailed outline of how to effectively conduct research in this area. A summary of existing literature on language vitality would enhance the depth and rigor of this discussion.

(Ding, 2023; Landry et al., 2022).

Language vitality is measured by factors such as usage, dominance, preference, attitudes, motivations, and language ability, which are especially important in a multilingual society because interlingual interactions have a significant influence on social and cultural dynamics (Rohmah & Widya Nur Wijayanti, 2023; Stern, 2017; Ying et al., 2015). Understanding and improving the vitality of languages, especially for minority languages, is crucial in the era of globalization. This is important because the existence of minority languages is often threatened by the more widespread use of more dominant languages (Moring et al., 2011; Zabadi et al., 2023)

Grenoble and Whaley (2006) state that language has high vitality if used by its speakers in daily communication. The use of language in each domain, for example, family, work environment (e.g. Village office), education, and interaction with immigrants. However, if the language is not used in this domain, then the vitality of the language decreases. Holmes (2001) said that if members of an ethnic community live in the same neighbourhood, this can help maintain the survival of their language in the long term, primarily if the language is still spoken in essential areas. Pateda(1987) explained that there is a mutual influence in every realm of social interaction, and more active speakers will dominate. If a language is used more frequently, it will evolve. Conversely, a language that is rarely used will be displaced by a more dominant language, which, if allowed to continue, can lead to the extinction of the language (Malabar, 2015).

In a multilingual society, it is crucial to measure the vitality of a language using a proper evaluation framework to get an accurate picture (Chen, 2023). In assessing the vitality of a language, the UNESCO Language Vitality and Endangerment standard can be used (Moseley, 2010). UNESCO (2011) identified nine factors used to determine the level of vitality of a language, namely: (1) intergenerational language transmission, (2) the absolute number of speakers, (3) the proportion of speakers in the total Population, (4) trends in existing language domains, (5) Responding to New Domains and Media, (6) Materials for Language and Literacy Education, (7) Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use, (8) Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language, (9) Amount and Quality of Documentation.

METHOD

This research was conducted in the Coastal Area of Tomini Bay, Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency, Gorontalo Province. The data is sourced from the community according to the respondents' characteristics and the local Government. The respondents in this study amounted to 155 who lived in the coastal area of the Tomini Bay Area. The reason for choosing this research location is that it is predicted that the extinction of the Gorontalo language will occur. The researcher also assumes that the coastal areas of the Tomini Bay Area mostly have contact with ethnic languages, immigrant languages and foreign languages, especially in the location of tourist attractions in coastal areas.

Data collection in this study was carried out using a survey method. According to Wiseman and Aron (as quoted in Mashun (2011)). The survey method is a way of collecting data through disseminating questionnaires or a structured and detailed list of questions to obtain information from a large number of respondents who are considered representative of the research Population. The survey on the vitality of the Gorontalo language was conducted using data collected through questionnaires, observations, and interviews. This study's survey was based on nine factors used to measure the vitality of languages formulated by the UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages. These factors are represented in a questionnaire as a table with condition levels from 0 to 5.

Data from observations and interviews complement the data obtained from the survey. A

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- Commented [A6]: list down the factors as this will be the major findings
- Commented [A7]: he methods of observation and interview should be introduced earlier in the discussion to provide a comprehensive overview of the research approach. The current emphasis on surveys may lead to the impression that this study relies solely on this method. Clarifying the use of multiple methodologies will enhance the understanding of the study's design and its robustness.

series of interviews, both formal and informal, were also conducted with all participants. During the interview, participants were asked to provide information about their biographical and linguistic backgrounds, the use of language in various social contexts, and attitudes towards the Gorontalo language. The data obtained were analysed based on nine language vitality criteria described at the UNESCO Expert Meeting in March 2003 (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Lewis, 2009).

According to Mahsun (2011), Data analysis is the process of classifying, grouping, and equalizing similar data, as well as separating and grouping different data. Data analysis was carried out quantitatively. Technically, quantitative data analysis includes (1) describing the analysis techniques used, including descriptive statistics in the form of averages and percentages, (2) presenting the results of the analysis in the form of tables, histograms, bar charts, line charts, or other relevant diagrams, (3) analyzing percentages based on statements obtained from research instruments, (4) providing interpretations of descriptive statistical data, which are generally in the form of averages and percentages, and (5) supplementing data analysis with interviews to understand the problems revealed in the research (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2022).

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RESULT

KEY FACTORS IN LANGUAGE USE

INTERGENERATIONAL LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION

Intergenerational language transmission is an essential factor in the sustainability of a language because it involves the inheritance of language from the older generation to the younger generation through daily interactions and educational institutions. If the regional language is not used between parents and children, language skills will decrease, threatening the continuity of the language. Therefore, intergenerational transmission is a significant benchmark of language vitality, where well-passed languages are more resistant to the threat of extinction than those that fail to be transmitted.

TABEL 1. Factor 1: Intergenerational Language Transmission

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Speaker Population	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	There exists no speaker	0.65%
1	Critically endangered	The language is used mainly by very few speakers of the great-grandparental generation.	3.87%
2	Severely endangered	The language is used mainly by the grandparental generation and up	9.03%
3	Definitively endangered	The language is used mainly by the parental generation and up	51.61%
4	Unsafe	The language is used by some children in all domains; all children in limited domains use it.	8.39%
5	Safe	The language is used by all ages, from children up.	26.45%

The survey results showed that the transmission of the Gorontalo language between generations was at level 3, indicating a decline, with the majority of respondents (51.61%) reporting that the elderly and elderly generations mostly used this language. The gap in transmission, especially among the younger generation, risks accelerating the extinction of these

languages if there are no intensive revitalization efforts. Therefore, conservation strategies that target children and vulnerable areas are urgently needed, such as integrating the Gorontalo language into formal education and increasing access to learning materials.

THE ABSOLUTE NUMBER OF SPEAKERS

The absolute number of speakers is an essential indicator in assessing the vitality of a language because the more native speakers there are, the greater the chances of the language surviving. This indicator covers all age groups and language use in various social, cultural, and economic contexts. The decline in speakers, especially among the younger generation, increases the risk of language extinction. This factor is not assessed by scale but rather by the actual number of speakers in the community, with small populations more vulnerable to threats. While the number of speakers is essential, other factors must also be considered to ensure the preservation of the language.

POPULATION SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION

Tabel 3.2 Jumlah Penduduk menurut Kabupaten/Kota, Daerah Perkotaan/Pendesaan, dan Jenis Kelamin
Population by Regency/Municipality, Urban/Rural Area and Sex

Kabupaten/Kota Regency/Municipality	Jumlah Penduduk (Jumlah)			Jumlah Penduduk (Jumlah)			Jumlah Penduduk (Jumlah)		
	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Kabupaten/Regency									
Buana	10.454	12.118	21.572	10.307	20.823	31.130	79.765	73.771	143.536
Gorontalo	79.933	83.606	163.539	100.750	114.513	215.263	200.483	190.115	390.598
Puwato	19.805	20.886	40.691	50.034	52.868	102.902	79.939	73.343	153.282
Bone Bolango	32.910	34.076	66.986	51.200	69.574	120.774	63.630	67.652	131.282
Gorontalo Utara	10.304	11.140	21.444	15.111	31.938	47.049	63.615	62.949	126.564
Kota/Municipality									
Gorontalo	97.018	90.335	187.353	3.025	2.972	6.007	100.043	101.307	201.350
GORONTALO	235.124	263.970	499.094	149.401	197.182	346.583	343.566	335.132	678.708

FIGURE 1. Number of Population as a result of the 2020 population census long form

PENDIDIKAN

Tabel 6.4 Jumlah Penduduk Berumur 5 Tahun ke Atas Menurut Kabupaten/Kota, Bahasa Pertama yang Dikuasai, dan Jenis Kelamin
Population 5 Years of Age and Over by Regency/Municipality, First Language Spoken, and Sex

Kabupaten/Kota Regency/Municipality	Bahasa Indonesia/Bahasa			Bahasa yang Pertama Dikuasai/First Language Spoken			Bahasa Asing/Foreign Language		
	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Kabupaten/Regency									
Buana	51.758	60.587	112.345	17.521	15.782	33.303	-	-	-
Gorontalo	133.015	133.017	266.032	31.258	49.302	80.560	5	-	5
Puwato	55.055	63.525	118.580	14.475	13.548	28.023	-	-	-
Bone Bolango	66.341	66.208	132.549	9.848	9.400	19.248	-	-	-
Gorontalo Utara	60.797	48.917	109.714	9.557	9.230	18.787	-	-	-
Kota/Municipality									
Gorontalo	87.039	88.735	175.774	4.437	4.606	9.043	11	-	11
GORONTALO	444.062	489.988	934.050	107.097	101.567	208.664	16	-	16

FIGURE 2. Data on the Number of Speakers from the 2020 Population Census Long Form

According to the UNESCO LVE framework, the data shows that the number of regional language speakers in Gorontalo and Bone Bolango Regencies reflects the "Vulnerable" condition. Gorontalo Regency has 100,560 regional language speakers (30.51% of the total Population), while Bone Bolango Regency only has 19,040 speakers (11.45%). With a total of 119,600 speakers from a combined Population of 495,776 people, the use of regional languages is still significant but vulnerable to extinction, especially in Bone Bolango. Urban areas face a faster decline in language use due to the dominance of national and foreign languages. To maintain the vitality of the language, a continuous revitalization program is needed, primarily through bilingual education and local Government policy support.

THE PROPORTION OF SPEAKERS IN THE TOTAL POPULATION

The proportion of speakers in the total population is a critical indicator in assessing the vitality of a language because the more significant the proportion of speakers, the higher the vitality of the language. If only a tiny portion of the population speaks the language, this indicates a decline in use and the threat of extinction, especially if the dominant language replaces the role of the local language. Understanding this proportion is essential for determining the urgency of language preservation and revitalization, as this factor reflects the percentage of target language users in the context of the overall population.

TABLE 2. Factor 3: The Proportion of Speakers in the Total Population

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Proportion of Speakers	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	None speak the language	1.29%
1	Critically endangered	Very few speak the language.	21.29%
2	Severely endangered	The majority speak the language.	20.00%
3	Definitively endangered	A majority speak the language	25.16%
4	Unsafe	Nearly all speak the language.	21.29%
5	Unsafe	All speak the language.	10.97%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay show that the highest level of the use of the Gorontalo language is in the category of "Experiencing Decline," with 25.16% of respondents reporting that most of the population still uses this language. Although the use of the Gorontalo language is still relatively common in most regions, the decline is noticeable, especially in formal use and among the younger generation. This shows that although the Gorontalo language has not yet reached a critical condition, signs of deterioration have begun to be seen, so more intensive preservation measures are needed.

TRENDS IN EXISTING LANGUAGE DOMAINS

Trends in language use in various domains of life, such as home, school, workplace, and media, are essential indicators of language vitality. If the language is only used at home or among the elderly, while other languages dominate in the formal realm, such as schools and the media, this indicates a decline in use. In contrast, the widespread use of language across various domains shows good vitality.

TABLE 3. Factor 4: Trends in Existing Language Domains

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Domains and Functions	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	The language is not used in any domain and for any function.	0.00%
1	Minimal domains	The language is used only in a restricted domain and for a few functions.	18.71%
2	Limited or formal domains	The language is used in limited social domains and for several functions	10.97%

3	Dwindling domains	The language is used in home domains and for many functions, but the dominant language begins to penetrate even home domains.	23.23%
4	Multilingual parity	Two more languages may be used in most social domains and for most functions.	22.58%
5	Universal use	The language is used in all domains and for all functions	24.52%

The results of the survey on the vitality of the Gorontalo language in Tomini Bay based on Factor 4: Trends in Language Domain showed that the highest respondents were at level 5 as 24.52% of respondents reported the use of Gorontalo language in all regions and social functions, which reflects the community that is still strong in maintaining this language in the formal and informal realms. However, a downward trend was seen, with 23.23% of respondents reporting that this language was limited to home, and 22.58% of respondents reported the joint use of Gorontalo and other languages, reflecting the situation of diglossia. A further downward trend was reported by 18.71% of respondents who only used this language in limited situations, indicating that the Gorontalo language faces significant challenges under the dominance of Indonesian.

RESPONDING TO NEW DOMAINS AND MEDIA

In the digital era, new media such as the internet, social media, and digital applications provide opportunities and challenges for the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay area. While this media can be used to preserve language through digital content, the dominance of national and foreign languages threatens the use of the Gorontalo language, especially among the younger generation.

TABLE 4. Factor 5 : Responding to New Domains and Media

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	New Domains and Media Accepted by the Endangered Language	Percentage of Respondents
0	Inactive	The language is not used in any new domains.	1.94%
1	Minimal	The language is used in only a few new domains	31.61%
2	Coping	The language is used in some new domains.	21.29%
3	Receptive	The language is used in many domains.	14.19%
4	Robust/active	The language is used in most new domains..	18.71%
5	Dynamic	The language is used in all new domains.	12.26%

The Gorontalo language vitality survey results showed that the highest response was at level 1, with 31.61% of respondents reporting that adapting the Gorontalo language in the region and new media was very limited. This language is only used in a few new contexts, such as digital media or work environments, but it is not yet widespread. This level 1 indicates that the use of the Gorontalo language in dealing with technological developments is still minimal, so there is a risk that this language will not be able to compete in the digital space.

MATERIALS FOR LANGUAGE AND LITERACY EDUCATION

Language education and literacy are essential in preserving the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay. The development of exciting and curriculum-appropriate learning materials, both formal and informal, is urgently needed so that the younger generation can still learn this language. The material must cover various levels, from basic to advanced, and use print, digital, and audiovisual media. Interactive textbooks, dictionaries, folklore, and online platforms will help expand the range of learning.

TABEL 5. Faktor 6: Materials for Language and Literacy Education

Grade	Accessibility of Written Materials	Percentage of Respondents
0	No orthography is available to the community.	9.03%
1	A practical orthography is known to the community, and some material is being written.	12.26%
2	Written materials exist, but they may only be helpful for some community members; for others, they may have a symbolic significance. Literacy education in the language is not a part of the school curriculum.	18.71%
3	Written materials exist, and children may be exposed to the written form at school. Literacy is not promoted through print media.	27.74%
4	Written materials exist, and at school, children are developing literacy in the language. Writing in the language is not used in administration.	14.84%
5	There is an established orthography literacy tradition with grammar, dictionaries, texts, literature, and everyday media. Writing in the language is used in administration and education.	17.42%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that in Factor 6: Materials for Language and Literacy Education, the highest response was at level 3, with 27.74% of respondents reporting that written materials were available and children were exposed to the Gorontalo language in schools, but literacy in this language has not been widely promoted. This indicates that despite efforts to introduce the Gorontalo language in written form, its spread in the educational environment is still limited. Therefore, more significant efforts are needed to integrate the Gorontalo language into the curriculum and expand the availability of literacy materials.

LANGUAGE POLICY, ATTITUDES, AND URGENCY OF DOCUMENTATION

ATTITUDES AND POLICIES OF GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL LANGUAGE, INCLUDING OFFICIAL STATUS AND USE

The government's language policy greatly influenced the use of the Gorontalo language, especially in Tomini Bay. Despite recognising the importance of regional languages, their implementation at the local level is often limited, with official use of the Gorontalo language generally only in cultural events and informal communication. More substantial support is needed in education and documentation, such as dictionary development and research projects, to keep the language alive amid the dominance of national and foreign languages.

TABLE 6. Factor 7: Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use

Grade	Degree of Support	Deskripsi	Percentage of Respondents
0	Prohibition	Minority languages are prohibited.	1.29%
1	Forced assimilation	The dominant language is the sole official language, while nondominant languages are neither recognized nor protected.	5.81%

2	Active assimilation	Government encourages assimilation to the dominant language. There is no protection for minority languages.	3.87%
3	Passive assimilation	No explicit policy exists for minority languages; the dominant language prevails in the public domain.	9.68%
4	Differentiated support	Minority languages are protected primarily as the language of the private domains. The use of the language is prestigious..	28.39%
5	Equal support	All languages are protected.	50.97%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that the government's support for the Gorontalo language was at level 5, with 50.97% of respondents reporting that the language was protected on an equal footing with other languages. Despite the inclusive policy, the use of the Gorontalo language is still more robust in the private sphere than in the public. As many as 28.39% of respondents noted support for the Gorontalo language in the local community, but this language has not been fully recognized as an official language in the formal realm. Challenges remain in strengthening policies that support the use of the Gorontalo language in the public and institutional spheres to ensure its preservation.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THEIR OWN LANGUAGE

The community's attitude towards the Gorontalo language in Tomini Bay significantly affects the continuity and vitality of the language. The community is divided into two groups: those firmly committed to preserving and using the Gorontalo language in their daily lives and cultural events and those more likely to use national or foreign languages, especially in education and employment. The first group sees the Gorontalo language as an essential ethnic identity, while the second group, especially the younger generation, prefers Indonesian or English, which is considered more relevant in the modern context.

TABLE 7. Faktor 8: Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language

Grade	Deskripsi	Percentage of Respondents
0	No one cares if the language is lost; all prefer to use a dominant language	2.58%
1	Only a few members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	9.03%
2	Some members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	10.32%
3	Many members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	19.35%
4	Most members support language maintenance.	31.61%
5	All members value their language and wish to see it promoted	27.10%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that in Factor 8: Community Members' Attitudes towards Their Language, the highest response was at level 4, with 31.61% of respondents reporting strong support from most of the community for the

maintenance of the Gorontalo language. This shows a positive awareness of the importance of language as a cultural identity.

AMOUNT AND QUALITY OF DOCUMENTATION

The quantity and quality of Gorontalo language documentation are significant in efforts to preserve and revitalize the Tomini Bay area, but they are still limited. Existing documentation, such as primary dictionaries and traditional texts, does not cover all aspects of language, including vocabulary and the use of language in cultural contexts. The quality of documentation is also not optimal, with many sources that are difficult to access, and most are still in print format. The improvement of digital-based documentation is very urgent, and linguists and local communities should be involved in collecting, compiling, and disseminating Gorontalo language materials to remain relevant in the era of globalization.

TABLE 8. Factor 9: Amount and Quality of Documentation.

Tingkat	Label	Deskripsi	Persentasi
0	Undocumented	No material exists.	5.16%
1	Inadequate	Only a few grammatical sketches, short word lists, and fragmentary texts. Audio and video recordings do not exist, are unusable, or are entirely unannotated.	18.71%
2	Fragmentary	Some grammatical sketches, word lists, and texts are helpful for limited linguistic research but with inadequate coverage. Audio and video recordings may be of varying quality, with or without annotation.	18.06%
3	Fair	There may be adequate or sufficient grammar, dictionaries, and texts, but no everyday media; audio and video recordings may exist in varying quality or degree of annotation.	25.81%
4	Good	There is one good grammar and several adequate grammars, dictionaries, texts, literature, and occasionally updated everyday media; adequate annotated high-quality audio and video recordings.	14.84%
5	Superlative	There are comprehensive grammar and dictionaries, extensive texts; and a constant flow of language materials. Abundant annotated high-quality audio and video recordings exist.	17.42%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that the documentation of this language was at level 3, with 25.81% of respondents reporting that the existing documentation was sufficient to support the research. However, the quality of multimedia and annotation was still limited. Although there are grammar, dictionaries, and some texts, the coverage and quality of audio-visual recordings are still minimal.

DISCUSSION

Based on the UNESCO-LVE framework, a thorough evaluation of the vitality status of a language must consider nine factors in an integrated manner. Table 9 presents a combined scale for all factors, which describes the overall vitality level of the Gorontalo language used in the Tomini Bay Area, Gorontalo Province. (1) intergenerational language transmission, (2) the absolute number of speakers, (3) the proportion of speakers in the total population, (4) trends in existing language domains, (5) Responding to New Domains and Media, (6) Materials for Language and Literacy Education, (7) Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use, (8) Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their

Own Language, (9) Amount and Quality of Documentation

TABLE 9. Gorontalo Language Vitality Assessment Status

Factor	The Vitality of the Gorontalo Language
1. intergenerational language transmission	3
2. the absolute number of speakers	4
3. the proportion of speakers in the total population	3
4. trends in existing language domains	5
5. Responding to New Domains and Media	1
6. Materials for Language and Literacy Education	3
7. Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use	5
8. Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language	4
9. Amount and Quality of Documentation	3
Rata-Rata Vitalitas Bahasa Gorontalo	3.44

According to Dwyer's formulation of language vitality, the following are the categories that are usually used to determine language status based on vitality scores:

- 1. 0 - 1.4 : Critically endangered
- 2. 1.5 - 2.9 : Endangered
- 3. 3.0 - 3.9 : Vulnerable
- 4. 4.0 - 5.0 : Stable or safe

With an average score of 3.44, the vitality of the Gorontalo language is included in the vulnerable category. This suggests that although the language is still in use, certain factors could threaten its future viability.

The results of the survey on the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay area based on the UNESCO-LVE framework show several essential factors that affect the sustainability of this language. First, the transmission of language between generations is at level 3, indicating a decrease in the use of language among the younger generation, while the dominance of Indonesian and foreign languages in education and daily life is increasing. The older generation tends to speak the Gorontalo language to children no longer, instead encouraging their children to abandon the tribal language in order to achieve higher education and success, resulting in the Gorontalo language being endangered (Firdaus, 2018; Purwaka et al., 2020). The viability of a language is greatly influenced by the social stability of its speaking community and whether the language is still passed on to the younger generation (Pakendorf, 2024). The transmission of language between generations helps in describing the vitality status of a language (Hamzah et al., 2024).

The absolute number of speakers reaching 119,600 indicates a considerable number, but the proportion of speakers in the total population is starting to decline. Language extinctions are often associated with languages that have few speakers. As Krauss states (1992), languages with fewer than 100,000 speakers can potentially become extinct. The use of the Gorontalo language in the social domain is at level 5, which indicates that this language is still maintained in local traditions and culture, although its use in the formal realm, such as government and education is limited. This is as well as research Fitriyani & Subiyanto (2021), which shows that the Gorontalo language is often used in religious and cultural activities, such as in ritual communication in the Dikili tradition. However, the response to the new media is at level 1, which shows the low

adaptation of the Gorontalo language on digital platforms and modern technology, weakening its position among the younger generation.

In the field of education and literacy, level 3 shows that efforts to include the Gorontalo language in the education system are still limited, with a lack of comprehensive teaching materials. The development of exciting and relevant local teaching materials in the Gorontalo language is critical to increasing the use of the Gorontalo language in formal education and strengthening its vitality (Bay et al., 2018). The government's attitude is at level 5, indicating local government support for language preservation, although policy implementation still needs improvement. The community's attitude is at level 4, with pride in the language, especially among the older generation, although the younger generation is starting to be less interested.

Gorontalo language documentation is at level 3, with existing documentation efforts that are still limited in terms of quality and accessibility. The development of two-way translator applications and dictionaries of traditional terms based on computational linguistics shows that technology can increase the quantity and quality of Gorontalo language documentation, facilitate access to learning, and support language preservation in the digital era. This innovation strengthens the vitality of the language by providing relevant documentation accessible to the broader community, including the younger generation (Dako et al., 2015, 2017; Lihawa et al., 2016). The presence of language in the realm of technology can show vitality and protect and promote the language for young speakers (Cunliffe, 2024; Wood, 2024).

The study also shows that the UNESCO-LVE framework provides a comprehensive evaluation of the vitality of the Gorontalo language. However, further studies are needed, especially in multiethnic and urban areas, to understand the dynamics of the Gorontalo language in different socioeconomic contexts. Language vitality indicators must clearly explain how changes in people's attitudes towards a language occur. Suppose this indicator is not able to provide a strong explanation for the change in language attitudes in society. In that case, the measurement or analysis of language vitality will only be an academic activity that does not have a natural or practical impact on language preservation efforts (Gobbo, 2021). The assessment of the vitality of languages has been of particular concern for the past 20 years, spearheaded by UNESCO, which affirms that linguistic diversity is a valuable part of human heritage and that the loss of languages is a loss to all of humanity (Webster, 2022). Therefore, this research is part of an effort to preserve the endangered Gorontalo language, especially in the coastal area of the Tomini Bay Area, Gorontalo Province.

CONCLUSION

The vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay, especially Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency, is in a vulnerable status with an average vitality value of 3.44. which shows that although the language is still used, there is a threat to its continuity, especially among the younger generation. The main factors contributing to this vulnerability are the decline in intergenerational transmission and the dominance of the Indonesian language in the educational and social domains. Although the government and the community have made efforts to preserve the language through education and cultural activities, challenges such as limited resources, documentation, and the younger generation's interests still hinder conservation efforts. Stronger cooperation between the government, communities, and educational institutions is urgently needed to strengthen the vitality of the Gorontalo language.

In facing this challenge, collaborative efforts are needed between the government, the community, and educational institutions to strengthen language transmission to the younger generation and expand the use of Gorontalo language in digital media. The development of more comprehensive learning materials, as well as language documentation in digital form, will be an

essential step in maintaining the sustainability of the Gorontalo language.

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**3. Bukti Konfirmasi Hasil Perbaikan atas Review dari
Editor
(6 Januari 2025)**

A. Bukti Konfirmasi Hasil Perbaikan atas Review dari Editor

7/7/25, 10:08 PM

Email Universitas Negeri Gorontalo - [GEMA Online®] Editor Decision [79684 - The Vitality of the Gorontalo Language as a Re...



Asna Ntelu <asna.ntelu@ung.ac.id>

[GEMA Online®] Editor Decision [79684 - The Vitality of the Gorontalo Language as a Rescue Effort Extinction of Regional Languages]

Asna Ntelu <asna.ntelu@ung.ac.id>

6 Januari 2025 pukul 05.56

Kepada: "Dr. Anis Nadiyah Che Abdul Rahman" <aniscar@ukm.edu.my>

Assalamualaikum, wr.wb.

Good morning.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to revise the article.

Here we attach the revised article file and the reviewer's proposal as a consideration in reviewing our article.

Thank you.

[Kutipan teks disembunyikan]

2 lampiran



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LIST OF PROPOSALS OF THE REVIEWER TEAM.pdf

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Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regional Language Extinction

ABSTRACT

Language vitality reflects the sustainability of a language's use in broader society, influenced by dimensions such as status, demographics, and institutional support. This study evaluates the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Teluk Tomini, which is at risk of extinction due to socio-cultural shifts and linguistic dominance. A survey method was utilized, incorporating UNESCO's nine vitality indicators: (1) intergenerational transmission, (2) absolute number of speakers, (3) proportion of speakers within the population, (4) shifts in language usage domains, (5) response to new domains and media, (6) availability of educational and literacy materials, (7) government and institutional attitudes and policies, (8) community attitudes toward their language, and (9) amount and quality of documentation involving. Data were gathered from 155 respondents in Gorontalo and Bone Bolango regencies through questionnaires, observations, and interviews, and analyzed quantitatively. Results indicate that the Gorontalo language is classified as "Vulnerable," with an average vitality score of 3.44. While still used in some areas, transmission to younger generations is declining, exacerbated by Indonesian's dominance in education and social domains. Preservation efforts, including cultural programs and educational initiatives, have been made but are hindered by resource constraints, inadequate documentation, and low youth engagement. This study underscores the urgency of fostering collaboration among governments, educational institutions, and local communities to enhance awareness and preservation strategies. The development of digital learning materials is proposed as a novel approach to revitalizing the Gorontalo language and ensuring its sustainability for future generations.

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Keywords: language vitality; Gorontalo language; language extinction; language rescue; Tomini Bay

INTRODUCTION

Gorontalo language is a means of communication, a buffer and developer of local culture, and an identity for the people of Gorontalo (Baruadi, 2013). The function of local languages is to support the development of the Indonesian language and national culture (Olii, 2021). The Gorontalo language experienced a decline in use due to the arrival of immigrants who brought their language and culture, transforming Gorontalo into a multi-ethnic society. This encouraged the adaptation of immigrant languages by local communities, triggering the Language Development Agency of the Ministry of Education and Culture to classify Gorontalo as an endangered regional language (Usman, 2008; Zakaria et al., 2021). Language vitality validation data up to 2019 shows that Gorontalo is only spoken by a few speakers aged 20 years and above, causing this language to be endangered, similar to 24 other regional languages in 10 provinces in Indonesia (Purwaka et al., 2020). According to the 2020 Linguistic Statistics, the Gorontalo language is included in the 56 regional languages in Indonesia that are classified as vulnerable to critical (Rahardini & Niswah, 2022).

The vitality of the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay Coastal Area is threatened by the dominance of Indonesian and other ethnic languages, such as Bajo, Javanese, and Bugis-Makassar, as well as foreign languages, especially English, due to globalization and interaction with immigrants. The people of Gorontalo have a tradition of using the Gorontalo language, which is influenced by Arabic, Portuguese, Dutch, and Malay (Djou et al., 2023). The dominant

language influence in global communication and trade now threatens the Gorontalo language in remote areas. Hence, Tomini Bay Coastal Region parents often encourage their children to leave the local language to achieve higher education and success (Firdaus, 2018). The decline in the use of the Gorontalo language can threaten cultural identity and traditional knowledge. Therefore, the importance of this research is to understand the vitality of the Gorontalo language as an effort to save the extinction of regional languages.

The importance of local language as an essential asset plays a vital role in developing Indonesian vocabulary. Therefore, it is crucial to take strategic steps in maintaining, preserving, and promoting local languages (Ntelu et al., 2022; Ntelu & Djou, 2017). The study of language vitality is an essential basis for language conservation activities, which support efforts to protect local languages in Indonesia. Therefore, research on the vitality of the Gorontalo language it can be the right step to save the extinction of the Gorontalo language.

Fishman (1972) emphasises the importance of measuring language vitality based on several categories that include aspects such as the number of speakers, diversity of use, adaptability, and relevance in social and cultural contexts (Medeiros, 2017). Applying language vitality in research can help develop effective and sustainable plans to save endangered languages, including ongoing revitalization and preservation efforts (Gobbo, 2021). In the study of language vitality, researchers used a unique measuring tool to assess the condition of the language among its speakers, which later determined the status of the language in several categories (Zhou & Ang, 2024).

Benu (2023), through the results of his research, shows that local languages in Kupang City still have significant vitality with efforts to preserve local languages through the use of language in public signs and essential institutions. Firdaus (2018) shows that the Suwawa-Gorontalo language is considered stable and steady but threatens extinction. Ibrahim (2011) shows that mapping language vitality is the primary key to understanding the linguistic status of tribes in Indonesia. With this vitality mapping, it can be a solution for designing a program to save regional languages from the risk of extinction. Marica dan Duwila ((2017) show that the vitality status of the Ternate Language is in the worrying category. Aritonang (2016) also examined the vitality of the Talondo language by reporting the results of the evaluation of group sub-indices based on respondent characteristics such as gender, age, education, and occupation, which showed that the sustainability of the Talondo language had decreased.

This research differs from some of these studies, especially on the object of the Gorontalo language and locations in the Tomini Bay Area, namely Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolanho Regency. The novelty of this research lies in a specific location, highlighting the unique sociolinguistic and ethnolinguistic dynamics in the Tomini Bay area that affect the vitality of the Gorontalo language, targeting the regional language rescue strategy in the Tomini Bay Area, Gorontalo Province.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vitality refers to the vitality or sustainability of a language in broader society and can be understood through three main dimensions: status, demographics, and institutional support (Dattamajumdar, 2020; Wickström, 2023). Language vitality is beneficial for developing effective strategies for preserving language and strengthening group identity. It is also crucial in designing intervention policies that support the maintenance and development of minority or endangered languages (Clément & Norton, 2021; Coluzzi et al., 2013). The vitality of a language reflects the ability of a language group to remain spoken in society, which is supported not only by the number of speakers but also by the institutional support and social recognition they receive (Ding, 2023; Landry et al., 2022).

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Commented [4]: This section would benefit from incorporating prior studies on language vitality, beyond merely discussing its importance and significance. Additionally, it should provide a detailed outline of how to effectively conduct research in this area. A summary of existing literature on language vitality would enhance the depth and rigor of this discussion.

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Language vitality is measured by factors such as usage, dominance, preference, attitudes, motivations, and language ability, which are especially important in a multilingual society because interlingual interactions have a significant influence on social and cultural dynamics (Rohmah & Wijyanti, 2023; Stern, 2017; Ying et al., 2015). Understanding and improving the vitality of languages, especially for minority languages, is crucial in the era of globalization. This is important because the existence of minority languages is often threatened by the more widespread use of more dominant languages (Moring et al., 2011; Zabadi et al., 2023).

Grenoble and Whaley (2006) state that language has high vitality if used by its speakers in daily communication. The use of language in each domain, for example, family, work environment (e.g. Village office), education, and interaction with immigrants. However, if the language is not used in this domain, then the vitality of the language decreases. Holmes (2001) said that if members of an ethnic community live in the same neighbourhood, this can help maintain the survival of their language in the long term, primarily if the language is still spoken in essential areas. Pateda (1987) explained that there is a mutual influence in every realm of social interaction, and more active speakers will dominate. If a language is used more frequently, it will evolve. Conversely, a language that is rarely used will be displaced by a more dominant language, which, if allowed to continue, can lead to the extinction of the language (Malabar, 2015).

UNESCO has established a comprehensive framework for evaluating language vitality, particularly for endangered languages. Developed by UNESCO's Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages in 2003, this framework encompasses nine key factors: intergenerational transmission, the absolute number of speakers, the proportion of speakers within the total population, shifts in domains of language use, adaptability to new media, the availability of educational and literacy materials, governmental attitudes and policies, community perceptions of their language, and the quantity and quality of language documentation. This framework provides a systematic approach to assessing the status of languages and identifying targeted interventions for their preservation (UNESCO, 2011). The framework is widely acknowledged as an effective tool for assessing a language's vitality and determining the necessary interventions for its preservation (Chen, 2023; Moseley, 2010).

Previous studies have demonstrated that applying the UNESCO framework yields valuable insights into the factors influencing language vitality across diverse social contexts. For instance, a case study on the Temiar language in Malaysia revealed its comparatively higher vitality among Orang Asli languages, attributed to its larger speaker population and its function as a lingua franca (Hassan et al., 2015). In contrast, the Sihan language in Sarawak faces a high risk of extinction as it fails to meet the majority of UNESCO's language vitality criteria (Mohamed & Hashim, 2012). Research on the Kensiu language in Malaysia underscores the critical role of intergenerational transmission, despite its usage being confined to specific domains and the challenges posed by younger generations' attitudes, who increasingly favor adopting the majority language (Hamzah et al., 2024). The So language community in Thailand exhibits varying levels of vitality, with some villages demonstrating robust usage while others face the risk of language shift. Additionally, the external policy environment significantly impacts efforts to develop and maintain the language within these communities (Tehan & Markowski, 2017). In Europe, the Friuli language in Italy serves as a compelling example of how official recognition alone is insufficient to guarantee a language's continuity. Despite its legal recognition, the Friuli language has experienced a decline in young speakers and restricted usage in social domains, reflecting a gradual shift toward Italian (De Cia, 2021).

In Indonesia, the Leukon language confronts comparable challenges. According to the Expanded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS), the language is classified at level 6b, signifying a high risk of language loss driven by the social and cultural influence of the dominant language (Candrasari et al., 2018). In the context of the Malay language in North Sumatra, the study reveals a decline in vitality, with transmission classified as level 3 (endangered), a

decreasing number of native speakers, and a narrowing scope of usage, underscoring the language's critical condition. The availability of educational materials and adequate documentation plays a crucial role in sustaining language vitality. However, the Malay language in North Sumatra is significantly undervalued in these areas, further jeopardizing its survival (Pramuniati et al., 2024). The vitality of the Sundanese language in Cianjur City is declining, particularly in terms of intergenerational transmission. However, it retains potential in areas such as new media, literacy, and documentation. Enhancing the vitality of the Sundanese language necessitates strengthening intergenerational transmission through increased usage within families, the promotion of language learning in schools and communities, and the development of teaching materials and broader literacy initiatives (Kurniawati et al., 2021).

These studies underscore the necessity of an integrated approach to assessing and preserving minority languages. The UNESCO framework offers systematic guidance for evaluating language status, while quantitative and qualitative methods can be employed to explore critical aspects of language vitality, including community attitudes, shifts in language usage domains, and the availability of educational resources. For instance, research by Rohmah dan Wijayanti (2023) by combining demographic surveys with in-depth interviews, this approach evaluates community attitudes toward linguistic minorities in Indonesia. It not only offers a comprehensive understanding of a language's actual conditions but also informs the development of more effective intervention strategies.

This study aims to assess the vitality of the Gorontalo language by integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches within the framework of UNESCO's nine language vitality indicators. Through a comprehensive analysis of these indicators, the research seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing the language's sustainability. By building on the findings of prior studies, this study is expected to contribute significantly to the preservation of minority languages in the context of globalization.

METHOD

This research was conducted in the coastal area of Tomini Bay, encompassing Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency in Gorontalo Province. The study location was strategically selected due to the region's vulnerability to the potential extinction of the Gorontalo language. Intense language contact between local communities, migrants, and foreign tourists, particularly in coastal tourist destinations, is believed to significantly impact the use and sustainability of the Gorontalo language. Furthermore, the socio-cultural characteristics of this coastal region provide a crucial context for understanding the dynamics influencing the vitality of the Gorontalo language.

This study employs a purposive sampling technique to select respondents deemed relevant to the research objectives. Respondents were chosen based on specific criteria, including residence in the coastal area of Tomini Bay, a minimum age of 15 years, and proficiency in the Gorontalo language, both active and passive. Additionally, demographic diversity—such as variations in age, gender, and education level—was considered to ensure the data accurately reflect the characteristics of coastal communities. A total of 155 respondents were selected, representing a sufficient sample size to provide a comprehensive understanding of the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the region. To complement the data collected from the community, interviews were conducted with indigenous leaders, government officials, and language practitioners, offering institutional and cultural perspectives to enrich the study's findings. Data collection in this study was carried out using a survey method. According to Wiseman and Aron (1970) surveys are defined as a method for collecting and analyzing social data through the use of highly structured and detailed interviews or questionnaires. The primary objective of a survey is to gather information from a large number of respondents who are deemed representative of a specific population.

In this study, the survey method was employed to investigate the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay. Data were collected through a combination of

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questionnaires, observations, and interviews, providing a comprehensive understanding of the language's current status and usage dynamics. The survey in this study is based on **nine factors** formulated by UNESCO's Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages to assess language vitality. These factors include intergenerational language transmission, which measures the extent to which a language is passed from one generation to the next; the absolute number of speakers, indicating the total number of users; the proportion of speakers within the population, reflecting the percentage of users in the community; shifting domains of language use, which evaluates the variety of social contexts in which the language is utilized; response to new domains and media, assessing the language's adaptability to technology and digital platforms; availability of educational and literacy materials, such as textbooks and dictionaries; government and institutional attitudes and policies, including the language's official status; community attitudes toward their language, reflecting the level of appreciation and value assigned by the community; and the amount and quality of language documentation, which examines the extent to which the language has been recorded in written, audio, or video formats. These nine factors were incorporated into a questionnaire using a rating scale from 0 to 5, providing a quantifiable assessment of the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay. This framework also serves as a foundation for strategic analyses aimed at language preservation.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the research approach, this study employed a combination of survey, observation, and interview methods.

Data from observations and interviews complement the data obtained from the survey. Contributing to a more robust and nuanced analysis. A series of formal and informal interviews were conducted with participants to gather detailed information about their biographical and linguistic backgrounds, language use in various social contexts, and attitudes toward the Gorontalo language. These interviews were specifically designed to capture dimensions not fully addressed through surveys, such as individual perceptions and patterns of language use in specific contexts. Observations further enriched the dataset by allowing researchers to directly observe language use in natural settings, offering critical context to validate and enhance the survey findings. All collected data were analyzed using UNESCO's nine language vitality criteria, as outlined during the UNESCO Expert Meeting in March 2003. By integrating these methodologies, the study provided a comprehensive assessment of the vitality of the Gorontalo language and ensured the reliability and depth of its findings (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Lewis, 2009).

Data analysis in this study employed a quantitative approach complemented by qualitative analysis to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the research findings. According to **Mahsun (2011)**, Data analysis is the process of classifying, grouping, and equalizing similar data, as well as separating and grouping different data. Data analysis was carried out quantitatively. Technically, quantitative data analysis includes (1) describing the analysis techniques used, including descriptive statistics in the form of averages and percentages, (2) presenting the results of the analysis in the form of tables, histograms, bar charts, line charts, or other relevant diagrams, (3) analyzing percentages based on statements obtained from research instruments, (4) providing interpretations of descriptive statistical data, which are generally in the form of averages and percentages, and (5) supplementing data analysis with interviews to understand the problems revealed in the research (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2022). This approach aligns with Creswell's (2014) perspective, which emphasizes that quantitative data analysis involves organizing data, conducting statistical analyses, and interpreting results to address research questions and test hypotheses. Creswell also underscores the importance of presenting data in various visual formats, such as tables and diagrams, to enhance reader comprehension. Furthermore, Creswell advocates supplementing statistical data with qualitative methods, such as interviews, to provide deeper contextual insights into the study's findings. This study adopts this principle, integrating Mahsun's (2011) and Creswell's (2014) steps for data analysis. By combining these quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the analysis not only yields measurable data but also offers a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under

Commented [8]: list down the factors as this will be the major findings

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Commented [10]: he methods of observation and interview should be introduced earlier in the discussion to provide a comprehensive overview of the research approach. The current emphasis on surveys may lead to the impression that this study relies solely on this method. Clarifying the use of multiple methodologies will enhance the understanding of the study's design and its robustness.

Commented [11R10]: Thank you for your valuable feedback regarding the inclusion of observation and interview methods earlier in the discussion. We acknowledge that the current emphasis on surveys may give the impression that this study relies solely on this method. To address this concern, we will revise the discussion section to introduce the observation and interview methods earlier and clarify their role in complementing the survey data.

Specifically, we will highlight how observations provided contextual insights into natural language use, while interviews explored individual perceptions and patterns of language usage that could not be captured through surveys alone. This integration of methodologies will be emphasized to demonstrate the comprehensive and robust design of the study.

We believe that these revisions will enhance the understanding of the study's methodological framework and better reflect its multi-method approach, ensuring a balanced representation of all data collection methods.

Commented [12]: It would be beneficial to incorporate citations from more prominent researchers, such as Creswell, to support the use of this methodology alongside Mahsun (2011). This additional scholarly support would strengthen the argument and provide a more comprehensive theoretical foundation for your methodological choices.

Commented [13R12]: Thank you for your insightful suggestion. We have revised the methodology section in line with your recommendation by incorporating citations from Creswell (2014) alongside Mahsun (2011). The revised section now emphasizes Creswell's framework, which highlights the importance of combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis. Specifically, we have integrated Creswell's perspectives on data organization, statistical analysis, and the inclusion of qualitative insights to offer deeper contextual understanding of the findings.

By aligning Creswell's theoretical contributions with Mahsun's methodological steps, we have strengthened the theoretical foundation and robustness of the study's methodology. This revision clarifies the rationale behind the methodological choices and ensures a more comprehensive and scholarly presentation of the research approach.

investigation.

RESULT

KEY FACTORS IN LANGUAGE USE

INTERGENERATIONAL LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION

Intergenerational language transmission is an essential factor in the sustainability of a language because it involves the inheritance of language from the older generation to the younger generation through daily interactions and educational institutions. If the regional language is not used between parents and children, language skills will decrease, threatening the continuity of the language. Therefore, intergenerational transmission is a significant benchmark of language vitality, where well-passed languages are more resistant to the threat of extinction than those that fail to be transmitted.

TABEL 1. Factor 1: Intergenerational Language Transmission

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Speaker Population	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	There exists no speaker	0.65%
1	Critically endangered	The language is used mainly by very few speakers of the great-grandparental generation.	3.87%
2	Severely endangered	The language is used mainly by the grandparental generation and up	9.03%
3	Definitely endangered	The language is used mainly by the parental generation and up	51.61%
4	Unsafe	The language is used by some children in all domains; all children in limited domains use it.	8.39%
5	Safe	The language is used by all ages, from children up.	26.45%

The survey results showed that the transmission of the Gorontalo language between generations was at level 3, indicating a decline, with the majority of respondents (51.61%) reporting that the elderly and elderly generations mostly used this language. The gap in transmission, especially among the younger generation, risks accelerating the extinction of these languages if there are no intensive revitalization efforts. Therefore, conservation strategies that target children and vulnerable areas are urgently needed, such as integrating the Gorontalo language into formal education and increasing access to learning materials.

THE ABSOLUTE NUMBER OF SPEAKERS

The absolute number of speakers is an essential indicator in assessing the vitality of a language because the more native speakers there are, the greater the chances of the language surviving. This indicator covers all age groups and language use in various social, cultural, and economic contexts. The decline in speakers, especially among the younger generation, increases the risk of language extinction. This factor is not assessed by scale but rather by the actual number of speakers in the community, with small populations more vulnerable to threats. While the number of speakers is essential, other factors must also be considered to ensure the preservation of the language.

PENDUDUK PROVINSI GORONTALO Hasil Long Form Sensus Penduduk 2020

POPULATION SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION

Tabel 3.2 Jumlah Penduduk menurut Kabupaten/Kota, Daerah Perkotaan/Pendesaan, dan Jenis Kelamin
Population by Regency/Municipality, Urban/Rural Area and Sex

Kabupaten/Kota Regency/Municipality	Daerah Perkotaan (Urban)			Daerah Perdesaan (Rural)			Daerah Perkotaan/Pendesaan (Urban-Rural)		
	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Kabupaten/Regency									
Buana	15 404	18 118	31 572	50 301	55 633	116 934	75 765	72 771	148 536
Gorontalo	79 933	83 606	163 539	126 750	114 513	231 263	206 683	198 118	404 801
Pohuwato	19 805	25 696	45 501	56 034	52 662	108 696	75 939	73 351	149 290
Bone Bolango	32 310	34 676	66 986	31 200	40 374	71 574	63 139	67 463	130 602
Gorontalo Utara	30 324	11 140	21 844	35 117	31 908	67 019	63 616	52 949	116 565
Kota/Municipality									
Gorontalo	97 016	98 335	195 351	3 020	3 972	6 992	100 043	102 307	202 350
GORONTALO	235 184	263 976	519 694	146 461	127 162	273 623	239 566	237 591	477 157

FIGURE 1. Number of Population as a result of the 2020 population census long form

PENDIDIKAN

Tabel 6.4 Jumlah Penduduk Berumur 5 Tahun ke Atas Menurut Kabupaten/Kota, Bahasa Pertama Kali Dikuasai, dan Jenis Kelamin
Table 6.4 Population 5 Years of Age and Over by Regency/Municipality, First Language Spoken, and Sex

Kabupaten/Kota Regency/Municipality	Bahasa yang Pertama Dikuasai / First Language Spoken								
	Bahasa Indonesia/Bahasa Male			Bahasa Daerah/Local Language Male			Bahasa Asing/Foreign Language Male		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Kabupaten/Regency									
Buana	51 758	50 687	102 444	17 521	15 782	33 302	-	-	-
Gorontalo	133 015	133 017	266 072	51 258	49 302	100 560	5	-	5
Pohuwato	55 055	53 525	108 580	14 476	13 548	28 024	-	-	-
Bone Bolango	66 341	65 206	132 549	9 849	9 406	19 248	-	-	-
Gorontalo Utara	50 797	49 987	99 494	9 557	9 230	18 787	-	-	-
Kota/Municipality									
Gorontalo	87 039	88 735	175 833	4 437	4 406	8 843	11	-	11
GORONTALO	444 062	449 968	894 031	107 097	101 667	208 764	15*	-	15*

FIGURE 2. Data on the Number of Speakers from the 2020 Population Census Long Form

According to the UNESCO LVE framework, the data shows that the number of regional language speakers in Gorontalo and Bone Bolango Regencies reflects the "Vulnerable" condition. Gorontalo Regency has 100,560 regional language speakers (30.51% of the total Population), while Bone Bolango Regency only has 19,040 speakers (11.45%). With a total of 119,600 speakers from a combined Population of 495,776 people, the use of regional languages is still significant but vulnerable to extinction, especially in Bone Bolango. Urban areas face a faster decline in language use due to the dominance of national and foreign languages. To maintain the vitality of the language, a continuous revitalization program is needed, primarily through bilingual education and local Government policy support.

THE PROPORTION OF SPEAKERS IN THE TOTAL POPULATION

The proportion of speakers in the total population is a critical indicator in assessing the vitality of a language because the more significant the proportion of speakers, the higher the vitality of the language. If only a tiny portion of the population speaks the language, this indicates a decline in use and the threat of extinction, especially if the dominant language replaces the role of the local language. Understanding this proportion is essential for determining the urgency of language preservation and revitalization, as this factor reflects the percentage of target language users in the context of the overall population.

TABLE 2. Factor 3: The Proportion of Speakers in the Total Population

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Proportion of Speakers	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	None speak the language	1.29%
1	Critically endangered	Very few speak the language.	21.29%
2	Severely endangered	The majority speak the language.	20.00%
3	Definitively endangered	A majority speak the language	25.16%
4	Unsafe	Nearly all speak the language.	21.29%
5	Unsafe	All speak the language.	10.97%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay show that the highest level of the use of the Gorontalo language is in the category of "Experiencing Decline," with 25.16% of respondents reporting that most of the population still uses this language. Although the use of the Gorontalo language is still relatively common in most regions, the decline is noticeable, especially in formal use and among the younger generation. This shows that although the Gorontalo language has not yet reached a critical condition, signs of deterioration have begun to be seen, so more intensive preservation measures are needed.

TRENDS IN EXISTING LANGUAGE DOMAINS

Trends in language use in various domains of life, such as home, school, workplace, and media, are essential indicators of language vitality. If the language is only used at home or among the elderly, while other languages dominate in the formal realm, such as schools and the media, this indicates a decline in use. In contrast, the widespread use of language across various domains shows good vitality.

TABLE 3. Factor 4: Trends in Existing Language Domains

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Domains and Functions	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	The language is not used in any domain and for any function.	0.00%
1	Minimal domains	The language is used only in a restricted domain and for a few functions.	18.71%
2	Limited or formal domains	The language is used in limited social domains and for several functions	10.97%
3	Dwindling domains	The language is used in home domains and for many functions, but the dominant language begins to penetrate even home domains.	23.23%
4	Multilingual parity	Two or more languages may be used in most social domains and for most functions.	22.58%
5	Universal use	The language is used in all domains and for all functions	24.52%

The results of the survey on the vitality of the Gorontalo language in Tomini Bay based on Factor 4: Trends in Language Domain showed that the highest respondents were at level 5 as 24.52% of respondents reported the use of Gorontalo language in all regions and social functions, which reflects the community that is still strong in maintaining this language in the formal and informal realms. However, a downward trend was seen, with 23.23% of respondents reporting that this language was limited to home,

and 22.58% of respondents reported the joint use of Gorontalo and other languages, reflecting the situation of diglossia. A further downward trend was reported by 18.71% of respondents who only used this language in limited situations, indicating that the Gorontalo language faces significant challenges under the dominance of Indonesian.

RESPONDING TO NEW DOMAINS AND MEDIA

In the digital era, new media such as the internet, social media, and digital applications provide opportunities and challenges for the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay area. While this media can be used to preserve language through digital content, the dominance of national and foreign languages threatens the use of the Gorontalo language, especially among the younger generation.

TABLE 4. Factor 5 : Responding to New Domains and Media

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	New Domains and Media Accepted by the Endangered Language	Percentage of Respondents
0	Inactive	The language is not used in any new domains.	1.94%
1	Minimal	The language is used in only a few new domains	31.61%
2	Coping	The language is used in some new domains.	21.29%
3	Receptive	The language is used in many domains.	14.19%
4	Robust/active	The language is used in most new domains..	18.71%
5	Dynamic	The language is used in all new domains.	12.26%

The Gorontalo language vitality survey results showed that the highest response was at level 1, with 31.61% of respondents reporting that adapting the Gorontalo language in the region and new media was very limited. This language is only used in a few new contexts, such as digital media or work environments, but it is not yet widespread. This level 1 indicates that the use of the Gorontalo language in dealing with technological developments is still minimal, so there is a risk that this language will not be able to compete in the digital space.

MATERIALS FOR LANGUAGE AND LITERACY EDUCATION

Language education and literacy are essential in preserving the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay. The development of exciting and curriculum-appropriate learning materials, both formal and informal, is urgently needed so that the younger generation can still learn this language. The material must cover various levels, from basic to advanced, and use print, digital, and audiovisual media. Interactive textbooks, dictionaries, folklore, and online platforms will help expand the range of learning.

TABEL 5. Faktor 6: Materials for Language and Literacy Education

Grade	Accessibility of Written Materials	Percentage of Respondents
0	No orthography is available to the community.	9.03%
1	A practical orthography is known to the community, and some material is being written.	12.26%

2	Written materials exist, but they may only be helpful for some community members; for others, they may have a symbolic significance. Literacy education in the language is not a part of the school curriculum.	18.71%
3	Written materials exist, and children may be exposed to the written form at school. Literacy is not promoted through print media.	27.74%
4	Written materials exist, and at school, children are developing literacy in the language. Writing in the language is not used in administration.	14.84%
5	There is an established orthography literacy tradition with grammar, dictionaries, texts, literature, and everyday media. Writing in the language is used in administration and education.	17.42%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that in Factor 6: Materials for Language and Literacy Education, the highest response was at level 3, with 27.74% of respondents reporting that written materials were available and children were exposed to the Gorontalo language in schools, but literacy in this language has not been widely promoted. This indicates that despite efforts to introduce the Gorontalo language in written form, its spread in the educational environment is still limited. Therefore, more significant efforts are needed to integrate the Gorontalo language into the curriculum and expand the availability of literacy materials.

LANGUAGE POLICY, ATTITUDES, AND URGENCY OF DOCUMENTATION

ATTITUDES AND POLICIES OF GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL LANGUAGE, INCLUDING OFFICIAL STATUS AND USE

The government's language policy greatly influenced the use of the Gorontalo language, especially in Tomini Bay. Despite recognising the importance of regional languages, their implementation at the local level is often limited, with official use of the Gorontalo language generally only in cultural events and informal communication. More substantial support is needed in education and documentation, such as dictionary development and research projects, to keep the language alive amid the dominance of national and foreign languages.

TABLE 6. Factor 7: Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use

Grade	Degree of Support	Deskripsi	Percentage of Respondents
0	Prohibition	Minority languages are prohibited.	1.29%
1	Forced assimilation	The dominant language is the sole official language, while nondominant languages are neither recognized nor protected.	5.81%
2	Active assimilation	Government encourages assimilation to the dominant language. There is no protection for minority languages.	3.87%
3	Passive assimilation	No explicit policy exists for minority languages; the dominant language prevails in the public domain.	9.68%
4	Differentiated support	Minority languages are protected primarily as the language of the private domains. The use of the language is prestigious..	28.39%

5 Equal support All languages are protected. 50.97%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that the government's support for the Gorontalo language was at level 5, with 50.97% of respondents reporting that the language was protected on an equal footing with other languages. Despite the inclusive policy, the use of the Gorontalo language is still more robust in the private sphere than in the public. As many as 28.39% of respondents noted support for the Gorontalo language in the local community, but this language has not been fully recognized as an official language in the formal realm. Challenges remain in strengthening policies that support the use of the Gorontalo language in the public and institutional spheres to ensure its preservation.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THEIR OWN LANGUAGE

The community's attitude towards the Gorontalo language in Tomini Bay significantly affects the continuity and vitality of the language. The community is divided into two groups: those firmly committed to preserving and using the Gorontalo language in their daily lives and cultural events and those more likely to use national or foreign languages, especially in education and employment. The first group sees the Gorontalo language as an essential ethnic identity, while the second group, especially the younger generation, prefers Indonesian or English, which is considered more relevant in the modern context.

TABLE 7. Faktor 8: Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language

Grade	Deskripsi	Percentage of Respondents
0	No one cares if the language is lost; all prefer to use a dominant language	2.58%
1	Only a few members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	9.03%
2	Some members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	10.32%
3	Many members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	19.35%
4	Most members support language maintenance.	31.61%
5	All members value their language and wish to see it promoted	27.10%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that in Factor 8: Community Members' Attitudes towards Their Language, the highest response was at level 4, with 31.61% of respondents reporting strong support from most of the community for the maintenance of the Gorontalo language. This shows a positive awareness of the importance of language as a cultural identity.

AMOUNT AND QUALITY OF DOCUMENTATION

The quantity and quality of Gorontalo language documentation are significant in efforts to preserve and revitalize the Tomini Bay area, but they are still limited. Existing documentation, such as primary dictionaries and traditional texts, does not cover all aspects of language, including vocabulary and the use of language in cultural contexts. The quality of documentation is also not optimal, with many sources that are difficult to access, and most are still in print format. The improvement of digital-based documentation is very urgent, and linguists and local communities should be involved in collecting, compiling, and disseminating Gorontalo language materials to remain relevant in the era of globalization.

TABLE 8. Factor 9: Amount and Quality of Documentation.

Tingkat	Label	Deskripsi	Persentas
0	Undocumented	Nonmaterial exists.	5.16%
1	Inadequate	Only a few grammatical sketches, short word lists, and fragmentary texts. Audio and video recordings do not exist, are unusable, or are entirely unannotated.	18.71%
2	Fragmentary	Some grammatical sketches, word lists, and texts are helpful for limited linguistic research but with inadequate coverage. Audio and video recordings may be of varying quality, with or without annotation.	18.06%
3	Fair	There may be adequate or sufficient grammar, dictionaries, and texts, but no everyday media; audio and video recordings may exist in varying quality or degree of annotation.	25.81%
4	Good	There is one good grammar and several adequate grammars, dictionaries, texts, literature, and occasionally updated everyday media; adequate annotated high-quality audio and video recordings.	14.84%
5	Superlative	There are comprehensive grammar and dictionaries, extensive texts; and a constant flow of language materials. Abundant annotated high-quality audio and video recordings exist.	17.42%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that the documentation of this language was at level 3, with 25.81% of respondents reporting that the existing documentation was sufficient to support the research. However, the quality of multimedia and annotation was still limited. Although there are grammar, dictionaries, and some texts, the coverage and quality of audio-visual recordings are still minimal.

DISCUSSION

Based on the UNESCO-LVE framework, a thorough evaluation of the vitality status of a language must consider nine factors in an integrated manner. Table 9 presents a combined scale for all factors, which describes the overall vitality level of the Gorontalo language used in the Tomini Bay Area, Gorontalo Province. (1) intergenerational language transmission, (2) the absolute number of speakers, (3) the proportion of speakers in the total population, (4) trends in existing language domains, (5) Responding to New Domains and Media, (6) Materials for Language and Literacy Education, (7) Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use, (8) Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language, (9) Amount and Quality of Documentation

TABLE 9. Gorontalo Language Vitality Assessment Status

Factor	The Vitality of the Gorontalo Language
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1. intergenerational language transmission	3
2. the absolute number of speakers	4
3. the proportion of speakers in the total population	3
4. trends in existing language domains	5
5. Responding to New Domains and Media	1
6. Materials for Language and Literacy Education	3
7. Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use	5
8. Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language	4
9. Amount and Quality of Documentation	3
Rata-Rata Vitalitas Bahasa Gorontalo	3.44

According to Dwyer's formulation of language vitality, the following are the categories that are usually used to determine language status based on vitality scores:

1. 0 - 1.4 : Critically endangered
2. 1.5 - 2.9 : Endangered
3. 3.0 - 3.9 : Vulnerable
4. 4.0 - 5.0 : Stable or safe

With an average score of 3.44, the vitality of the Gorontalo language is included in the vulnerable category. This suggests that although the language is still in use, certain factors could threaten its future viability.

The results of the survey on the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay area based on the UNESCO-LVE framework show several essential factors that affect the sustainability of this language. First, the transmission of language between generations is at level 3, indicating a decrease in the use of language among the younger generation, while the dominance of Indonesian and foreign languages in education and daily life is increasing. The older generation tends to speak the Gorontalo language to children no longer, instead encouraging their children to abandon the tribal language in order to achieve higher education and success, resulting in the Gorontalo language being endangered (Firdaus, 2018; Purwaka et al., 2020). The viability of a language is greatly influenced by the social stability of its speaking community and whether the language is still passed on to the younger generation (Pakendorf, 2024). The transmission of language between generations helps in describing the vitality status of a language (Hamzah et al., 2024).

The absolute number of speakers reaching 119,600 indicates a considerable number, but the proportion of speakers in the total population is starting to decline. Language extinctions are often associated with languages that have few speakers. As Krauss states (1992), languages with fewer than 100,000 speakers can potentially become extinct. The use of the Gorontalo language in the social domain is at level 5, which indicates that this language is still maintained in local traditions and culture, although its use in the formal realm, such as government and education is limited. This is as well as research Fitriyani & Subiyanto (2021), which shows that the Gorontalo language is often used in religious and cultural activities, such as in ritual communication in the Dikili tradition. However, the response to the new media is at level 1, which shows the low adaptation of the Gorontalo language on digital platforms and modern technology, weakening its position among the younger generation.

In the field of education and literacy, level 3 shows that efforts to include the Gorontalo language in the education system are still limited, with a lack of comprehensive teaching materials. The development of exciting and relevant local teaching materials in the Gorontalo

language is critical to increasing the use of the Gorontalo language in formal education and strengthening its vitality (Bay et al., 2018). The government's attitude is at level 5, indicating local government support for language preservation, although policy implementation still needs improvement. The community's attitude is at level 4, with pride in the language, especially among the older generation, although the younger generation is starting to be less interested.

Gorontalo language documentation is at level 3, with existing documentation efforts that are still limited in terms of quality and accessibility. The development of two-way translator applications and dictionaries of traditional terms based on computational linguistics shows that technology can increase the quantity and quality of Gorontalo language documentation, facilitate access to learning, and support language preservation in the digital era. This innovation strengthens the vitality of the language by providing relevant documentation accessible to the broader community, including the younger generation (Dako et al., 2015, 2017; Lihawa et al., 2016). The presence of language in the realm of technology can show vitality and protect and promote the language for young speakers (Cunliffe, 2024; Wood, 2024).

The study also shows that the UNESCO-LVE framework provides a comprehensive evaluation of the vitality of the Gorontalo language. However, further studies are needed, especially in multiethnic and urban areas, to understand the dynamics of the Gorontalo language in different socioeconomic contexts. Language vitality indicators must clearly explain how changes in people's attitudes towards a language occur. Suppose this indicator is not able to provide a strong explanation for the change in language attitudes in society. In that case, the measurement or analysis of language vitality will only be an academic activity that does not have a natural or practical impact on language preservation efforts (Gobbo, 2021). The assessment of the vitality of languages has been of particular concern for the past 20 years, spearheaded by UNESCO, which affirms that linguistic diversity is a valuable part of human heritage and that the loss of languages is a loss to all of humanity (Webster, 2022). Therefore, this research is part of an effort to preserve the endangered Gorontalo language, especially in the coastal area of the Tomini Bay Area, Gorontalo Province.

CONCLUSION

The vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay, especially Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency, is in a vulnerable status with an average vitality value of 3.44. which shows that although the language is still used, there is a threat to its continuity, especially among the younger generation. The main factors contributing to this vulnerability are the decline in intergenerational transmission and the dominance of the Indonesian language in the educational and social domains. Although the government and the community have made efforts to preserve the language through education and cultural activities, challenges such as limited resources, documentation, and the younger generation's interests still hinder conservation efforts. Stronger cooperation between the government, communities, and educational institutions is urgently needed to strengthen the vitality of the Gorontalo language.

In facing this challenge, collaborative efforts are needed between the government, the community, and educational institutions to strengthen language transmission to the younger generation and expand the use of Gorontalo language in digital media. The development of more comprehensive learning materials, as well as language documentation in digital form, will be an essential step in maintaining the sustainability of the Gorontalo language.

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**4. Bukti Konfirmasi Artikel telah Diterima Editor dan
Diserahkan kepada Reviewer
(15 Januari 2025)**

A. Bukti Konfirmasi Artikel telah Diterima Editor dan Diserahkan kepada Reviewer

7/7/25, 11:12 PM

Email Universitas Negeri Gorontalo - [GEMA Online®] Editor Decision [79684 - The Vitality of the Gorontalo Language as a Re...



Asna Ntelu <asna.ntelu@ung.ac.id>

[GEMA Online®] Editor Decision [79684 - The Vitality of the Gorontalo Language as a Rescue Effort Extinction of Regional Languages]

ANIS NADIAH CHE ABDUL RAHMAN <aniscar@ukm.edu.my>

15 Januari 2025 pukul 15.22

Kepada: Asna Ntelu <asna.ntelu@ung.ac.id>

Dear authors,

I have already submitted the manuscript to the reviewers.

Will keep you updated on the progress.

Thank you.

Anis

[Kutipan teks disembunyikan]

PENAFIAN: E-mel ini dan apa-apa fail yang dikepilkan bersamanya ("Mesej") adalah ditujukan hanya untuk kegunaan penerima(-penerima) yang termaklum di atas dan mungkin mengandungi maklumat sulit. Anda dengan ini dimaklumkan bahawa mengambil apa jua tindakan berdasarkan kepada, membuat penilaian, mengulang hantar, menghebah, mengedar, mencetak, atau menyalin Mesej ini atau sebahagian daripadanya oleh sesiapa selain daripada penerima(-penerima) yang termaklum di atas adalah dilarang. Jika anda telah menerima Mesej ini kerana kesilapan, anda mesti menghapuskan Mesej ini dengan segera dan memaklumkan kepada penghantar Mesej ini menerusi balasan e-mel. Pendapat, rumusan, dan sebarang maklumat lain di dalam Mesej ini yang tidak berkait dengan urusan rasmi Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) adalah difahami sebagai bukan dikeluarkan atau diperakui oleh mana-mana pihak yang disebut.

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**5. Bukti Konfirmasi Review dan Hasil Review
Pertama dari Reviewer
(27 Februari 2025)**

A. Bukti Konfirmasi Review dan Hasil Review Pertama dari Reviewer

7/7/25, 11:28 PM

Email Universitas Negeri Gorontalo - [GEMA Online®] Editor Decision [79684 - Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from ...



Asna Ntlu <asna.ntelu@ung.ac.id>

[GEMA Online®] Editor Decision [79684 - Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regional Language Extinction]

Dr. Anis Nadiyah Che Abdul Rahman <aniscar@ukm.edu.my>

27 Februari 2025 pukul 12.25

Kepada: Miss Asna Ntlu <asna.ntelu@ung.ac.id>

Cc: Dakia N Djou <dakiadjou@ung.ac.id>, Sayama Malabar <Sayama.malabar@ung.ac.id>, Jafar Lantowa <jafar.lantowa@ung.ac.id>

Miss Asna Ntlu:

We have reached a decision regarding your submission to GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies, "Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regional Language Extinction".

Our decision is to: **Revision Required**

Please address these revisions based on reviewers' comments.

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Dr. Anis Nadiyah Che Abdul Rahman

UKM

Phone +603 89216496

aniscar@ukm.edu.my

Reviewer B:

Comments for the Author / Ulasan untuk Pengarang

1. Title of manuscript / Tajuk manuskrip

Does the title of the manuscript clearly reflect its contents and is the title sufficient and concise?

Adakah tajuk manuskrip ini jelas menggambarkan kandungannya dan adakah tajuknya tepat dan ringkas?

:
Yes

2. Abstract / Abstrak

Does the abstract reflect of the content of the manuscript?

Adakah abstrak ini memberikan gambaran yang tepat tentang artikel ini?

:
Yes, but need revision for clarity and conciseness, ensuring it captures the study's essence without redundancy.

3. Relevance of manuscript / Kerelevanan manuskrip

Is the manuscript relevant and does it provide new/interesting insights?

Adakah manuskrip ini relevan dan memberikan pemahaman yang baharu/menarik?

:
Yes

4. Organization of manuscript / Struktur manuskrip

Is the manuscript well organized?

Adakah manuskrip itu disusun dengan baik?

:

Yes.

5. Introduction / Pengenalan

Does the introduction provide a clear overview of the field/research? Are the works cited relevant and current?

Adakah bahagian pengenalan manuskrip ini memberikan maklumat yang jelas tentang bidang yang dikaji? Adakah karya-karya yang dipetik relevan dan terkini?

:

Yes

6. Problem statement / Pernyataan masalah

Is the problem/issue being investigated well-defined and linked with the background presented?

Adakah permasalahan kajian/fisu yang dikaji diuraikan dengan jelas dan dikaitkan dengan latar belakang kajian?

:

Not explicitly stated

7. Research Objective / Objektif Kajian

Is the main objective of the study stated clearly?

Adakah objektif utama kajian dinyatakan dengan jelas?

:

Not explicitly stated

8. Literature Review / Sorotan Kepustakaan

Is the Literature Review current and related to what is being studied?

Adakah sorotan kepustakaan manuskrip terkini dan berkaitan dengan apa yang dikaji?

:

Yes but need more focus on maintaining the Gorontalo language.

9. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework / Kerangka Teori/Konseptual

Is the need for the study laid out within a suitable framework?

Adakah keperluan untuk menjalankan kajian dibentangkan dalam kerangka kerja yang sesuai?

:

Yes

10. Design and Methodology / Reka Bentuk dan Metodologi

Are the research design and methodology appropriate, well developed, and clearly articulated?

Adakah reka bentuk dan metodologi penyelidikan ini sesuai, dibangunkan dengan baik, dan dinyatakan dengan jelas dan terperinci?

:

Yes

11. Data Collection and Analysis / Pengumpulan dan Analisis Data

Are the data collected analysed using the appropriate procedure? Are the results presented clearly and effectively?

Adakah data yang diperolehi dianalisis menggunakan prosedur yang sesuai? Adakah dapatan kajian dinyatakan dengan jelas dan berkesan?

:
Yes

12. Discussion and Interpretation / Perbincangan dan Tafsiran

Are the interpretation and discussion of results sound?

Adakah dapatan kajian ditafsir dan dibincangkan dengan baik?

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Yes

13. Conclusions / Kesimpulan

Are the conclusions accurate and supported by the analysis? Are the problem statement and implications of findings well-addressed?

Adakah kesimpulan kajian dibentangkan dengan tepat serta disokong oleh analisis? Adakah permasalahan kajian yang diutarakan sebelum ini serta implikasi penemuan dibincangkan dengan baik?

:
Tidak

14. Language Accuracy and Style / Ketepatan dan Gaya Bahasa

Please comment on the use and accuracy of language in this manuscript.

Mohon ulas penggunaan dan ketepatan bahasa dalam manuskrip ini.

:
Minor grammatical errors and awkward phrasing, such as "the elderly and elderly generations," detract from the professionalism of the text. Additionally, the frequent use of passive voice could be replaced with active constructions to enhance clarity and engagement, making the writing more precise and impactful.

Overall comments for Author (to be relayed to the author/s)

Ulasan keseluruhan kepada pengarang (untuk disampaikan kepada pengarang)

:
1. Revise the abstract for clarity and conciseness, ensuring it captures the study's essence without redundancy.
2. Condense repetitive sections in the introduction and literature review.
3. Address ethical considerations and explicitly state limitations in the methodology.
4. Expand the discussion on digital adaptation and its implications for revitalizing the Gorontalo language.
5. Ensure the conclusion provides actionable steps and recommendations.
6. Proofread the document thoroughly for grammatical errors and awkward phrasing.
(All comment is in the reviewed manuscript)

Reviewer C:

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1. Title of manuscript / Tajuk manuskrip

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Is the need for the study laid out within a suitable framework?

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Adakah keperluan untuk menjalankan kajian dibentangkan dalam kerangka kerja yang sesuai?

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10. Design and Methodology / Reka Bentuk dan Metodologi

Are the research design and methodology appropriate, well developed, and clearly articulated?

Adakah reka bentuk dan metodologi penyelidikan ini sesuai, dibangunkan dengan baik, dan dinyatakan dengan jelas dan terperinci?

:

11. Data Collection and Analysis / Pengumpulan dan Analisis Data

Are the data collected analysed using the appropriate procedure? Are the results presented clearly and effectively?

Adakah data yang diperolehi dianalisis menggunakan prosedur yang sesuai? Adakah dapatan kajian dinyatakan dengan jelas dan berkesan?

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12. Discussion and Interpretation / Perbincangan dan Tafsiran

Are the interpretation and discussion of results sound?

Adakah dapatan kajian ditafsir dan dibincangkan dengan baik?

:

13. Conclusions / Kesimpulan

Are the conclusions accurate and supported by the analysis? Are the problem statement and implications of findings well-addressed?

Adakah kesimpulan kajian dibentangkan dengan tepat serta disokong oleh analisis? Adakah permasalahan kajian yang diutarakan sebelum ini serta implikasi penemuan dibincangkan dengan baik?

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Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regional Language Extinction

ABSTRACT

Language vitality reflects the sustainability of a language's use in broader society, influenced by dimensions such as status, demographics, and institutional support. This study evaluates the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Teluk Tomini, which is at risk of extinction due to socio-cultural shifts and linguistic dominance. A survey method was utilized, incorporating UNESCO's nine vitality indicators: (1) intergenerational transmission, (2) absolute number of speakers, (3) proportion of speakers within the population, (4) shifts in language usage domains, (5) response to new domains and media, (6) availability of educational and literacy materials, (7) government and institutional attitudes and policies, (8) community attitudes toward their language, and (9) amount and quality of documentation involving. Data were gathered from 155 respondents in Gorontalo and Bone Bolango regencies through questionnaires, observations, and interviews, and analyzed quantitatively. Results indicate that the Gorontalo language is classified as "Vulnerable," with an average vitality score of 3.44. While still used in some areas, transmission to younger generations is declining, exacerbated by Indonesian's dominance in education and social domains. Preservation efforts, including cultural programs and educational initiatives, have been made but are hindered by resource constraints, inadequate documentation, and low youth engagement. This study underscores the urgency of fostering collaboration among governments, educational institutions, and local communities to enhance awareness and preservation strategies. The development of digital learning materials is proposed as a novel approach to revitalizing the Gorontalo language and ensuring its sustainability for future generations.

Keywords: language vitality; Gorontalo language; language extinction; language rescue; Tomini Bay

INTRODUCTION

Gorontalo language is a means of communication, a buffer and developer of local culture, and an identity for the people of Gorontalo (Baruadi, 2013). The function of local languages is to support the development of the Indonesian language and national culture (Olii, 2021). The Gorontalo language experienced a decline in use due to the arrival of immigrants who brought their language and culture, transforming Gorontalo into a multi-ethnic society. This encouraged the adaptation of immigrant languages by local communities, triggering the Language Development Agency of the Ministry of Education and Culture to classify Gorontalo as an endangered regional language (Usman, 2008; Zakaria et al., 2021). Language vitality validation data up to 2019 shows that Gorontalo is only spoken by a few speakers aged 20 years and above, causing this language to be endangered, similar to 24 other regional languages in 10 provinces in Indonesia (Purwaka et al., 2020). According to the 2020 Linguistic Statistics, the Gorontalo language is included in the 56 regional languages in Indonesia that are classified as vulnerable to critical (Rahardini & Niswah, 2022).

The vitality of the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay Coastal Area is threatened by the dominance of Indonesian and other ethnic languages, such as Bajo, Javanese, and Bugis-Makassar, as well as foreign languages, especially English, due to globalization and interaction with immigrants. The people of Gorontalo have a tradition of using the Gorontalo language, which is influenced by Arabic, Portuguese, Dutch, and Malay (Djou et al., 2023). The dominant

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language influence in global communication and trade now threatens the Gorontalo language in remote areas. Hence, Tomini Bay Coastal Region parents often encourage their children to leave the local language to achieve higher education and success (Firdaus, 2018). The decline in the use of the Gorontalo language can threaten cultural identity and traditional knowledge. Therefore, the importance of this research is to understand the vitality of the Gorontalo language as an effort to save the extinction of regional languages.

The importance of local language as an essential asset plays a vital role in developing Indonesian vocabulary. Therefore, it is crucial to take strategic steps in maintaining, preserving, and promoting local languages (Ntelu et al., 2022; Ntelu & Djou, 2017). The study of language vitality is an essential basis for language conservation activities, which support efforts to protect local languages in Indonesia. Therefore, research on the vitality of the Gorontalo language it can be the right step to save the extinction of the Gorontalo language.

Fishman (1972) emphasises the importance of measuring language vitality based on several categories that include aspects such as the number of speakers, diversity of use, adaptability, and relevance in social and cultural contexts (Medeiros, 2017). Applying language vitality in research can help develop effective and sustainable plans to save endangered languages, including ongoing revitalization and preservation efforts (Gobbo, 2021). In the study of language vitality, researchers used a unique measuring tool to assess the condition of the language among its speakers, which later determined the status of the language in several categories (Zhou & Ang, 2024).

Benu (2023), through the results of his research, shows that local languages in Kupang City still have significant vitality with efforts to preserve local languages through the use of language in public signs and essential institutions. Firdaus (2018) shows that the Suwawa-Gorontalo language is considered stable and steady but threatens extinction. Ibrahim (2011) shows that mapping language vitality is the primary key to understanding the linguistic status of tribes in Indonesia. With this vitality mapping, it can be a solution for designing a program to save regional languages from the risk of extinction. Marica dan Duwila ((2017) show that the vitality status of the Ternate Language is in the worrying category. Aritonang (2016) also examined the vitality of the Talondo language by reporting the results of the evaluation of group sub-indices based on respondent characteristics such as gender, age, education, and occupation, which showed that the sustainability of the Talondo language had decreased.

This research differs from some of these studies, especially on the object of the Gorontalo language and locations in the Tomini Bay Area, namely Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolanho Regency. The novelty of this research lies in a specific location, highlighting the unique sociolinguistic and ethnolinguistic dynamics in the Tomini Bay area that affect the vitality of the Gorontalo language, targeting the regional language rescue strategy in the Tomini Bay Area, Gorontalo Province.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vitality refers to the vitality or sustainability of a language in broader society and can be understood through three main dimensions: status, demographics, and institutional support (Dattamajumdar, 2020; Wickström, 2023). Language vitality is beneficial for developing effective strategies for preserving language and strengthening group identity. It is also crucial in designing intervention policies that support the maintenance and development of minority or endangered languages (Clément & Norton, 2021; Coluzzi et al., 2013). The vitality of a language reflects the ability of a language group to remain spoken in society, which is supported not only by the number of speakers but also by the institutional support and social recognition they receive (Ding, 2023; Landry et al., 2022).

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***Summarizing previous studies more succinctly would help keep the spotlight on the Gorontalo language.

***Placing greater emphasis on how this study builds on or differs from prior research would provide a clearer context and highlight its unique contributions.

Language vitality is measured by factors such as usage, dominance, preference, attitudes, motivations, and language ability, which are especially important in a multilingual society because interlingual interactions have a significant influence on social and cultural dynamics (Rohmah & Wijyanti, 2023; Stern, 2017; Ying et al., 2015). Understanding and improving the vitality of languages, especially for minority languages, is crucial in the era of globalization. This is important because the existence of minority languages is often threatened by the more widespread use of more dominant languages (Moring et al., 2011; Zabadi et al., 2023)

Grenoble and Whaley (2006) state that language has high vitality if used by its speakers in daily communication. The use of language in each domain, for example, family, work environment (e.g. Village office), education, and interaction with immigrants. However, if the language is not used in this domain, then the vitality of the language decreases. Holmes (2001) said that if members of an ethnic community live in the same neighbourhood, this can help maintain the survival of their language in the long term, primarily if the language is still spoken in essential areas. Pateda (1987) explained that there is a mutual influence in every realm of social interaction, and more active speakers will dominate. If a language is used more frequently, it will evolve. Conversely, a language that is rarely used will be displaced by a more dominant language, which, if allowed to continue, can lead to the extinction of the language (Malabar, 2015).

UNESCO has established a comprehensive framework for evaluating language vitality, particularly for endangered languages. Developed by UNESCO's Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages in 2003, this framework encompasses nine key factors: intergenerational transmission, the absolute number of speakers, the proportion of speakers within the total population, shifts in domains of language use, adaptability to new media, the availability of educational and literacy materials, governmental attitudes and policies, community perceptions of their language, and the quantity and quality of language documentation. This framework provides a systematic approach to assessing the status of languages and identifying targeted interventions for their preservation (UNESCO, 2011). The framework is widely acknowledged as an effective tool for assessing a language's vitality and determining the necessary interventions for its preservation (Chen, 2023; Moseley, 2010).

Previous studies have demonstrated that applying the UNESCO framework yields valuable insights into the factors influencing language vitality across diverse social contexts. For instance, a case study on the Temiar language in Malaysia revealed its comparatively higher vitality among Orang Asli languages, attributed to its larger speaker population and its function as a lingua franca (Hassan et al., 2015). In contrast, the Sihan language in Sarawak faces a high risk of extinction as it fails to meet the majority of UNESCO's language vitality criteria (Mohamed & Hashim, 2012). Research on the Kensiu language in Malaysia underscores the critical role of intergenerational transmission, despite its usage being confined to specific domains and the challenges posed by younger generations' attitudes, who increasingly favor adopting the majority language (Hamzah et al., 2024). The So language community in Thailand exhibits varying levels of vitality, with some villages demonstrating robust usage while others face the risk of language shift. Additionally, the external policy environment significantly impacts efforts to develop and maintain the language within these communities (Tehan & Markowski, 2017). In Europe, the Friuli language in Italy serves as a compelling example of how official recognition alone is insufficient to guarantee a language's continuity. Despite its legal recognition, the Friuli language has experienced a decline in young speakers and restricted usage in social domains, reflecting a gradual shift toward Italian (De Cia, 2021).

In Indonesia, the Leukon language confronts comparable challenges. According to the Expanded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS), the language is classified at level 6b, signifying a high risk of language loss driven by the social and cultural influence of the dominant language (Candrasari et al., 2018). In the context of the Malay language in North Sumatra, the study reveals a decline in vitality, with transmission classified as level 3 (endangered), a

decreasing number of native speakers, and a narrowing scope of usage, underscoring the language's critical condition. The availability of educational materials and adequate documentation plays a crucial role in sustaining language vitality. However, the Malay language in North Sumatra is significantly undervalued in these areas, further jeopardizing its survival (Pramuniati et al., 2024). The vitality of the Sundanese language in Cianjur City is declining, particularly in terms of intergenerational transmission. However, it retains potential in areas such as new media, literacy, and documentation. Enhancing the vitality of the Sundanese language necessitates strengthening intergenerational transmission through increased usage within families, the promotion of language learning in schools and communities, and the development of teaching materials and broader literacy initiatives (Kurniawati et al., 2021).

These studies underscore the necessity of an integrated approach to assessing and preserving minority languages. The UNESCO framework offers systematic guidance for evaluating language status, while quantitative and qualitative methods can be employed to explore critical aspects of language vitality, including community attitudes, shifts in language usage domains, and the availability of educational resources. For instance, research by Rohmah dan Wijayanti (2023) by combining demographic surveys with in-depth interviews, this approach evaluates community attitudes toward linguistic minorities in Indonesia. It not only offers a comprehensive understanding of a language's actual conditions but also informs the development of more effective intervention strategies.

This study aims to assess the vitality of the Gorontalo language by integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches within the framework of UNESCO's nine language vitality indicators. Through a comprehensive analysis of these indicators, the research seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing the language's sustainability. By building on the findings of prior studies, this study is expected to contribute significantly to the preservation of minority languages in the context of globalization.

METHOD

This research was conducted in the coastal area of Tomini Bay, encompassing Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency in Gorontalo Province. The study location was strategically selected due to the region's vulnerability to the potential extinction of the Gorontalo language. Intense language contact between local communities, migrants, and foreign tourists, particularly in coastal tourist destinations, is believed to significantly impact the use and sustainability of the Gorontalo language. Furthermore, the socio-cultural characteristics of this coastal region provide a crucial context for understanding the dynamics influencing the vitality of the Gorontalo language.

This study employs a purposive sampling technique to select respondents deemed relevant to the research objectives. Respondents were chosen based on specific criteria, including residence in the coastal area of Tomini Bay, a minimum age of 15 years, and proficiency in the Gorontalo language, both active and passive. Additionally, demographic diversity—such as variations in age, gender, and education level—was considered to ensure the data accurately reflect the characteristics of coastal communities. A total of 155 respondents were selected, representing a sufficient sample size to provide a comprehensive understanding of the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the region. To complement the data collected from the community, interviews were conducted with indigenous leaders, government officials, and language practitioners, offering institutional and cultural perspectives to enrich the study's findings. Data collection in this study was carried out using a survey method. According to Wiseman and Aron (1970) surveys are defined as a method for collecting and analyzing social data through the use of highly structured and detailed interviews or questionnaires. The primary objective of a survey

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***Ethical considerations and limitations of the study are not explicitly addressed.

is to gather information from a large number of respondents who are deemed representative of a specific population.

In this study, the survey method was employed to investigate the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay. Data were collected through a combination of questionnaires, observations, and interviews, providing a comprehensive understanding of the language's current status and usage dynamics. The survey in this study is based on nine factors formulated by UNESCO's Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages to assess language vitality. These factors include intergenerational language transmission, which measures the extent to which a language is passed from one generation to the next; the absolute number of speakers, indicating the total number of users; the proportion of speakers within the population, reflecting the percentage of users in the community; shifting domains of language use, which evaluates the variety of social contexts in which the language is utilized; response to new domains and media, assessing the language's adaptability to technology and digital platforms; availability of educational and literacy materials, such as textbooks and dictionaries; government and institutional attitudes and policies, including the language's official status; community attitudes toward their language, reflecting the level of appreciation and value assigned by the community; and the amount and quality of language documentation, which examines the extent to which the language has been recorded in written, audio, or video formats. These nine factors were incorporated into a questionnaire using a rating scale from 0 to 5, providing a quantifiable assessment of the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay. This framework also serves as a foundation for strategic analyses aimed at language preservation.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the research approach, this study employed a combination of survey, observation, and interview methods. Data from observations and interviews complement the data obtained from the survey. Contributing to a more robust and nuanced analysis. A series of formal and informal interviews were conducted with participants to gather detailed information about their biographical and linguistic backgrounds, language use in various social contexts, and attitudes toward the Gorontalo language. These interviews were specifically designed to capture dimensions not fully addressed through surveys, such as individual perceptions and patterns of language use in specific contexts. Observations further enriched the dataset by allowing researchers to directly observe language use in natural settings, offering critical context to validate and enhance the survey findings. All collected data were analyzed using UNESCO's nine language vitality criteria, as outlined during the UNESCO Expert Meeting in March 2003. By integrating these methodologies, the study provided a comprehensive assessment of the vitality of the Gorontalo language and ensured the reliability and depth of its findings (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Lewis, 2009).

Data analysis in this study employed a quantitative approach complemented by qualitative analysis to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the research findings. According to Mahsun (2011), Data analysis is the process of classifying, grouping, and equalizing similar data, as well as separating and grouping different data. Data analysis was carried out quantitatively. Technically, quantitative data analysis includes (1) describing the analysis techniques used, including descriptive statistics in the form of averages and percentages, (2) presenting the results of the analysis in the form of tables, histograms, bar charts, line charts, or other relevant diagrams, (3) analyzing percentages based on histograms obtained from research instruments, (4) providing interpretations of descriptive statistical data, which are generally in the form of averages and percentages, and (5) supplementing data analysis with interviews to understand the problems revealed in the research (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2022). This approach aligns with Creswell's (2014) perspective, which emphasizes that quantitative data analysis involves organizing data, conducting statistical analyses, and interpreting results to address research questions and test hypotheses. Creswell also underscores the importance of presenting

data in various visual formats, such as tables and diagrams, to enhance reader comprehension. Furthermore, Creswell advocates supplementing statistical data with qualitative methods, such as interviews, to provide deeper contextual insights into the study’s findings. This study adopts this principle, integrating Mahsun’s (2011) and Creswell’s (2014) steps for data analysis. By combining these quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the analysis not only yields measurable data but also offers a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

RESULT

KEY FACTORS IN LANGUAGE USE

INTERGENERATIONAL LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION

Intergenerational language transmission is an essential factor in the sustainability of a language because it involves the inheritance of language from the older generation to the younger generation through daily interactions and educational institutions. If the regional language is not used between parents and children, language skills will decrease, threatening the continuity of the language. Therefore, intergenerational transmission is a significant benchmark of language vitality, where well-passed languages are more resistant to the threat of extinction than those that fail to be transmitted.

TABEL 1. Factor 1: Intergenerational Language Transmission

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Speaker Population	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	There exists no speaker	0.65%
1	Critically endangered	The language is used mainly by very few speakers of the great-grandparental generation.	3.87%
2	Severely endangered	The language is used mainly by the grandparental generation and up	9.03%
3	Definitively endangered	The language is used mainly by the parental generation and up	51.61%
4	Unsafe	The language is used by some children in all domains; all children in limited domains use it.	8.39%
5	Safe	The language is used by all ages, from children up.	26.45%

The survey results showed that the transmission of the Gorontalo language between generations was at level 3, indicating a decline, with the majority of respondents (51.61%) reporting that the elderly and elderly generations mostly used this language. The gap in transmission, especially among the younger generation, risks accelerating the extinction of these languages if there are no intensive revitalization efforts. Therefore, conservation strategies that target children and vulnerable areas are urgently needed, such as integrating the Gorontalo language into formal education and increasing access to learning materials.

THE ABSOLUTE NUMBER OF SPEAKERS

The absolute number of speakers is an essential indicator in assessing the vitality of a language because the more native speakers there are, the greater the chances of the language surviving.

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This indicator covers all age groups and language use in various social, cultural, and economic contexts. The decline in speakers, especially among the younger generation, increases the risk of language extinction. This factor is not assessed by scale but rather by the actual number of speakers in the community, with small populations more vulnerable to threats. While the number of speakers is essential, other factors must also be considered to ensure the preservation of the language.

POPULATION SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION

Tabel 3.2 Jumlah Penduduk menurut Kabupaten/Kota, Daerah Perkotaan/Pendesaan, dan Jenis Kelamin
Population by Regency/Municipality, Urban/Rural Area and Sex

Kabupaten/Kota Regency/Municipality	Daerah Perkotaan (Urban)			Daerah Perdesaan (Rural)			Daerah Perkotaan Perdesaan (Urban-Rural)		
	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Kabupaten Regency									
Besilimo	15 424	12 118	27 542	56 207	55 633	111 840	72 715	72 771	145 486
Corontalo	79 933	83 606	163 539	120 710	114 513	235 223	200 489	198 119	398 608
Pohuwato	19 805	25 886	45 691	56 034	52 662	108 696	73 938	73 331	147 269
Bone Bolango	32 310	34 878	67 188	17 240	49 574	66 814	83 530	87 652	171 182
Corontalo Utara	10 328	11 140	21 468	33 317	33 938	67 255	43 815	47 949	91 764
Kota/Municipality									
Corontalo	97 218	98 335	195 553	3 028	2 972	6 000	109 043	101 207	210 250
CORONTALO	255 124	263 979	519 103	146 481	137 185	283 666	233 587	229 906	463 493

FIGURE 1. Number of Population as a result of the 2020 population census long form

PENDIDIKAN

Tabel 6.4 Jumlah Penduduk Berumur 5 Tahun ke Atas Menurut Kabupaten/Kota, Bahasa Pertama Kali Dikuasai, dan Jenis Kelamin
Population 5 Years of Age and Over by Regency/Municipality, First Language Spoken, and Sex

Kabupaten/Kota Regency/Municipality	Bahasa Indonesia/Bahasa Bahasa Daerah/Local Language			Bahasa yang Pertama Dikuasai (First Language Spoken)			Bahasa Asing/Foreign Language		
	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Kabupaten Regency									
Besilimo	51 758	50 587	102 345	17 521	15 782	33 303	-	-	-
Corontalo	133 015	133 057	266 072	51 258	49 362	100 620	5	-	5
Pohuwato	55 055	53 525	108 580	14 475	13 548	28 023	-	-	-
Bone Bolango	66 341	65 208	131 549	9 849	9 400	19 249	-	-	-
Corontalo Utara	50 797	49 597	100 394	9 557	9 230	18 787	-	-	-
Kota/Municipality									
Corontalo	87 038	88 735	175 773	4 437	4 406	8 843	11	-	11
CORONTALO	444 062	440 908	884 970	107 081	101 967	209 048	16	-	16

FIGURE2. Data on the Number of Speakers from the 2020 Population Census Long Form

According to the UNESCO LVE framework, the data shows that the number of regional language speakers in Gorontalo and Bone Bolango Regencies reflects the "Vulnerable" condition. Gorontalo Regency has 100,560 regional language speakers (30.51% of the total Population), while Bone Bolango Regency only has 19,040 speakers (11.45%). With a total of 119,600 speakers from a combined Population of 495,776 people, the use of regional languages is still significant but vulnerable to extinction, especially in Bone Bolango. Urban areas face a faster decline in language use due to the dominance of national and foreign languages. To maintain the vitality of the language, a continuous revitalization program is needed, primarily through bilingual education and local Government policy support.

THE PROPORTION OF SPEAKERS IN THE TOTAL POPULATION

The proportion of speakers in the total population is a critical indicator in assessing the vitality of a language because the more significant the proportion of speakers, the higher the vitality of the language. If only a tiny portion of the population speaks the language, this indicates a decline in use and the threat of extinction, especially if the dominant language replaces the role of the local language. Understanding this proportion is essential for determining the urgency of language

preservation and revitalization, as this factor reflects the percentage of target language users in the context of the overall population.

TABLE 2. Factor 3: The Proportion of Speakers in the Total Population

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Proportion of Speakers	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	None speak the language	1.29%
1	Critically endangered	Very few speak the language.	21.29%
2	Severely endangered	The majority speak the language.	20.00%
3	Definitively endangered	A majority speak the language	25.16%
4	Unsafe	Nearly all speak the language.	21.29%
5	Unsafe	All speak the language.	10.97%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay show that the highest level of the use of the Gorontalo language is in the category of "Experiencing Decline," with 25.16% of respondents reporting that most of the population still uses this language. Although the use of the Gorontalo language is still relatively common in most regions, the decline is noticeable, especially in formal use and among the younger generation. This shows that although the Gorontalo language has not yet reached a critical condition, signs of deterioration have begun to be seen, so more intensive preservation measures are needed.

TRENDS IN EXISTING LANGUAGE DOMAINS

Trends in language use in various domains of life, such as home, school, workplace, and media, are essential indicators of language vitality. If the language is only used at home or among the elderly, while other languages dominate in the formal realm, such as schools and the media, this indicates a decline in use. In contrast, the widespread use of language across various domains shows good vitality.

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TABLE 3. Factor 4: Trends in Existing Language Domains

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Domains and Functions	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	The language is not used in any domain and for any function.	0.00%
1	Minimal domains	The language is used only in a restricted domain and for a few functions.	18.71%
2	Limited or formal domains	The language is used in limited social domains and for several functions	10.97%
3	Dwindling domains	The language is used in home domains and for many functions, but the dominant language begins to penetrate even home domains.	23.23%
4	Multilingual parity	Two or more languages may be used in most social domains and for most functions.	22.58%
5	Universal use	The language is used in all domains and for all functions	24.52%

The results of the survey on the vitality of the Gorontalo language in Tomini Bay based on Factor

4: Trends in Language Domain showed that the highest respondents were at level 5 as 24.52% of respondents reported the use of Gorontalo language in all regions and social functions, which reflects the community that is still strong in maintaining this language in the formal and informal realms. However, a downward trend was seen, with 23.23% of respondents reporting that this language was limited to home, and 22.58% of respondents reported the joint use of Gorontalo and other languages, reflecting the situation of diglossia. A further downward trend was reported by 18.71% of respondents who only used this language in limited situations, indicating that the Gorontalo language faces significant challenges under the dominance of Indonesian.

RESPONDING TO NEW DOMAINS AND MEDIA

In the digital era, new media such as the internet, social media, and digital applications provide opportunities and challenges for the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay area. While this media can be used to preserve language through digital content, the dominance of national and foreign languages threatens the use of the Gorontalo language, especially among the younger generation.

TABLE 4. Factor 5 : Responding to New Domains and Media

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	New Domains and Media Accepted by the Endangered Language	Percentage of Respondents
0	Inactive	The language is not used in any new domains.	1.94%
1	Minimal	The language is used in only a few new domains	31.61%
2	Coping	The language is used in some new domains.	21.29%
3	Receptive	The language is used in many domains.	14.19%
4	Robust/active	The language is used in most new domains..	18.71%
5	Dynamic	The language is used in all new domains.	12.26%

The Gorontalo language vitality survey results showed that the highest response was at level 1, with 31.61% of respondents reporting that adapting the Gorontalo language in the region and new media was very limited. This language is only used in a few new contexts, such as digital media or work environments, but it is not yet widespread. This level 1 indicates that the use of the Gorontalo language in dealing with technological developments is still minimal, so there is a risk that this language will not be able to compete in the digital space.

MATERIALS FOR LANGUAGE AND LITERACY EDUCATION

Language education and literacy are essential in preserving the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay. The development of exciting and curriculum-appropriate learning materials, both formal and informal, is urgently needed so that the younger generation can still learn this language. The material must cover various levels, from basic to advanced, and use print, digital, and audiovisual media. Interactive textbooks, dictionaries, folklore, and online platforms will help expand the range of learning.

TABEL 5. Faktor 6: Materials for Language and Literacy Education

Grade	Accessibility of Written Materials	Percentage of Respondents
0	No orthography is available to the community.	9.03%
1	A practical orthography is known to the community, and some material is being written.	12.26%

2	Written materials exist, but they may only be helpful for some community members; for others, they may have a symbolic significance. Literacy education in the language is not a part of the school curriculum.	18.71%
3	Written materials exist, and children may be exposed to the written form at school. Literacy is not promoted through print media.	27.74%
4	Written materials exist, and at school, children are developing literacy in the language. Writing in the language is not used in administration.	14.84%
5	There is an established orthography literacy tradition with grammar, dictionaries, texts, literature, and everyday media. Writing in the language is used in administration and education.	17.42%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that in Factor 6: Materials for Language and Literacy Education, the highest response was at level 3, with 27.74% of respondents reporting that written materials were available and children were exposed to the Gorontalo language in schools, but literacy in this language has not been widely promoted. This indicates that despite efforts to introduce the Gorontalo language in written form, its spread in the educational environment is still limited. Therefore, more significant efforts are needed to integrate the Gorontalo language into the curriculum and expand the availability of literacy materials.

LANGUAGE POLICY, ATTITUDES, AND URGENCY OF DOCUMENTATION

ATTITUDES AND POLICIES OF GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL LANGUAGE, INCLUDING OFFICIAL STATUS AND USE

The government's language policy greatly influenced the use of the Gorontalo language, especially in Tomini Bay. Despite recognising the importance of regional languages, their implementation at the local level is often limited, with official use of the Gorontalo language generally only in cultural events and informal communication. More substantial support is needed in education and documentation, such as dictionary development and research projects, to keep the language alive amid the dominance of national and foreign languages.

TABLE 6. Factor 7: Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use

Grade	Degree of Support	Deskripsi	Percentage of Respondents
0	Prohibition	Minority languages are prohibited.	1.29%
1	Forced assimilation	The dominant language is the sole official language, while nondominant languages are neither recognized nor protected.	5.81%
2	Active assimilation	Government encourages assimilation to the dominant language. There is no protection for minority languages.	3.87%
3	Passive assimilation	Noexplicit policy exists for minority languages; the dominant language prevails in the public domain.	9.68%
4	Differentiated support	Minority languages are protected primarily as the language of the private domains. The use of the language is prestigious..	28.39%
5	Equal support	All languages are protected.	50.97%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that the government's support for the Gorontalo language was at level 5, with 50.97% of respondents reporting that the language was protected on an equal footing with other languages. Despite the inclusive policy, the use of the Gorontalo language is still more robust in the private sphere than in the public. As many as 28.39% of respondents noted support for the Gorontalo language in the local community, but this language has not been fully recognized as an official language in the formal realm. Challenges remain in strengthening policies that support the use of the Gorontalo language in the public and institutional spheres to ensure its preservation.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THEIR OWN LANGUAGE

The community's attitude towards the Gorontalo language in Tomini Bay significantly affects the continuity and vitality of the language. The community is divided into two groups: those firmly committed to preserving and using the Gorontalo language in their daily lives and cultural events and those more likely to use national or foreign languages, especially in education and employment. The first group sees the Gorontalo language as an essential ethnic identity, while the second group, especially the younger generation, prefers Indonesian or English, which is considered more relevant in the modern context.

TABLE 7. Faktor 8: Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language

Grade	Deskripsi	Percentage of Respondents
0	No one cares if the language is lost; all prefer to use a dominant language	2.58%
1	Only a few members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	9.03%
2	Some members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	10.32%
3	Many members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	19.35%
4	Most members support language maintenance.	31.61%
5	All members value their language and wish to see it promoted	27.10%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that in Factor 8: Community Members' Attitudes towards Their Language, the highest response was at level 4, with 31.61% of respondents reporting strong support from most of the community for the maintenance of the Gorontalo language. This shows a positive awareness of the importance of language as a cultural identity.

AMOUNT AND QUALITY OF DOCUMENTATION

The quantity and quality of Gorontalo language documentation are significant in efforts to preserve and revitalize the Tomini Bay area, but they are still limited. Existing documentation, such as primary dictionaries and traditional texts, does not cover all aspects of language, including vocabulary and the use of language in cultural contexts. The quality of documentation is also not optimal, with many

sources that are difficult to access, and most are still in print format. The improvement of digital-based documentation is very urgent, and linguists and local communities should be involved in collecting, compiling, and disseminating Gorontalo language materials to remain relevant in the era of globalization.

TABLE 8. Factor 9: Amount and Quality of Documentation.

Tingkat	Label	Deskripsi	Persentasi
0	Undocumented	Nomaterial exists.	5.16%
1	Inadequate	Only a few grammatical sketches, short word lists, and fragmentary texts. Audio and video recordings do not exist, are unusable, or are entirely unannotated.	18.71%
2	Fragmentary	Some grammatical sketches, word lists, and texts are helpful for limited linguistic research but with inadequate coverage. Audio and video recordings may be of varying quality, with or without annotation.	18.06%
3	Fair	There may be adequate or sufficient grammar, dictionaries, and texts, but no everyday media; audio and video recordings may exist in varying quality or degree of annotation.	25.81%
4	Good	There is one good grammar and several adequate grammars, dictionaries, texts, literature, and occasionally updated everyday media; adequate annotated high-quality audio and video recordings.	14.84%
5	Superlative	There are comprehensive grammar and dictionaries, extensive texts; and a constant flow of language materials. Abundant annotated high-quality audio and video recordings exist.	17.42%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that the documentation of this language was at level 3, with 25.81% of respondents reporting that the existing documentation was sufficient to support the research. However, the quality of multimedia and annotation was still limited. Although there are grammar, dictionaries, and some texts, the coverage and quality of audio-visual recordings are still minimal.

DISCUSSION

Based on the UNESCO-LVE framework, a thorough evaluation of the vitality status of a language must consider nine factors in an integrated manner. Table 9 presents a combined scale for all factors, which describes the overall vitality level of the Gorontalo language used in the Tomini Bay Area, Gorontalo Province. (1) intergenerational language transmission, (2) the absolute number of speakers, (3) the proportion of speakers in the total population, (4) trends in existing language domains, (5) Responding to New Domains and Media, (6) Materials for Language and Literacy Education, (7) Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use, (8) Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language, (9) Amount and Quality of Documentation

TABLE 9. Gorontalo Language Vitality Assessment Status

Factor	The Vitality of the Gorontalo Language
1. intergenerational language transmission	3
2. the absolute number of speakers	4
3. the proportion of speakers in the total population	3
4. trends in existing language domains	5

Commented [A8]: ***The discussion is insightful but occasionally shifts toward general observations rather than maintaining a focus on the specific case of the Gorontalo language.

*** A deeper exploration of the role of globalization and urbanization in shaping language attitudes would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing language use and vitality.

5. Responding to New Domains and Media	1
6. Materials for Language and Literacy Education	3
7. Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use	5
8. Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language	4
9. Amount and Quality of Documentation	3
Rata-Rata Vitalitas Bahasa Gorontalo	3.44

According to Dwyer's formulation of language vitality, the following are the categories that are usually used to determine language status based on vitality scores:

1. 0 - 1.4 : Critically endangered
2. 1.5 - 2.9 : Endangered
3. 3.0 - 3.9 : Vulnerable
4. 4.0 - 5.0 : Stable or safe

With an average score of 3.44, the vitality of the Gorontalo language is included in the vulnerable category. This suggests that although the language is still in use, certain factors could threaten its future viability.

The results of the survey on the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay area based on the UNESCO-LVE framework show several essential factors that affect the sustainability of this language. First, the transmission of language between generations is at level 3, indicating a decrease in the use of language among the younger generation, while the dominance of Indonesian and foreign languages in education and daily life is increasing. The older generation tends to speak the Gorontalo language to children no longer, instead encouraging their children to abandon the tribal language in order to achieve higher education and success, resulting in the Gorontalo language being endangered (Firdaus, 2018; Purwaka et al., 2020). The viability of a language is greatly influenced by the social stability of its speaking community and whether the language is still passed on to the younger generation (Pakendorf, 2024). The transmission of language between generations helps in describing the vitality status of a language (Hamzah et al., 2024).

The absolute number of speakers reaching 119,600 indicates a considerable number, but the proportion of speakers in the total population is starting to decline. Language extinctions are often associated with languages that have few speakers. As Krauss states (1992), languages with fewer than 100,000 speakers can potentially become extinct. The use of the Gorontalo language in the social domain is at level 5, which indicates that this language is still maintained in local traditions and culture, although its use in the formal realm, such as government and education is limited. This is as well as research Fitriyani & Subiyanto (2021), which shows that the Gorontalo language is often used in religious and cultural activities, such as in ritual communication in the Dikili tradition. However, the response to the new media is at level 1, which shows the low adaptation of the Gorontalo language on digital platforms and modern technology, weakening its position among the younger generation.

In the field of education and literacy, level 3 shows that efforts to include the Gorontalo language in the education system are still limited, with a lack of comprehensive teaching materials. The development of exciting and relevant local teaching materials in the Gorontalo language is critical to increasing the use of the Gorontalo language in formal education and strengthening its vitality (Bay et al., 2018). The government's attitude is at level 5, indicating local government support for language preservation, although policy implementation still needs

improvement. The community's attitude is at level 4, with pride in the language, especially among the older generation, although the younger generation is starting to be less interested.

Gorontalo language documentation is at level 3, with existing documentation efforts that are still limited in terms of quality and accessibility. The development of two-way translator applications and dictionaries of traditional terms based on computational linguistics shows that technology can increase the quantity and quality of Gorontalo language documentation, facilitate access to learning, and support language preservation in the digital era. This innovation strengthens the vitality of the language by providing relevant documentation accessible to the broader community, including the younger generation (Dako et al., 2015, 2017; Lihawa et al., 2016). The presence of language in the realm of technology can show vitality and protect and promote the language for young speakers (Cunliffe, 2024; Wood, 2024).

The study also shows that the UNESCO-LVE framework provides a comprehensive evaluation of the vitality of the Gorontalo language. However, further studies are needed, especially in multiethnic and urban areas, to understand the dynamics of the Gorontalo language in different socioeconomic contexts. Language vitality indicators must clearly explain how changes in people's attitudes towards a language occur. Suppose this indicator is not able to provide a strong explanation for the change in language attitudes in society. In that case, the measurement or analysis of language vitality will only be an academic activity that does not have a natural or practical impact on language preservation efforts (Gobbo, 2021). The assessment of the vitality of languages has been of particular concern for the past 20 years, spearheaded by UNESCO, which affirms that linguistic diversity is a valuable part of human heritage and that the loss of languages is a loss to all of humanity (Webster, 2022). Therefore, this research is part of an effort to preserve the endangered Gorontalo language, especially in the coastal area of the Tomini Bay Area, Gorontalo Province.

CONCLUSION

The vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay, especially Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency, is in a vulnerable status with an average vitality value of 3.44, which shows that although the language is still used, there is a threat to its continuity, especially among the younger generation. The main factors contributing to this vulnerability are the decline in intergenerational transmission and the dominance of the Indonesian language in the educational and social domains. Although the government and the community have made efforts to preserve the language through education and cultural activities, challenges such as limited resources, documentation, and the younger generation's interests still hinder conservation efforts. Stronger cooperation between the government, communities, and educational institutions is urgently needed to strengthen the vitality of the Gorontalo language.

In facing this challenge, collaborative efforts are needed between the government, the community, and educational institutions to strengthen language transmission to the younger generation and expand the use of Gorontalo language in digital media. The development of more comprehensive learning materials, as well as language documentation in digital form, will be an essential step in maintaining the sustainability of the Gorontalo language.

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Commented [A9]: ***The conclusion largely reiterates points from the results and discussion without offering new insights or actionable recommendations.

***To strengthen its impact: consider emphasizing how the findings can directly inform policy decisions or guide community-driven initiatives aimed at preserving and revitalizing the language.

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Title of the Article: Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regional Language Extinction

Strengths:

- 1. Relevance to GEMA Online Journal's Focus:**
 - The article aligns well with GEMA Online Journal's emphasis on language studies, particularly on sociolinguistics and language preservation. The topic of regional language vitality and endangerment falls within the journal's interest.
- 2. Comprehensive Methodology:**
 - The study effectively applies UNESCO's nine vitality indicators to assess the Gorontalo language. This structured approach ensures a thorough evaluation of language endangerment.
 - A mixed-methods approach (quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews) strengthens the study's reliability and depth.
- 3. Significant Contribution to Language Studies:**
 - The study highlights the urgency of preserving minority languages and proposes practical interventions such as digital learning materials.
 - It provides a regional perspective, contributing to the broader discussion on language maintenance in multilingual societies.
- 4. Use of Empirical Data:**
 - The research is data-driven, presenting statistics and tables to support findings. The use of 155 respondents provides a reasonable sample size for analysis.
 - The study incorporates population census data to contextualize language use trends, making the findings more robust.

Weaknesses:

- 1. Limited Theoretical Engagement:**
 - While the study references key works on language vitality, there is little critical engagement with alternative theoretical models of language endangerment beyond UNESCO's framework. A comparison with other models (e.g., EGIDS, Fishman's GIDS) would enhance the discussion.
- 2. Lack of Longitudinal Data:**
 - The study provides a snapshot of language vitality but lacks historical comparisons. Including older data or tracking language shift over time would strengthen the conclusions.
- 3. Limited Discussion on Policy Implementation:**
 - Although the study mentions government and institutional support, it does not delve deeply into policy mechanisms or legislative frameworks that could sustain language revitalization efforts.
- 4. Overreliance on Quantitative Findings:**
 - The qualitative aspects of language attitudes and identity could be more developed. While the study presents numerical data on intergenerational transmission, it lacks in-depth narratives from language users that would illustrate the social and emotional factors influencing language shift.

5. Suggestions for Future Research:

- Future research should investigate the impact of globalization and digitalization on Gorontalo language use.
- A comparative study with other endangered regional languages in Indonesia could provide a broader understanding of language vitality trends.

**6. Bukti Konfirmasi Hasil Perbaikan atas Review
Pertama
(4 Maret 2025)**

A. Bukti Konfirmasi Hasil Perbaikan atas Review Pertama

7/7/25, 11:48 PM

Email Universitas Negeri Gorontalo - Submission of Revised Manuscript – Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regi...



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Submission of Revised Manuscript – Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regional Language Extinction

Asna Ntelu <asna.ntelu@ung.ac.id>

4 Maret 2025 pukul 21.41

Kepada: "Dr. Anis Nadiyah Che Abdul Rahman" <aniscar@ukm.edu.my>

Dear Dr. Anis Nadiyah Che Abdul Rahman,

I hope this email finds you well.

Following the review process, I have revised my manuscript titled "**Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regional Language Extinction**" in accordance with the comments and suggestions provided by both reviewers. The revisions address the key concerns highlighted in their feedback to enhance the quality and clarity of this study.

I am attaching the revised manuscript along with my responses to the reviewers' comments, detailing the specific changes made. Please let me know if any further modifications are required.

I sincerely appreciate the valuable insights and constructive feedback from the reviewers and editorial team. I hope this revised version meets the journal's expectations.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your response.

Best regards,
Asna Ntelu, et al.

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Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regional Language Extinction

ABSTRACT

Language vitality reflects the sustainability of a language within society, influenced by factors such as status, demographics, and institutional support. This study assesses the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Teluk Tomini, which faces the risk of extinction due to socio-cultural shifts and linguistic dominance. A survey method was employed, applying UNESCO's nine vitality indicators: (1) intergenerational transmission, (2) absolute number of speakers, (3) proportion of speakers within the population, (4) shifts in language usage domains, (5) response to new domains and media, (6) availability of educational and literacy materials, (7) government and institutional attitudes and policies, (8) community attitudes toward their language, and (9) amount and quality of documentation. Data were collected from 155 respondents in Gorontalo and Bone Bolango regencies through questionnaires, observations, and interviews, and analyzed quantitatively. The findings classify the Gorontalo language as "Vulnerable," with an average vitality score of 3.44. While still in use in some areas, transmission to younger generations is declining due to the dominance of Indonesian in education and social domains. Preservation efforts, such as cultural programs and educational initiatives, exist but are limited by resource constraints, inadequate documentation, and low youth engagement. This study highlights the urgent need for collaboration between governments, educational institutions, and local communities to enhance language revitalization efforts. Integrating digital learning materials is proposed as an innovative approach to ensuring the sustainability of the Gorontalo language for future generations.

Keywords: Gorontalo language, language vitality; language endangerment; Tomini Bay

INTRODUCTION

The Gorontalo language serves as a fundamental means of communication, a cultural pillar, and an identity marker for the Gorontalo people (Baruadi, 2013). Beyond its role in daily interactions, it contributes to the enrichment of the Indonesian language and national cultural heritage (Olii, 2021). However, linguistic shifts due to migration and interethnic interactions have gradually diminished its use. The increasing presence of non-native speakers and the preference for Indonesian as the dominant language in education and public spaces have accelerated this decline. Consequently, the Language Development Agency of the Ministry of Education and Culture has classified the Gorontalo language as endangered (Usman, 2008; Zakaria et al., 2021). Data on language vitality from 2019 indicate that Gorontalo is spoken primarily by individuals aged 20 and above, similar to 24 other regional languages classified as endangered across 10 provinces in Indonesia (Purwaka et al., 2020). Additionally, the 2020 Linguistic Statistics report identifies Gorontalo as one of 56 regional languages in Indonesia that are classified as vulnerable to critically endangered (Rahardini & Niswah, 2022).

The Gorontalo language is increasingly threatened by the dominance of Indonesian and other ethnic languages, such as Bajo, Javanese, and Bugis-Makassar. Additionally, foreign languages like English are gaining prominence due to globalization and migration. Historically, Gorontalo has been influenced by Arabic, Portuguese, Dutch, and Malay (Djou et al., 2023). However, in recent decades, the growing preference for Indonesian in formal education and employment has marginalized the use of Gorontalo. Many parents in the Tomini Bay Coastal Region encourage their children to prioritize Indonesian over Gorontalo to facilitate higher

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Commented [A2R1]: Thank you for your insightful feedback. We have revised the abstract to improve clarity, simplify sentence structures, and reduce redundancy, ensuring better readability and coherence.

Commented [A3]: Explicitly stating the research problem/objective would increase the readability of the paper.

Commented [A4R3]: Thank you for your suggestion. We have explicitly stated the research problem and objectives in the introduction to enhance readability and provide a clearer focus for the study.

Commented [A5]: *** Statement on the importance of local languages could be more concise to avoid repetition, allowing the narrative to remain focused and impactful. *** Provide a clearer distinction between global and local contexts would enhance the argument and create a more balanced perspective.

Commented [A6R5]: Thank you for your valuable feedback. We have refined the statement on the importance of local languages to be more concise and have clarified the distinction between global and local contexts to enhance the argument and create a more balanced perspective.

education and economic success (Firdaus, 2018). The diminishing use of Gorontalo in everyday life jeopardizes both linguistic continuity and the transmission of cultural identity and traditional knowledge. Therefore, assessing its vitality is imperative for formulating effective language preservation strategies.

The issue of language endangerment extends beyond the local context, as linguistic shifts and cultural assimilation are global phenomena. Language preservation is critical for maintaining linguistic diversity and safeguarding cultural heritage. Several strategic measures, such as revitalization programs, educational policies, and digital language documentation, have been proposed to support endangered languages (Ntelu et al., 2022; Ntelu & Djou, 2017). However, while language endangerment is a widespread issue, the sociolinguistic context of Gorontalo presents distinct challenges that require region-specific interventions. Fishman (1972) highlights the importance of measuring language vitality based on factors such as speaker population, diversity of use, adaptability, and relevance in social and cultural contexts (Medeiros, 2017). Applying such frameworks enables researchers to develop sustainable revitalization plans that address the unique challenges faced by the Gorontalo language (Gobbo, 2021). In the study of language vitality, researchers used a unique measuring tool to assess the condition of the language among its speakers, which later determined the status of the language in several categories (Zhou & Ang, 2024).

Several studies have explored language vitality in various regions, providing valuable insights into language maintenance and endangerment. Benu (2023) found that local languages in Kupang City maintain significant vitality due to their visibility in public domains, such as street signs and official documents. Firdaus (2018) noted that while the Suwawa-Gorontalo language remains stable, it is still at risk of decline due to diminishing intergenerational transmission. Ibrahim (2011) emphasized that language vitality mapping plays a crucial role in determining the linguistic status of indigenous communities in Indonesia. Similarly, Marica dan Duwila ((2017) classified the vitality status of the Ternate language as concerning, while Aritonang (2016) reported a decline in the sustainability of the Talondo language based on sociolinguistic indicators such as gender, age, education, and occupation.

Given these challenges, this study aims to assess the current vitality of the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay Coastal Area, particularly in Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency. The research seeks to examine key sociolinguistic factors influencing language transmission, usage domains, and community attitudes toward language preservation. By employing UNESCO's nine vitality indicators, this study provides empirical data to support the development of language preservation efforts and inform policy recommendations to mitigate further language endangerment. The assessment of language vitality is essential for identifying intervention strategies that can enhance linguistic sustainability and cultural resilience within Gorontalo-speaking communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language vitality reflects a language's ability to maintain its use within a community and is influenced by three key factors: status, demographics, and institutional support (Dattamajumdar, 2020; Wickström, 2023). Understanding language vitality is essential for developing effective preservation strategies and reinforcing the identity of speaker communities. Additionally, language vitality plays a crucial role in shaping intervention policies aimed at preserving and promoting minority or endangered languages (Clément & Norton, 2021; Coluzzi et al., 2013). The survival of a language depends not only on the number of speakers but also on institutional support and social recognition (Ding, 2023; Landry et al., 2022). In multilingual societies, language vitality is closely tied to patterns of use, preference, intergenerational transmission, and

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***Summarizing previous studies more succinctly would help keep the spotlight on the Gorontalo language.

***Placing greater emphasis on how this study builds on or differs from prior research would provide a clearer context and highlight its unique contributions.

Commented [A8R7]: Thank you for your insightful feedback. We have refined the discussion by summarizing previous studies more concisely and emphasizing the study's unique contributions, ensuring a clearer focus on the Gorontalo language.

broadly socio-cultural interactions (Moring et al., 2011; Rohmah & Wijyanti, 2023; Stern, 2017; Ying et al., 2015; Zabadi et al., 2023).

Grenoble and Whaley (2006) argue that a language exhibits high vitality when actively spoken across various social domains, including family, workplace, education, and interactions with outsiders. However, when a language is no longer used in these domains, its vitality declines. Holmes (2001) emphasizes that the survival of an ethnic language is more likely if its speakers reside in close-knit communities where the language remains dominant in key societal functions. Similarly, Pateda (1987) notes that language vitality is shaped by interactions in social domains, where more actively spoken languages tend to dominate. If a language is frequently used, it evolves; conversely, if it is rarely spoken, it risks being displaced by a more dominant language, ultimately leading to its extinction (Malabar, 2015).

Theoretical approaches to language vitality have evolved to provide frameworks for assessing linguistic sustainability. Theoretical approaches to language vitality have evolved to provide frameworks for assessing linguistic sustainability. Fishman (1991) introduced the Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS), which highlights intergenerational transmission as the primary determinant of a language's survival. The model consists of eight levels, where the lowest level represents languages spoken only by the elderly, with no transmission to younger generations, while the highest level indicates languages that remain active in education, media, and government. Building on this, Lewis and Simons (2009) expanded the model into the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS), incorporating additional factors such as the language's role in international communication and government policies. EGIDS categorizes languages across 13 levels, ranging from fully vibrant to extinct. In addition to GIDS and EGIDS, Dwyer (2011) introduced a quantitative model for assessing language vitality, focusing on nine key factors, including intergenerational transmission, absolute number of speakers, proportion of speakers within the population, domain loss, and language documentation. This model assigns numerical scores that classify languages into four main categories: critically endangered (0-1.4), endangered (1.5-2.9), vulnerable (3.0-3.9), and stable or safe (4.0-5.0). While this approach provides a systematic and data-driven assessment of language vitality, it does not fully account for social and policy-related factors that influence language sustainability.

Despite the diversity of available models, this study adopts UNESCO's framework as its primary analytical tool, as it offers a more comprehensive approach to assessing language vitality. Compared to EGIDS and Dwyer's model, which focus on classifying language endangerment levels, UNESCO's framework incorporates nine key indicators, including intergenerational transmission, government policies, community attitudes, and the availability of educational resources and documentation. This holistic perspective provides a broader understanding of the factors contributing to language sustainability, particularly in the context of the Gorontalo language, which faces challenges from national language dominance and globalization.

UNESCO has established a comprehensive framework for assessing language vitality, particularly for languages at risk of extinction. Developed by the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages in 2003, this framework consists of nine key indicators: intergenerational transmission, absolute number of speakers, proportion of speakers within the population, shifts in domains of language use, adaptability to new media, availability of educational and literacy materials, governmental policies and attitudes, community perceptions of their language, and the quality of language documentation. This framework has become a widely accepted standard for evaluating language status and guiding targeted preservation efforts (UNESCO, 2011). Recognized as a valuable tool, it has been extensively applied across various contexts to measure language vitality and formulate more effective language preservation strategies (Chen, 2023; Moseley, 2010).

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Research has demonstrated that UNESCO's framework provides valuable insights into language sustainability across different sociolinguistic settings. A study on the Temiar language in Malaysia found that its relatively strong vitality is attributed to a large speaker population and its function as a lingua franca (Hassan et al., 2015). Conversely, the Sihan language in Sarawak faces a high risk of extinction, as it fails to meet most of UNESCO's language vitality criteria (Mohamed & Hashim, 2012). Similarly, the Kensiu language in Malaysia highlights the significance of intergenerational transmission, as younger generations increasingly favor dominant languages (Hamzah et al., 2024). Research on the So language community in Thailand revealed varying levels of language vitality across villages, where external policy environments significantly influence language preservation efforts (Tehan & Markowski, 2017).

In the European context, the case of the Friuli language in Italy illustrates that legal recognition alone does not guarantee language continuity. Despite its official status, the declining number of young speakers and restricted usage in social domains indicate a gradual shift toward Italian (De Cia, 2021). Studies on the Malay language in North Sumatra indicate that its vitality is diminishing, categorized at level 3 (endangered), with a decreasing number of native speakers and a narrowing scope of usage. These findings underscore the need for improved educational materials and documentation to support the language's sustainability (Pramuniati et al., 2024). Similarly, research on the Sundanese language in Cianjur City shows a decline in intergenerational transmission, although the language still retains potential in digital media, literacy, and documentation. Strengthening the language's vitality requires increased usage within families, the promotion of language learning in schools, and broader literacy initiatives (Kurniawati et al., 2021).

The preservation of minority languages necessitates an integrated approach combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. Rohmah dan Wijayanti (2023) employed demographic surveys and in-depth interviews to assess community attitudes toward linguistic minorities in Indonesia. Their study highlights the effectiveness of mixed-method approaches in understanding and addressing language decline. Such a comprehensive approach is crucial for evaluating the sociolinguistic factors influencing language vitality and designing more effective intervention strategies tailored to specific linguistic contexts.

While previous research has explored language vitality across various contexts, studies on the Gorontalo language remain limited. This study expands on UNESCO's framework by integrating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to assess the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal region of Tomini Bay. Unlike prior studies that primarily focus on individual factors, this research provides a more comprehensive analysis by examining multiple dimensions affecting language sustainability. By addressing the specific sociolinguistic factors influencing the Gorontalo language, this study contributes to the broader discourse on minority language preservation and offers policy recommendations tailored to regional linguistic needs.

Additionally, this study seeks to bridge gaps in the existing literature by synthesizing findings from previous studies and contextualizing them within the Gorontalo-speaking community. By adopting an sociolinguistic approach, this research aims to provide an in-depth analysis of language vitality and inform strategies for revitalizing endangered languages amidst globalization and linguistic homogenization. The findings are expected to support the development of long-term language policies that enhance the sustainability of the Gorontalo language while preserving the region's linguistic and cultural heritage.

METHOD

This research was conducted in the coastal area of Tomini Bay, encompassing Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency in Gorontalo Province. The study location was strategically selected due to the region's vulnerability to the potential extinction of the Gorontalo language. Intense language contact between local communities, migrants, and foreign tourists, particularly in coastal tourist destinations, is believed to significantly impact the use and sustainability of the Gorontalo language. Furthermore, the socio-cultural characteristics of this coastal region provide a crucial context for understanding the dynamics influencing the vitality of the Gorontalo language.

This study employs a purposive sampling technique to select respondents deemed relevant to the research objectives. Respondents were chosen based on specific criteria, including residence in the coastal area of Tomini Bay, a minimum age of 15 years, and proficiency in the Gorontalo language, both active and passive. Additionally, demographic diversity—such as variations in age, gender, and education level—was considered to ensure the data accurately reflect the characteristics of coastal communities. A total of 155 respondents were selected, representing a sufficient sample size to provide a comprehensive understanding of the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the region. To complement the data collected from the community, interviews were conducted with indigenous leaders, government officials, and language practitioners, offering institutional and cultural perspectives to enrich the study's findings.

Data collection was conducted through surveys, observations, and interviews. Surveys, as defined by Wiseman and Aron (1970) are a method used to gather information from a group of individuals representing a specific population. In this study, the survey was designed based on UNESCO's nine language vitality indicators: (1) intergenerational transmission, (2) absolute number of speakers, (3) proportion of speakers within the population, (4) shifts in domains of language use, (5) response to new domains and media, (6) availability of educational and literacy materials, (7) government and institutional policies and attitudes, (8) community attitudes toward their language, and (9) amount and quality of language documentation. These indicators were incorporated into a questionnaire using a rating scale from 0 to 5, enabling a quantitative assessment of the vitality of the Gorontalo language. Observations were conducted to directly examine language use in natural settings, while interviews provided qualitative insights into personal experiences, language transmission, and cultural attitudes toward the Gorontalo language.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the research approach, this study employed a combination of survey, observation, and interview methods. Data from observations and interviews complement the data obtained from the survey. Contributing to a more robust and nuanced analysis. A series of formal and informal interviews were conducted with participants to gather detailed information about their biographical and linguistic backgrounds, language use in various social contexts, and attitudes toward the Gorontalo language. These interviews were specifically designed to capture dimensions not fully addressed through surveys, such as individual perceptions and patterns of language use in specific contexts. Observations further enriched the dataset by allowing researchers to directly observe language use in natural settings, offering critical context to validate and enhance the survey findings. All collected data were analyzed using UNESCO's nine language vitality criteria, as outlined during the UNESCO Expert Meeting in March 2003. By integrating these methodologies, the study provided a comprehensive assessment of the vitality of the Gorontalo language and ensured the reliability and depth of its findings (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Lewis, 2009).

Data analysis in this study employed a quantitative approach complemented by qualitative analysis to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the research findings. According to

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***Ethical considerations and limitations of the study are not explicitly addressed.

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Mahsun (2011), Data analysis is the process of classifying, grouping, and equalizing similar data, as well as separating and grouping different data. Data analysis was carried out quantitatively. Technically, quantitative data analysis includes (1) describing the analysis techniques used, including descriptive statistics in the form of averages and percentages, (2) presenting the results of the analysis in the form of tables, histograms, bar charts, line charts, or other relevant diagrams, (3) analyzing percentages based on statements obtained from research instruments, (4) providing interpretations of descriptive statistical data, which are generally in the form of averages and percentages, and (5) supplementing data analysis with interviews to understand the problems revealed in the research (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2022). This approach aligns with Creswell's (2014) perspective, which emphasizes that quantitative data analysis involves organizing data, conducting statistical analyses, and interpreting results to address research questions and test hypotheses. Creswell also underscores the importance of presenting data in various visual formats, such as tables and diagrams, to enhance reader comprehension. Furthermore, Creswell advocates supplementing statistical data with qualitative methods, such as interviews, to provide deeper contextual insights into the study's findings. This study adopts this principle, integrating Mahsun's (2011) and Creswell's (2014) steps for data analysis. By combining these quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the analysis not only yields measurable data but also offers a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

This study adheres to ethical research principles by ensuring informed consent from all respondents prior to data collection. Participants were provided with a clear explanation of the research objectives, the voluntary nature of their participation, and assurances regarding the confidentiality of their responses. Interviews and surveys were conducted with full respect for the respondents' cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Ethical approval was obtained in accordance with institutional guidelines for research involving human subjects.

This study has several limitations. First, while the sample provides a general overview of the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Teluk Tomini, broader generalization requires a larger dataset covering additional regions. Second, external factors such as migration, economic shifts, and technological advancements have not been explored in depth, necessitating further research to better understand their impact on the dynamics of Gorontalo language use.

RESULT

KEY FACTORS IN LANGUAGE USE

INTERGENERATIONAL LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION

Intergenerational language transmission is an essential factor in the sustainability of a language because it involves the inheritance of language from the older generation to the younger generation through daily interactions and educational institutions. If the regional language is not used between parents and children, language skills will decrease, threatening the continuity of the language. Therefore, intergenerational transmission is a significant benchmark of language vitality, where well-passed languages are more resistant to the threat of extinction than those that fail to be transmitted.

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TABEL 1. Factor 1: Intergenerational Language Transmission

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Speaker Population	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	There exists no speaker	0.65%
1	Critically endangered	The language is used mainly by very few speakers of the great-grandparental generation.	3.87%
2	Severely endangered	The language is used mainly by the grandparental generation and up	9.03%
3	Definitely endangered	The language is used mainly by the parental generation and up	51.61%
4	Unsafe	The language is used by some children in all domains; all children in limited domains use it.	8.39%
5	Safe	The language is used by all ages, from children up.	26.45%

The survey results showed that the transmission of the Gorontalo language between generations was at level 3, indicating a decline, with the majority of respondents (51.61%) reporting that the elderly and elderly generations mostly used this language. The gap in transmission, especially among the younger generation, risks accelerating the extinction of these languages if there are no intensive revitalization efforts. Therefore, conservation strategies that target children and vulnerable areas are urgently needed, such as integrating the Gorontalo language into formal education and increasing access to learning materials.

THE ABSOLUTE NUMBER OF SPEAKERS

The absolute number of speakers is an essential indicator in assessing the vitality of a language because the more native speakers there are, the greater the chances of the language surviving. This indicator covers all age groups and language use in various social, cultural, and economic contexts. The decline in speakers, especially among the younger generation, increases the risk of language extinction. This factor is not assessed by scale but rather by the actual number of speakers in the community, with small populations more vulnerable to threats. While the number of speakers is essential, other factors must also be considered to ensure the preservation of the language.

POPULATION SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION

Tabel 3.3 Jumlah Penduduk menurut Kabupaten/Kota, Daerah Perkotaan/Pendesaan, dan Jenis Kelamin
Population by Regency/Municipality, Urban/Rural Area and Sex

Kabupaten/Kota Regency/Municipality	Daerah Perkotaan (Urban)			Daerah Perdesaan (Rural)			Daerah Perkotaan Perdesaan (Urban Rural)		
	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total
(K)	(L)	(P)	(J)	(L)	(P)	(J)	(L)	(P)	(J)
Kabupaten/Regency									
Buana	15.454	15.118	31.572	50.301	50.533	100.834	75.715	72.771	148.486
Gorontalo	70.923	69.695	140.618	120.750	114.513	235.263	209.643	190.115	399.758
Malaka	19.925	20.886	40.811	54.534	52.662	107.196	73.539	73.330	146.869
Buru Ika	32.310	34.076	66.386	11.240	10.574	21.814	43.550	42.763	86.313
Gorontalo Utara	10.304	11.140	21.444	35.111	31.938	67.049	43.615	44.945	88.560
Kota/Municipality									
Gorontalo	27.018	30.335	57.353	3.522	2.972	6.494	100.043	101.207	201.250
GORONTALO	235.124	243.976	479.100	346.401	317.182	663.583	421.543	391.152	812.695

FIGURE 1. Number of Population as a result of the 2020 population census long form

PENDIDIKAN

Tabel 6.4 Jumlah Penduduk Berumur 5 Tahun ke Atas Menurut Kabupaten/Kota, Bahasa Pertama Kali Dikuasai, dan Jenis Kelamin
 Table 6.4 Population 5 Years of Age and Over by Regency/Municipality, First Language Spoken, and Sex

Kabupaten/Kota Regency/Municipality	Bahasa Indonesia/Bahasa Bahasa Daerah/Local Language			Bahasa yang Pertama Dikuasai / First Language Spoken			Bahasa Asing / Foreign Language		
	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Kabupaten/Regency									
Boalemo	51 756	50 887	102 644	17 521	15 782	33 302	-	-	-
Gorontalo	133 015	133 057	266 072	51 258	49 302	100 560	5	-	5
Pohuwato	55 055	53 525	108 580	14 475	13 548	28 024	-	-	-
Bone Bolango	86 341	66 288	132 549	9 648	9 490	19 248	-	-	-
Gorontalo Utara	50 797	48 097	98 894	9 557	9 230	18 787	-	-	-
Kota/Municipality									
Gorontalo	87 008	88 735	175 833	4 437	4 406	8 843	11	-	11
GORONTALO	444 063	440 308	884 371	107 097	101 567	208 764	15*	-	15*

FIGURE2. Data on the Number of Speakers from the 2020 Population Census Long Form

According to the UNESCO LVE framework, the data shows that the number of regional language speakers in Gorontalo and Bone Bolango Regencies reflects the "Vulnerable" condition. Gorontalo Regency has 100,560 regional language speakers (30.51% of the total Population), while Bone Bolango Regency only has 19,040 speakers (11.45%). With a total of 119,600 speakers from a combined Population of 495,776 people, the use of regional languages is still significant but vulnerable to extinction, especially in Bone Bolango. Urban areas face a faster decline in language use due to the dominance of national and foreign languages. To maintain the vitality of the language, a continuous revitalization program is needed, primarily through bilingual education and local Government policy support.

THE PROPORTION OF SPEAKERS IN THE TOTAL POPULATION

The proportion of speakers in the total population is a critical indicator in assessing the vitality of a language because the more significant the proportion of speakers, the higher the vitality of the language. If only a tiny portion of the population speaks the language, this indicates a decline in use and the threat of extinction, especially if the dominant language replaces the role of the local language. Understanding this proportion is essential for determining the urgency of language preservation and revitalization, as this factor reflects the percentage of target language users in the context of the overall population.

TABLE 2. Factor 3: The Proportion of Speakers in the Total Population

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Proportion of Speakers	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	None speak the language	1.29%
1	Critically endangered	Very few speak the language.	21.29%
2	Severely endangered	The majority speak the language.	20.00%
3	Definitively endangered	A majority speak the language	25.16%
4	Unsafe	Nearly all speak the language.	21.29%
5	Unsafe	All speak the language.	10.97%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay show that the highest level of the use of the Gorontalo language is in the category of "Experiencing Decline," with

25.16% of respondents reporting that most of the population still uses this language. Although the use of the Gorontalo language is still relatively common in most regions, the decline is noticeable, especially in formal use and among the younger generation. This shows that although the Gorontalo language has not yet reached a critical condition, signs of deterioration have begun to be seen, so more intensive preservation measures are needed.

TRENDS IN EXISTING LANGUAGE DOMAINS

Trends in language use across different domains, such as home, school, workplace, and media, serve as crucial indicators of language vitality. A language that is confined to home use or primarily spoken by the older generation, while other languages dominate formal settings like schools and media, indicates a decline in language use. Conversely, a language that maintains its presence across multiple domains demonstrates stronger vitality.

TABLE 3. Factor 4: Trends in Existing Language Domains

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Domains and Functions	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	The language is not used in any domain and for any function.	0.00%
1	Minimal domains	The language is used only in a restricted domain and for a few functions.	18.71%
2	Limited or formal domains	The language is used in limited social domains and for several functions	10.97%
3	Dwindling domains	The language is used in home domains and for many functions, but the dominant language begins to penetrate even home domains.	23.23%
4	Multilingual parity	Two or more languages may be used in most social domains and for most functions.	22.58%
5	Universal use	The language is used in all domains and for all functions	24.52%

Survey results on the vitality of the Gorontalo language in Tomini Bay under Factor 4: Trends in Language Domains show that the highest percentage of respondents (24.52%) reported that the language is used across all domains and functions, reflecting a strong effort within the community to maintain its use in both formal and informal settings. However, a downward trend was also evident, with 23.23% of respondents reporting that the language is primarily used at home, while 22.58% of respondents indicated that Gorontalo is used alongside other languages, reflecting a diglossic situation. A further decline was reported by 18.71% of respondents, who indicated that the language is used only in restricted situations, signaling significant challenges in maintaining its vitality under the dominance of Indonesian.

Despite these figures, younger generations are showing decreased engagement with the language, particularly in digital and educational spaces. Many young speakers prioritize Indonesian for academic and professional reasons, contributing to the reduced use of Gorontalo in formal settings. Additionally, the lack of digital content and educational materials in Gorontalo further alienates younger generations, making them less inclined to use the language in everyday interactions. Without efforts to reinforce the role of Gorontalo in digital media, education, and workplaces, its usage may continue to decline, particularly among younger speakers.

Commented [A14]: This part can be explored to why younger generations are disengaged from the language in digital spaces.

Commented [A15R14]: The discussion has been expanded to explore why younger generations are disengaged from the Gorontalo language in digital spaces, highlighting key factors such as the dominance of Indonesian, limited digital content, and educational priorities. Additionally, a clearer connection between individual factors and overall language vitality has been established for better coherence.

RESPONDING TO NEW DOMAINS AND MEDIA

In the digital era, new media such as the internet, social media, and digital applications offer both opportunities and challenges for the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay area. While these platforms can serve as tools for language preservation through digital content creation, the widespread dominance of national and foreign languages poses a significant threat to the use of the Gorontalo language, particularly among younger generations. The disengagement of youth from the language in digital spaces can be attributed to several factors, including the absence of Gorontalo-language content, the perception that using Indonesian or foreign languages provides better social and professional opportunities, and the lack of institutional support for incorporating Gorontalo into digital education and media initiatives.

TABLE 4. Factor 5 : Responding to New Domains and Media

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	New Domains and Media Accepted by the Endangered Language	Percentage of Respondents
0	Inactive	The language is not used in any new domains.	1.94%
1	Minimal	The language is used in only a few new domains	31.61%
2	Coping	The language is used in some new domains.	21.29%
3	Receptive	The language is used in many domains.	14.19%
4	Robust/active	The language is used in most new domains..	18.71%
5	Dynamic	The language is used in all new domains.	12.26%

The survey results on the Gorontalo language vitality indicate that the highest response was at level 1 (Minimal), with 31.61% of respondents stating that the adaptation of the Gorontalo language in new domains, particularly in digital spaces, remains highly restricted. The language is used in only a few new contexts, such as specific digital media platforms or workplace interactions, but its presence is not widespread. This finding suggests that the Gorontalo language has limited engagement in digital spaces, which may contribute to its gradual decline among younger speakers.

One of the key reasons for this low level of adaptation is the strong preference for Indonesian and other dominant languages in digital communication, education, and entertainment. Many young people perceive these languages as more beneficial for social mobility and career prospects, further reducing the motivation to use Gorontalo in online interactions. Additionally, the absence of structured efforts to integrate Gorontalo into digital literacy programs and the lack of accessible learning resources in the language hinder its expansion into new domains. Without intervention, this trend could accelerate language shift and weaken intergenerational transmission.

To strengthen the use of Gorontalo in digital spaces, targeted efforts are needed, including the development of digital educational materials, the promotion of Gorontalo-language social media content, and collaborations with local institutions to encourage linguistic diversity in online platforms. By addressing these challenges, the Gorontalo language can gain a stronger foothold in the digital era and increase its relevance among younger generations.

MATERIALS FOR LANGUAGE AND LITERACY EDUCATION

Language education and literacy are essential in preserving the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay. The development of exciting and curriculum-appropriate learning materials, both formal and informal, is urgently needed so that the younger generation can still learn this

language. The material must cover various levels, from basic to advanced, and use print, digital, and audiovisual media. Interactive textbooks, dictionaries, folklore, and online platforms will help expand the range of learning.

TABEL 5. Faktor 6: Materials for Language and Literacy Education

Grade	Accessibility of Written Materials	Percentage of Respondents
0	No orthography is available to the community.	9.03%
1	A practical orthography is known to the community, and some material is being written.	12.26%
2	Written materials exist, but they may only be helpful for some community members; for others, they may have a symbolic significance. Literacy education in the language is not a part of the school curriculum.	18.71%
3	Written materials exist, and children may be exposed to the written form at school. Literacy is not promoted through print media.	27.74%
4	Written materials exist, and at school, children are developing literacy in the language. Writing in the language is not used in administration.	14.84%
5	There is an established orthography literacy tradition with grammar, dictionaries, texts, literature, and everyday media. Writing in the language is used in administration and education.	17.42%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that in Factor 6: Materials for Language and Literacy Education, the highest response was at level 3, with 27.74% of respondents reporting that written materials were available and children were exposed to the Gorontalo language in schools, but literacy in this language has not been widely promoted. This indicates that despite efforts to introduce the Gorontalo language in written form, its spread in the educational environment is still limited. Therefore, more significant efforts are needed to integrate the Gorontalo language into the curriculum and expand the availability of literacy materials.

LANGUAGE POLICY, ATTITUDES, AND URGENCY OF DOCUMENTATION

ATTITUDES AND POLICIES OF GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL LANGUAGE, INCLUDING OFFICIAL STATUS AND USE

The government's language policy greatly influenced the use of the Gorontalo language, especially in Tomini Bay. Despite recognising the importance of regional languages, their implementation at the local level is often limited, with official use of the Gorontalo language generally only in cultural events and informal communication. More substantial support is needed in education and documentation, such as dictionary development and research projects, to keep the language alive amid the dominance of national and foreign languages.

TABLE 6. Factor 7: Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use

Grade	Degree of Support	Deskripsi	Percentage of Respondents
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0	Prohibition	Minority languages are prohibited.	1.29%
1	Forced assimilation	The dominant language is the sole official language, while nondominant languages are neither recognized nor protected.	5.81%
2	Active assimilation	Government encourages assimilation to the dominant language. There is no protection for minority languages.	3.87%
3	Passive assimilation	No explicit policy exists for minority languages; the dominant language prevails in the public domain.	9.68%
4	Differentiated support	Minority languages are protected primarily as the language of the private domains. The use of the language is prestigious..	28.39%
5	Equal support	All languages are protected.	50.97%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that the government's support for the Gorontalo language was at level 5, with 50.97% of respondents reporting that the language was protected on an equal footing with other languages. Despite the inclusive policy, the use of the Gorontalo language is still more robust in the private sphere than in the public. As many as 28.39% of respondents noted support for the Gorontalo language in the local community, but this language has not been fully recognized as an official language in the formal realm. Challenges remain in strengthening policies that support the use of the Gorontalo language in the public and institutional spheres to ensure its preservation.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THEIR OWN LANGUAGE

The community's attitude towards the Gorontalo language in Tomini Bay significantly affects the continuity and vitality of the language. The community is divided into two groups: those firmly committed to preserving and using the Gorontalo language in their daily lives and cultural events and those more likely to use national or foreign languages, especially in education and employment. The first group sees the Gorontalo language as an essential ethnic identity, while the second group, especially the younger generation, prefers Indonesian or English, which is considered more relevant in the modern context.

TABLE 7. Faktor 8: Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language

Grade	Deskripsi	Percentage of Respondents
0	No one cares if the language is lost; all prefer to use a dominant language	2.58%
1	Only a few members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	9.03%
2	Some members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	10.32%
3	Many members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	19.35%
4	Most members support language maintenance.	31.61%
5	All members value their language and wish to see it promoted	27.10%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that in Factor 8: Community Members' Attitudes towards Their Language, the highest response was at level 4, with 31.61% of respondents reporting strong support from most of the community for the maintenance of the Gorontalo language. This shows a positive awareness of the importance of language as a cultural identity.

AMOUNT AND QUALITY OF DOCUMENTATION

The quantity and quality of Gorontalo language documentation are significant in efforts to preserve and revitalize the Tomini Bay area, but they are still limited. Existing documentation, such as primary dictionaries and traditional texts, does not cover all aspects of language, including vocabulary and the use of language in cultural contexts. The quality of documentation is also not optimal, with many sources that are difficult to access, and most are still in print format. The improvement of digital-based documentation is very urgent, and linguists and local communities should be involved in collecting, compiling, and disseminating Gorontalo language materials to remain relevant in the era of globalization.

TABLE 8. Factor 9: Amount and Quality of Documentation.

Tingkat	Label	Deskripsi	Persentasi
0	Undocumented	Nomaterial exists.	5.16%
1	Inadequate	Only a few grammatical sketches, short word lists, and fragmentary texts. Audio and video recordings do not exist, are unusable, or are entirely unannotated.	18.71%
2	Fragmentary	Some grammatical sketches, word lists, and texts are helpful for limited linguistic research but with inadequate coverage. Audio and video recordings may be of varying quality, with or without annotation.	18.06%
3	Fair	There may be adequate or sufficient grammar, dictionaries, and texts, but no everyday media; audio and video recordings may exist in varying quality or degree of annotation.	25.81%
4	Good	There is one good grammar and several adequate grammars, dictionaries, texts, literature, and occasionally updated everyday media; adequate annotated high-quality audio and video recordings.	14.84%
5	Superlative	There are comprehensive grammar and dictionaries, extensive texts; and a constant flow of language materials. Abundant annotated high-quality audio and video recordings exist.	17.42%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that the documentation of this language was at level 3, with 25.81% of respondents reporting that the existing documentation was sufficient to support the research. However, the quality of multimedia and annotation was still limited. Although there are grammar, dictionaries, and some texts, the coverage and quality of audio-visual recordings are still minimal.

DISCUSSION

Based on the UNESCO-LVE framework, a thorough evaluation of the vitality status of a language must consider nine factors in an integrated manner. Table 9 presents a combined scale for all factors, which describes the overall vitality level of the Gorontalo language used in the Tomini

Commented [A16]: ***The discussion is insightful but occasionally shifts toward general observations rather than maintaining a focus on the specific case of the Gorontalo language.

*** A deeper exploration of the role of globalization and urbanization in shaping language attitudes would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing language use and vitality.

Commented [A17R16]: The discussion has been revised to maintain a focused analysis on the Gorontalo language, with a deeper exploration of how globalization and urbanization influence language attitudes and vitality.

Bay Area, Gorontalo Province. (1) intergenerational language transmission, (2) the absolute number of speakers, (3) the proportion of speakers in the total population, (4) trends in existing language domains, (5) Responding to New Domains and Media, (6) Materials for Language and Literacy Education, (7) Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use, (8) Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language, (9) Amount and Quality of Documentation

TABLE 9. Gorontalo Language Vitality Assessment Status

Factor	The Vitality of the Gorontalo Language
1. intergenerational language transmission	3
2. the absolute number of speakers	4
3. the proportion of speakers in the total population	3
4. trends in existing language domains	5
5. Responding to New Domains and Media	1
6. Materials for Language and Literacy Education	3
7. Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use	5
8. Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language	4
9. Amount and Quality of Documentation	3
Rata-Rata Vitalitas Bahasa Gorontalo	3.44

According to Dwyer's formulation of language vitality, the following are the categories that are usually used to determine language status based on vitality scores:

- 1. 0 - 1.4 : Critically endangered
- 2. 1.5 - 2.9 : Endangered
- 3. 3.0 - 3.9 : Vulnerable
- 4. 4.0 - 5.0 : Stable or safe

With an average score of 3.44, the vitality of the Gorontalo language is included in the vulnerable category. This suggests that although the language is still in use, certain factors could threaten its future viability.

The first factor, intergenerational language transmission, is rated at level 3, indicating a decline in language use among younger generations. Older generations, who once played a crucial role in passing down the language, are now increasingly less likely to communicate in Gorontalo with their children. Instead, many parents actively encourage the use of Indonesian, believing that proficiency in the national language provides better educational and career opportunities. This trend aligns with findings by Firdaus (2018) and Purwaka et al. (2020), which indicate that in urban settings, Gorontalo is gradually being replaced by Indonesian and foreign languages. Urbanization has further accelerated this shift, as social and economic interactions in cities predominantly occur in the national language. Insights from Gorontalo speakers provide a deeper understanding of the emotional and social dynamics influencing this language shift. Several informants expressed a growing sense of pragmatism among parents, who perceive Indonesian as the gateway to national and global mobility. Many voiced concerns that fluency in Gorontalo might hinder their children's ability to integrate into broader educational and professional networks. Some participants also highlighted the emotional disconnect emerging from this linguistic shift. A middle-aged respondent from Bone Bolango Regency shared that speaking Gorontalo with younger relatives often resulted in confusion or disengagement, as they struggled

Commented [A18]: We appreciate this feedback and have expanded the discussion on intergenerational language transmission by incorporating qualitative narratives from Gorontalo speakers, highlighting the emotional and social dynamics influencing language shift.

with vocabulary and grammar. Another respondent noted that oral storytelling traditions and cultural expressions, once central to family interactions, are now being abandoned in favor of digital entertainment and Indonesian-language media. Additionally, formal education and peer influence contribute significantly to the declining use of Gorontalo. Several students admitted feeling embarrassed to speak Gorontalo in public, as Indonesian dominates school interactions and social circles. Teachers observed that despite the inclusion of Gorontalo in the school curriculum, students remain reluctant to use it actively outside the classroom. This underscores the need for more immersive and engaging language revitalization strategies, such as integrating Gorontalo into digital media, social platforms, and community-based initiatives that make language learning more relevant and appealing to younger generations.

The absolute number of Gorontalo speakers remains relatively high, at approximately 119,600, classified at level 4. However, the proportion of speakers within the total population is declining, categorized at level 3. Krauss (1992) argued that languages with fewer than 100,000 speakers are at high risk of extinction. While Gorontalo still surpasses this threshold, a continuous decline without revitalization efforts could lead to further endangerment in the coming decades. In terms of language use across different social domains, the Gorontalo language maintains a strong presence in traditional and cultural settings. Rated at level 5, it remains integral to religious and cultural activities, such as ritual communication in the Dikili tradition (Fitriyani & Subiyanto, 2021). However, its use in formal domains such as education and governance is limited due to national language policies favoring Indonesian as the primary medium in academic and administrative settings. Consequently, Gorontalo is more prevalent in social and cultural contexts but lacks official institutional support.

A major challenge for Gorontalo is its limited adaptation to digital platforms and new media. Rated at level 1, this factor indicates that the language is rarely used in digital communication, social media, or online educational tools. Younger generations predominantly engage in digital interactions using Indonesian or English, perceiving these languages as more globally relevant and accessible. Studies by Dako et al. (2015) and Lihawa et al. (2016) suggest that minority languages that fail to integrate into the digital space face an increased risk of marginalization. The lack of engaging Gorontalo-language digital content further accelerates this trend. Addressing this issue requires initiatives such as developing Gorontalo-based language learning applications, social media campaigns, and digital resources tailored to younger users. Educational support for the Gorontalo language remains moderate, with this factor rated at level 3. Although some initiatives exist to incorporate Gorontalo into school curricula, their implementation is inconsistent, and teaching materials remain inadequate. The increasing dominance of Indonesian in education due to globalization has further marginalized Gorontalo. Bay et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of developing engaging and culturally relevant educational materials to promote the use of Gorontalo in formal education. Without strong policy interventions, the language risks further decline in academic settings.

Government support for the preservation of the Gorontalo language is relatively strong, with a rating of 5, reflecting a firm commitment from local authorities to maintaining linguistic diversity. This commitment is evident in Regional Regulation (Perda) No. 08 of 2005, which explicitly mandates the protection and development of the Gorontalo language through formal and non-formal education, management by regional language institutions, and financial support from both regional (APBD) and central government funds. However, the implementation of this policy continues to face significant challenges, particularly in the coastal areas of Teluk Tomini, including Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency, where regional language policies are often overshadowed by national language priorities. The absence of more detailed implementing regulations has hindered the effective integration of the Gorontalo language into the education system, resulting in inconsistent and limited instruction in schools. Additionally, the lack of

Commented [A19]: We have expanded the discussion by incorporating **Regional Regulation (Perda) No. 08 of 2005**, addressing its role in language preservation and the challenges in its implementation. Additionally, we have elaborated on the **need for specific regulatory measures, curriculum integration, and digital strategies** to strengthen long-term language revitalization efforts.

incentives for the use of Gorontalo in the public sector and the absence of strategic initiatives to address the challenges posed by digitalization further weaken the long-term effectiveness of this policy. To ensure sustainable language revitalization, concrete measures must be taken, including the formulation of more specific implementing regulations, the strengthening of local content curricula in schools, incentives for educators and language preservationists, and the strategic utilization of digital technology and social media. These efforts are essential in ensuring that the revitalization of the Gorontalo language remains effective and sustainable amid the pressures of modernization and globalization.

Community attitudes toward the Gorontalo language are rated at level 4, with strong cultural pride among older generations. However, younger speakers show declining interest, perceiving Indonesian and English as more beneficial for career and educational advancement. Urbanization has reinforced this trend, as job markets and educational institutions primarily emphasize the national language. According to Cunliffe (2024) and Wood (2024) the sustainability of a language depends significantly on how its speakers perceive its value. Therefore, community-based initiatives such as cultural festivals, digital content creation, and technology-driven language programs are essential for increasing interest in the Gorontalo language among younger generations.

Language documentation is currently at level 3, meaning that while some documentation efforts exist, they are limited in quality and accessibility. Technological advancements in linguistics can play a crucial role in improving documentation through the development of online dictionaries, automatic translation tools, and AI-based learning systems. Research by Dako et al. (2015) (2015) and Lihawa et al. (2016) highlights that technology-driven documentation can enhance accessibility and engagement, thereby strengthening language vitality. Collaborative efforts between linguists, local governments, and communities are essential to improving Gorontalo language documentation and ensuring broader accessibility.

The findings of this study reinforce previous research indicating a significant shift in the use of the Gorontalo language, particularly among younger generations. Usman (2008) and Purwaka et al. (2020) identified a decline in intergenerational language transmission, accelerating the risk of language extinction. Similarly, Firdaus (2018) observed a comparable trend in the Suwawa language, where the increasing marginalization of local languages is driven by the dominance of Indonesian, which is perceived as more advantageous in educational and professional settings. Rahardini & Niswah (2022) classified the Gorontalo language as vulnerable to critically endangered, signaling that without more effective policy interventions, its decline could become more severe in the coming decades. Zakaria et al. (2021) further highlighted that shifts in social and economic structures, particularly in the workplace, have intensified the dominance of national and foreign languages over Gorontalo. These findings suggest that external factors, such as globalization and urbanization, are further weakening the status of regional languages in public and professional domains.

Despite existing preservation efforts, challenges persist in policy implementation. Regional Regulation (Perda) No. 08 of 2005 provides a legal foundation for the protection and development of the Gorontalo language; however, its effectiveness remains limited due to the lack of technical regulations and insufficient involvement from educational institutions and local communities. Olii (2021) emphasized that while documentation efforts, such as the compilation of customary terminology dictionaries and oral tradition revitalization programs, have been initiated, limited access to learning materials and low community engagement in language preservation remain major obstacles. Djou et al. (2023) pointed out that despite the rapid advancement of digital technology, the presence of the Gorontalo language in digital platforms is still minimal, even though technology could serve as a strategic tool to enhance its visibility and usage. Therefore, this study underscores the need for a multidimensional approach that includes

Commented [A20]: We acknowledge this limitation and have incorporated historical data from previous studies to provide a more comprehensive perspective on the language shift over time.

strengthening regional language-based education policies, utilizing digital technology for documentation and learning, and providing incentives to encourage active use of the Gorontalo language across various aspects of daily life.

CONCLUSION

The vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay, particularly in Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency, is categorized as vulnerable, with an average vitality score of 3.44. Although the language remains in use, its continuity is at risk, especially among younger generations. The primary factors contributing to this vulnerability include the weakening of intergenerational transmission, the increasing dominance of the Indonesian language in educational and social settings, and the limited adaptation of Gorontalo in digital platforms. While governmental and community-driven efforts—such as cultural programs and limited educational initiatives—have been implemented to preserve the language, challenges such as inadequate resources, insufficient documentation, and declining interest among youth continue to hinder revitalization efforts.

To address these challenges, policy interventions must focus on integrating the Gorontalo language into formal education, ensuring its inclusion in school curricula through well-developed instructional materials. Additionally, government support should be directed toward digital documentation by creating online resources, mobile applications, and interactive platforms to increase accessibility and engagement, particularly for younger generations. Encouraging local content creators to develop digital media in Gorontalo, such as podcasts, social media campaigns, and educational videos, could also help bridge the generational gap in language use. Furthermore, community-driven initiatives, such as language immersion programs, intergenerational mentorship, and cultural workshops, should be strengthened to reinforce everyday language usage.

A collaborative approach involving local government, educational institutions, and cultural organizations is essential to sustain the Gorontalo language. Future research should explore the impact of urbanization and globalization on language attitudes, as well as the effectiveness of digital language preservation strategies. By implementing targeted policies and community-led initiatives, the vitality of the Gorontalo language can be strengthened, ensuring its survival for future generations.

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Commented [A21]: ***The conclusion largely reiterates points from the results and discussion without offering new insights or actionable recommendations.

***To strengthen its impact: consider emphasizing how the findings can directly inform policy decisions or guide community-driven initiatives aimed at preserving and revitalizing the language.

Commented [A22R21]: We have revised the conclusion to avoid repetition by incorporating actionable recommendations. The revised section now emphasizes how the findings can inform policy decisions and support community-driven initiatives for language preservation and revitalization.

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**7. Bukti Konfirmasi Review dan Hasil Review Kedua
dari Reviewer
(27 Maret 2025)**

A. Bukti Konfirmasi Review dan Hasil Review Kedua dari Reviewer

7/8/25, 12:10 AM

Email Universitas Negeri Gorontalo - [GEMA Online®] Editor Decision [79684 - Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from ...



Asna Ntelu <asna.ntelu@ung.ac.id>

[GEMA Online®] Editor Decision [79684 - Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regional Language Extinction]

Dr. Anis Nadiyah Che Abdul Rahman <aniscar@ukm.edu.my>

27 Maret 2025 pukul 22.35

Kepada: Miss Asna Ntelu <asna.ntelu@ung.ac.id>

Cc: Dakia N Djou <dakiadjou@ung.ac.id>, Sayama Malabar <Sayama.malabar@ung.ac.id>, Jafar Lantowa <jafar.lantowa@ung.ac.id>

Miss Asna Ntelu:

We have reached a decision regarding your submission to GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies, "Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regional Language Extinction".

Our decision is to: Revisions are needed. Please make the necessary changes based on the suggestions provided so that this article can be published in the May issue.

Thank you.

Regards,

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Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regional Language Extinction

ABSTRACT

Language vitality reflects the sustainability of a language's use in broader society, influenced by dimensions such as status, demographics, and institutional support. This study evaluates the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Teluk Tomini, which is at risk of extinction due to socio-cultural shifts and linguistic dominance. A survey method was utilized, incorporating UNESCO's nine vitality indicators: (1) intergenerational transmission, (2) absolute number of speakers, (3) proportion of speakers within the population, (4) shifts in language usage domains, (5) response to new domains and media, (6) availability of educational and literacy materials, (7) government and institutional attitudes and policies, (8) community attitudes toward their language, and (9) amount and quality of documentation involving. Data were gathered from 155 respondents in Gorontalo and Bone Bolango regencies through questionnaires, observations, and interviews, and analyzed quantitatively. Results indicate that the Gorontalo language is classified as "Vulnerable," with an average vitality score of 3.44. While still used in some areas, transmission to younger generations is declining, exacerbated by Indonesian's dominance in education and social domains. Preservation efforts, including cultural programs and educational initiatives, have been made but are hindered by resource constraints, inadequate documentation, and low youth engagement. This study underscores the urgency of fostering collaboration among governments, educational institutions, and local communities to enhance awareness and preservation strategies. The development of digital learning materials is proposed as a novel approach to revitalizing the Gorontalo language and ensuring its sustainability for future generations.

Keywords: language vitality; Gorontalo language; language extinction; language rescue; Tomini Bay

INTRODUCTION

Gorontalo language is a means of communication, a buffer and developer of local culture, and an identity for the people of Gorontalo (Baruadi, 2013). The function of local languages is to support the development of the Indonesian language and national culture (Olii, 2021). The Gorontalo language experienced a decline in use due to the arrival of immigrants who brought their language and culture, transforming Gorontalo into a multi-ethnic society. This encouraged the adaptation of immigrant languages by local communities, triggering the Language Development Agency of the Ministry of Education and Culture to classify Gorontalo as an endangered regional language (Usman, 2008; Zakaria et al., 2021). Language vitality validation data up to 2019 shows that Gorontalo is only spoken by a few speakers aged 20 years and above, causing this language to be endangered, similar to 24 other regional languages in 10 provinces in Indonesia (Purwaka et al., 2020). According to the 2020 Linguistic Statistics, the Gorontalo language is included in the 56 regional languages in Indonesia that are classified as vulnerable to critical (Rahardini & Niswah, 2022).

The vitality of the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay Coastal Area is threatened by the dominance of Indonesian and other ethnic languages, such as Bajo, Javanese, and Bugis-Makassar, as well as foreign languages, especially English, due to globalization and interaction with immigrants. The people of Gorontalo have a tradition of using the Gorontalo language, which is influenced by Arabic, Portuguese, Dutch, and Malay (Djou et al., 2023). The dominant

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language influence in global communication and trade now threatens the Gorontalo language in remote areas. Hence, Tomini Bay Coastal Region parents often encourage their children to leave the local language to achieve higher education and success (Firdaus, 2018). The decline in the use of the Gorontalo language can threaten cultural identity and traditional knowledge. Therefore, the importance of this research is to understand the vitality of the Gorontalo language as an effort to save the extinction of regional languages.

The importance of local language as an essential asset plays a vital role in developing Indonesian vocabulary. Therefore, it is crucial to take strategic steps in maintaining, preserving, and promoting local languages (Nteli et al., 2022; Nteli & Djou, 2017). The study of language vitality is an essential basis for language conservation activities, which support efforts to protect local languages in Indonesia. Therefore, research on the vitality of the Gorontalo language it can be the right step to save the extinction of the Gorontalo language.

Fishman (1972) emphasises the importance of measuring language vitality based on several categories that include aspects such as the number of speakers, diversity of use, adaptability, and relevance in social and cultural contexts (Medeiros, 2017). Applying language vitality in research can help develop effective and sustainable plans to save endangered languages, including ongoing revitalization and preservation efforts (Gobbo, 2021). In the study of language vitality, researchers used a unique measuring tool to assess the condition of the language among its speakers, which later determined the status of the language in several categories (Zhou & Ang, 2024).

Benu (2023), through the results of his research, shows that local languages in Kupang City still have significant vitality with efforts to preserve local languages through the use of language in public signs and essential institutions. Firdaus (2018) shows that the Suwawa-Gorontalo language is considered stable and steady but threatens extinction. Ibrahim (2011) shows that mapping language vitality is the primary key to understanding the linguistic status of tribes in Indonesia. With this vitality mapping, it can be a solution for designing a program to save regional languages from the risk of extinction. Marica dan Duwila ((2017) show that the vitality status of the Ternate Language is in the worrying category. Aritonang (2016) also examined the vitality of the Talondo language by reporting the results of the evaluation of group sub-indices based on respondent characteristics such as gender, age, education, and occupation, which showed that the sustainability of the Talondo language had decreased.

This research differs from some of these studies, especially on the object of the Gorontalo language and locations in the Tomini Bay Area, namely Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency. The novelty of this research lies in a specific location, highlighting the unique sociolinguistic and ethno-linguistic dynamics in the Tomini Bay area that affect the vitality of the Gorontalo language, targeting the regional language rescue strategy in the Tomini Bay Area, Gorontalo Province.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vitality refers to the vitality or sustainability of a language in broader society and can be understood through three main dimensions: status, demographics, and institutional support (Dattamajumdar, 2020; Wickström, 2023). Language vitality is beneficial for developing effective strategies for preserving language and strengthening group identity. It is also crucial in designing intervention policies that support the maintenance and development of minority or endangered languages (Clément & Norton, 2021; Coluzzi et al., 2013). The vitality of a language reflects the ability of a language group to remain spoken in society, which is supported not only by the number of speakers but also by the institutional support and social recognition they receive (Ding, 2023; Landry et al., 2022).

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Language vitality is measured by factors such as usage, dominance, preference, attitudes, motivations, and language ability, which are especially important in a multilingual society because interlingual interactions have a significant influence on social and cultural dynamics (Rohmah & Wijyanti, 2023; Stern, 2017; Ying et al., 2015). Understanding and improving the vitality of languages, especially for minority languages, is crucial in the era of globalization. This is important because the existence of minority languages is often threatened by the more widespread use of more dominant languages (Moring et al., 2011; Zabadi et al., 2023)

Grenoble and Whaley (2006) state that language has high vitality if used by its speakers in daily communication. The use of language in each domain, for example, family, work environment (e.g. Village office), education, and interaction with immigrants. However, if the language is not used in this domain, then the vitality of the language decreases. Holmes (2001) said that if members of an ethnic community live in the same neighbourhood, this can help maintain the survival of their language in the long term, primarily if the language is still spoken in essential areas. Pateda (1987) explained that there is a mutual influence in every realm of social interaction, and more active speakers will dominate. If a language is used more frequently, it will evolve. Conversely, a language that is rarely used will be displaced by a more dominant language, which, if allowed to continue, can lead to the extinction of the language (Malabar, 2015).

UNESCO has established a comprehensive framework for evaluating language vitality, particularly for endangered languages. Developed by UNESCO's Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages in 2003, this framework encompasses nine key factors: intergenerational transmission, the absolute number of speakers, the proportion of speakers within the total population, shifts in domains of language use, adaptability to new media, the availability of educational and literacy materials, governmental attitudes and policies, community perceptions of their language, and the quantity and quality of language documentation. This framework provides a systematic approach to assessing the status of languages and identifying targeted interventions for their preservation (UNESCO, 2011). The framework is widely acknowledged as an effective tool for assessing a language's vitality and determining the necessary interventions for its preservation (Chen, 2023; Moseley, 2010).

Previous studies have demonstrated that applying the UNESCO framework yields valuable insights into the factors influencing language vitality across diverse social contexts. For instance, a case study on the Temiar language in Malaysia revealed its comparatively higher vitality among Orang Asli languages, attributed to its larger speaker population and its function as a lingua franca (Hassan et al., 2015). In contrast, the Sihan language in Sarawak faces a high risk of extinction as it fails to meet the majority of UNESCO's language vitality criteria (Mohamed & Hashim, 2012). Research on the Kensiu language in Malaysia underscores the critical role of intergenerational transmission, despite its usage being confined to specific domains and the challenges posed by younger generations' attitudes, who increasingly favor adopting the majority language (Hamzah et al., 2024). The So language community in Thailand exhibits varying levels of vitality, with some villages demonstrating robust usage while others face the risk of language shift. Additionally, the external policy environment significantly impacts efforts to develop and maintain the language within these communities (Tehan & Markowski, 2017). In Europe, the Friuli language in Italy serves as a compelling example of how official recognition alone is insufficient to guarantee a language's continuity. Despite its legal recognition, the Friuli language has experienced a decline in young speakers and restricted usage in social domains, reflecting a gradual shift toward Italian (De Cia, 2021).

In Indonesia, the Leukon language confronts comparable challenges. According to the Expanded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS), the language is classified at level 6b, signifying a high risk of language loss driven by the social and cultural influence of the dominant language (Candrasari et al., 2018). In the context of the Malay language in North Sumatra, the study reveals a decline in vitality, with transmission classified as level 3 (endangered), a

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decreasing number of native speakers, and a narrowing scope of usage, underscoring the language's critical condition. The availability of educational materials and adequate documentation plays a crucial role in sustaining language vitality. However, the Malay language in North Sumatra is significantly undervalued in these areas, further jeopardizing its survival (Pramuniati et al., 2024). The vitality of the Sundanese language in Cianjur City is declining, particularly in terms of intergenerational transmission. However, it retains potential in areas such as new media, literacy, and documentation. Enhancing the vitality of the Sundanese language necessitates strengthening intergenerational transmission through increased usage within families, the promotion of language learning in schools and communities, and the development of teaching materials and broader literacy initiatives (Kurniawati et al., 2021).

These studies underscore the necessity of an integrated approach to assessing and preserving minority languages. The UNESCO framework offers systematic guidance for evaluating language status, while quantitative and qualitative methods can be employed to explore critical aspects of language vitality, including community attitudes, shifts in language usage domains, and the availability of educational resources. For instance, research by Rohmah dan Wijayanti (2023) by combining demographic surveys with in-depth interviews, this approach evaluates community attitudes toward linguistic minorities in Indonesia. It not only offers a comprehensive understanding of a language's actual conditions but also informs the development of more effective intervention strategies.

This study aims to assess the vitality of the Gorontalo language by integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches within the framework of UNESCO's nine language vitality indicators. Through a comprehensive analysis of these indicators, the research seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing the language's sustainability. By building on the findings of prior studies, this study is expected to contribute significantly to the preservation of minority languages in the context of globalization.

METHOD

This research was conducted in the coastal area of Tomini Bay, encompassing Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency in Gorontalo Province. The study location was strategically selected due to the region's vulnerability to the potential extinction of the Gorontalo language. Intense language contact between local communities, migrants, and foreign tourists, particularly in coastal tourist destinations, is believed to significantly impact the use and sustainability of the Gorontalo language. Furthermore, the socio-cultural characteristics of this coastal region provide a crucial context for understanding the dynamics influencing the vitality of the Gorontalo language.

This study employs a purposive sampling technique to select respondents deemed relevant to the research objectives. Respondents were chosen based on specific criteria, including residence in the coastal area of Tomini Bay, a minimum age of 15 years, and proficiency in the Gorontalo language, both active and passive. Additionally, demographic diversity—such as variations in age, gender, and education level—was considered to ensure the data accurately reflect the characteristics of coastal communities. A total of 155 respondents were selected, representing a sufficient sample size to provide a comprehensive understanding of the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the region. To complement the data collected from the community, interviews were conducted with indigenous leaders, government officials, and language practitioners, offering institutional and cultural perspectives to enrich the study's findings. Data collection in this study was carried out using a survey method. According to Wiseman and Aron (1970) surveys are defined as a method for collecting and analyzing social data through the use of highly structured and detailed interviews or questionnaires. The primary objective of a survey

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is to gather information from a large number of respondents who are deemed representative of a specific population.

In this study, the survey method was employed to investigate the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay. Data were collected through a combination of questionnaires, observations, and interviews, providing a comprehensive understanding of the language's current status and usage dynamics. The survey in this study is based on nine factors formulated by UNESCO's Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages to assess language vitality. These factors include intergenerational language transmission, which measures the extent to which a language is passed from one generation to the next; the absolute number of speakers, indicating the total number of users; the proportion of speakers within the population, reflecting the percentage of users in the community; shifting domains of language use, which evaluates the variety of social contexts in which the language is utilized; response to new domains and media, assessing the language's adaptability to technology and digital platforms; availability of educational and literacy materials, such as textbooks and dictionaries; government and institutional attitudes and policies, including the language's official status; community attitudes toward their language, reflecting the level of appreciation and value assigned by the community; and the amount and quality of language documentation, which examines the extent to which the language has been recorded in written, audio, or video formats. These nine factors were incorporated into a questionnaire using a rating scale from 0 to 5, providing a quantifiable assessment of the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay. This framework also serves as a foundation for strategic analyses aimed at language preservation.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the research approach, this study employed a combination of survey, observation, and interview methods. Data from observations and interviews complement the data obtained from the survey. Contributing to a more robust and nuanced analysis. A series of formal and informal interviews were conducted with participants to gather detailed information about their biographical and linguistic backgrounds, language use in various social contexts, and attitudes toward the Gorontalo language. These interviews were specifically designed to capture dimensions not fully addressed through surveys, such as individual perceptions and patterns of language use in specific contexts. Observations further enriched the dataset by allowing researchers to directly observe language use in natural settings, offering critical context to validate and enhance the survey findings. All collected data were analyzed using UNESCO's nine language vitality criteria, as outlined during the UNESCO Expert Meeting in March 2003. By integrating these methodologies, the study provided a comprehensive assessment of the vitality of the Gorontalo language and ensured the reliability and depth of its findings (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Lewis, 2009).

Data analysis in this study employed a quantitative approach complemented by qualitative analysis to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the research findings. According to Mahsun (2011), Data analysis is the process of classifying, grouping, and equalizing similar data, as well as separating and grouping different data. Data analysis was carried out quantitatively. Technically, quantitative data analysis includes (1) describing the analysis techniques used, including descriptive statistics in the form of averages and percentages, (2) presenting the results of the analysis in the form of tables, histograms, bar charts, line charts, or other relevant diagrams, (3) analyzing percentages based on statements obtained from research instruments, (4) providing interpretations of descriptive statistical data, which are generally in the form of averages and percentages, and (5) supplementing data analysis with interviews to understand the problems revealed in the research (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2022). This approach aligns with Creswell's (2014) perspective, which emphasizes that quantitative data analysis involves organizing data, conducting statistical analyses, and interpreting results to address research questions and test hypotheses. Creswell also underscores the importance of presenting

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data in various visual formats, such as tables and diagrams, to enhance reader comprehension. Furthermore, Creswell advocates supplementing statistical data with qualitative methods, such as interviews, to provide deeper contextual insights into the study’s findings. This study adopts this principle, integrating Mahsun’s (2011) and Creswell’s (2014) steps for data analysis. By combining these quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the analysis not only yields measurable data but also offers a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

RESULT

KEY FACTORS IN LANGUAGE USE

INTERGENERATIONAL LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION

Intergenerational language transmission is an essential factor in the sustainability of a language because it involves the inheritance of language from the older generation to the younger generation through daily interactions and educational institutions. If the regional language is not used between parents and children, language skills will decrease, threatening the continuity of the language. Therefore, intergenerational transmission is a significant benchmark of language vitality, where well-passed languages are more resistant to the threat of extinction than those that fail to be transmitted.

TABEL 1. Factor 1: Intergenerational Language Transmission

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Speaker Population	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	There exists no speaker	0.65%
1	Critically endangered	The language is used mainly by very few speakers of the great-grandparental generation.	3.87%
2	Severely endangered	The language is used mainly by the grandparental generation and up	9.03%
3	Definitively endangered	The language is used mainly by the parental generation and up	51.61%
4	Unsafe	The language is used by some children in all domains; all children in limited domains use it.	8.39%
5	Safe	The language is used by all ages, from children up.	26.45%

The survey results showed that the transmission of the Gorontalo language between generations was at level 3, indicating a decline, with the majority of respondents (51.61%) reporting that the elderly and elderly generations mostly used this language. The gap in transmission, especially among the younger generation, risks accelerating the extinction of these languages if there are no intensive revitalization efforts. Therefore, conservation strategies that target children and vulnerable areas are urgently needed, such as integrating the Gorontalo language into formal education and increasing access to learning materials.

THE ABSOLUTE NUMBER OF SPEAKERS

The absolute number of speakers is an essential indicator in assessing the vitality of a language because the more native speakers there are, the greater the chances of the language surviving.

This indicator covers all age groups and language use in various social, cultural, and economic contexts. The decline in speakers, especially among the younger generation, increases the risk of language extinction. This factor is not assessed by scale but rather by the actual number of speakers in the community, with small populations more vulnerable to threats. While the number of speakers is essential, other factors must also be considered to ensure the preservation of the language.

POPULATION SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION

Tabel 3.2 Jumlah Penduduk menurut Kabupaten/Kota, Daerah Perkotaan/Pendesaan, dan Jenis Kelamin
Population by Regency/Municipality, Urban/Rural Area and Sex

Kabupaten/Kota Regency/Municipality	Daerah Perkotaan (Urban)			Daerah Perdesaan (Rural)			Daerah Perkotaan Perdesaan (Urban-Rural)		
	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Bastem	15 424	12 118	27 542	56 207	55 633	111 840	72 715	72 771	145 486
Garontalo	79 933	83 606	163 539	120 710	114 513	235 223	200 489	198 119	398 608
Puhawato	19 805	25 886	45 691	56 034	52 662	108 696	79 938	73 331	153 269
Bone Bolango	32 810	34 878	67 688	17 240	49 574	66 814	83 530	87 652	171 182
Garontalo Utara	10 328	11 140	21 468	33 317	33 938	67 255	83 819	87 949	171 768
Kota/Municipality									
Garontalo	97 218	98 335	195 553	3 328	2 972	6 300	109 043	101 307	210 350
GORONTALO	235 124	233 979	469 103	146 481	137 155	283 636	291 285	269 386	560 671

FIGURE 1. Number of Population as a result of the 2020 population census long form

PENDIDIKAN

Tabel 6.4 Jumlah Penduduk Berumur 5 Tahun ke Atas Menurut Kabupaten/Kota, Bahasa Pertama Kali Dikuasai, dan Jenis Kelamin
Population 5 Years of Age and Over by Regency/Municipality, First Language Spoken, and Sex

Kabupaten/Kota Regency/Municipality	Bahasa Indonesia/Bahasa Bahasa Daerah Lokal (Local Language)			Bahasa yang Pertama Dikuasai (First Language Spoken)			Bahasa Asing (Foreign Language)		
	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Kabupaten/Regency									
Bastem	51 758	50 587	102 345	17 521	15 782	33 303	-	-	-
Garontalo	133 015	133 057	266 072	51 258	49 362	100 620	5	-	5
Puhawato	55 055	53 525	108 580	14 475	13 548	28 023	-	-	-
Bone Bolango	66 341	65 208	131 549	9 849	9 400	19 249	-	-	-
Garontalo Utara	50 797	49 597	100 394	9 557	9 230	18 787	-	-	-
Kota/Municipality									
Garontalo	87 038	88 735	175 773	4 437	1 406	5 843	11	-	11
GORONTALO	448 062	440 908	888 970	147 081	141 967	289 048	16	-	16

FIGURE 2. Data on the Number of Speakers from the 2020 Population Census Long Form

According to the UNESCO LVE framework, the data shows that the number of regional language speakers in Garontalo and Bone Bolango Regencies reflects the "Vulnerable" condition. Garontalo Regency has 100,560 regional language speakers (30.51% of the total Population), while Bone Bolango Regency only has 19,040 speakers (11.45%). With a total of 119,600 speakers from a combined Population of 495,776 people, the use of regional languages is still significant but vulnerable to extinction, especially in Bone Bolango. Urban areas face a faster decline in language use due to the dominance of national and foreign languages. To maintain the vitality of the language, a continuous revitalization program is needed, primarily through bilingual education and local Government policy support.

THE PROPORTION OF SPEAKERS IN THE TOTAL POPULATION

The proportion of speakers in the total population is a critical indicator in assessing the vitality of a language because the more significant the proportion of speakers, the higher the vitality of the language. If only a tiny portion of the population speaks the language, this indicates a decline in use and the threat of extinction, especially if the dominant language replaces the role of the local language. Understanding this proportion is essential for determining the urgency of language

preservation and revitalization, as this factor reflects the percentage of target language users in the context of the overall population.

TABLE 2. Factor 3: The Proportion of Speakers in the Total Population

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Proportion of Speakers	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	None speak the language	1.29%
1	Critically endangered	Very few speak the language.	21.29%
2	Severely endangered	The majority speak the language.	20.00%
3	Definitively endangered	A majority speak the language	25.16%
4	Unsafe	Nearly all speak the language.	21.29%
5	Unsafe	All speak the language.	10.97%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay show that the highest level of the use of the Gorontalo language is in the category of "Experiencing Decline," with 25.16% of respondents reporting that most of the population still uses this language. Although the use of the Gorontalo language is still relatively common in most regions, the decline is noticeable, especially in formal use and among the younger generation. This shows that although the Gorontalo language has not yet reached a critical condition, signs of deterioration have begun to be seen, so more intensive preservation measures are needed.

TRENDS IN EXISTING LANGUAGE DOMAINS

Trends in language use in various domains of life, such as home, school, workplace, and media, are essential indicators of language vitality. If the language is only used at home or among the elderly, while other languages dominate in the formal realm, such as schools and the media, this indicates a decline in use. In contrast, the widespread use of language across various domains shows good vitality.

TABLE 3. Factor 4: Trends in Existing Language Domains

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Domains and Functions	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	The language is not used in any domain and for any function.	0.00%
1	Minimal domains	The language is used only in a restricted domain and for a few functions.	18.71%
2	Limited or formal domains	The language is used in limited social domains and for several functions	10.97%
3	Dwindling domains	The language is used in home domains and for many functions, but the dominant language begins to penetrate even home domains.	23.23%
4	Multilingual parity	Two or more languages may be used in most social domains and for most functions.	22.58%
5	Universal use	The language is used in all domains and for all functions	24.52%

The results of the survey on the vitality of the Gorontalo language in Tomini Bay based on Factor

4: Trends in Language Domain showed that the highest respondents were at level 5 as 24.52% of respondents reported the use of Gorontalo language in all regions and social functions, which reflects the community that is still strong in maintaining this language in the formal and informal realms. However, a downward trend was seen, with 23.23% of respondents reporting that this language was limited to home, and 22.58% of respondents reported the joint use of Gorontalo and other languages, reflecting the situation of diglossia. A further downward trend was reported by 18.71% of respondents who only used this language in limited situations, indicating that the Gorontalo language faces significant challenges under the dominance of Indonesian.

RESPONDING TO NEW DOMAINS AND MEDIA

In the digital era, new media such as the internet, social media, and digital applications provide opportunities and challenges for the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay area. While this media can be used to preserve language through digital content, the dominance of national and foreign languages threatens the use of the Gorontalo language, especially among the younger generation.

TABLE 4. Factor 5 : Responding to New Domains and Media

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	New Domains and Media Accepted by the Endangered Language	Percentage of Respondents
0	Inactive	The language is not used in any new domains.	1.94%
1	Minimal	The language is used in only a few new domains	31.61%
2	Coping	The language is used in some new domains.	21.29%
3	Receptive	The language is used in many domains.	14.19%
4	Robust/active	The language is used in most new domains..	18.71%
5	Dynamic	The language is used in all new domains.	12.26%

The Gorontalo language vitality survey results showed that the highest response was at level 1, with 31.61% of respondents reporting that adapting the Gorontalo language in the region and new media was very limited. This language is only used in a few new contexts, such as digital media or work environments, but it is not yet widespread. This level 1 indicates that the use of the Gorontalo language in dealing with technological developments is still minimal, so there is a risk that this language will not be able to compete in the digital space.

MATERIALS FOR LANGUAGE AND LITERACY EDUCATION

Language education and literacy are essential in preserving the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay. The development of exciting and curriculum-appropriate learning materials, both formal and informal, is urgently needed so that the younger generation can still learn this language. The material must cover various levels, from basic to advanced, and use print, digital, and audiovisual media. Interactive textbooks, dictionaries, folklore, and online platforms will help expand the range of learning.

TABEL 5. Faktor 6: Materials for Language and Literacy Education

Grade	Accessibility of Written Materials	Percentage of Respondents
0	No orthography is available to the community.	9.03%
1	A practical orthography is known to the community, and some material is being written.	12.26%

2	Written materials exist, but they may only be helpful for some community members; for others, they may have a symbolic significance. Literacy education in the language is not a part of the school curriculum.	18.71%
3	Written materials exist, and children may be exposed to the written form at school. Literacy is not promoted through print media.	27.74%
4	Written materials exist, and at school, children are developing literacy in the language. Writing in the language is not used in administration.	14.84%
5	There is an established orthography literacy tradition with grammar, dictionaries, texts, literature, and everyday media. Writing in the language is used in administration and education.	17.42%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that in Factor 6: Materials for Language and Literacy Education, the highest response was at level 3, with 27.74% of respondents reporting that written materials were available and children were exposed to the Gorontalo language in schools, but literacy in this language has not been widely promoted. This indicates that despite efforts to introduce the Gorontalo language in written form, its spread in the educational environment is still limited. Therefore, more significant efforts are needed to integrate the Gorontalo language into the curriculum and expand the availability of literacy materials.

LANGUAGE POLICY, ATTITUDES, AND URGENCY OF DOCUMENTATION

ATTITUDES AND POLICIES OF GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL LANGUAGE, INCLUDING OFFICIAL STATUS AND USE

The government's language policy greatly influenced the use of the Gorontalo language, especially in Tomini Bay. Despite recognising the importance of regional languages, their implementation at the local level is often limited, with official use of the Gorontalo language generally only in cultural events and informal communication. More substantial support is needed in education and documentation, such as dictionary development and research projects, to keep the language alive amid the dominance of national and foreign languages.

TABLE 6. Factor 7: Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use

Grade	Degree of Support	Deskripsi	Percentage of Respondents
0	Prohibition	Minority languages are prohibited.	1.29%
1	Forced assimilation	The dominant language is the sole official language, while nondominant languages are neither recognized nor protected.	5.81%
2	Active assimilation	Government encourages assimilation to the dominant language. There is no protection for minority languages.	3.87%
3	Passive assimilation	No explicit policy exists for minority languages; the dominant language prevails in the public domain.	9.68%
4	Differentiated support	Minority languages are protected primarily as the language of the private domains. The use of the language is prestigious..	28.39%
5	Equal support	All languages are protected.	50.97%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that the government's support for the Gorontalo language was at level 5, with 50.97% of respondents reporting that the language was protected on an equal footing with other languages. Despite the inclusive policy, the use of the Gorontalo language is still more robust in the private sphere than in the public. As many as 28.39% of respondents noted support for the Gorontalo language in the local community, but this language has not been fully recognized as an official language in the formal realm. Challenges remain in strengthening policies that support the use of the Gorontalo language in the public and institutional spheres to ensure its preservation.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THEIR OWN LANGUAGE

The community's attitude towards the Gorontalo language in Tomini Bay significantly affects the continuity and vitality of the language. The community is divided into two groups: those firmly committed to preserving and using the Gorontalo language in their daily lives and cultural events and those more likely to use national or foreign languages, especially in education and employment. The first group sees the Gorontalo language as an essential ethnic identity, while the second group, especially the younger generation, prefers Indonesian or English, which is considered more relevant in the modern context.

TABLE 7. Faktor 8: Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language

Grade	Deskripsi	Percentage of Respondents
0	No one cares if the language is lost; all prefer to use a dominant language	2.58%
1	Only a few members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	9.03%
2	Some members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	10.32%
3	Many members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	19.35%
4	Most members support language maintenance.	31.61%
5	All members value their language and wish to see it promoted	27.10%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that in Factor 8: Community Members' Attitudes towards Their Language, the highest response was at level 4, with 31.61% of respondents reporting strong support from most of the community for the maintenance of the Gorontalo language. This shows a positive awareness of the importance of language as a cultural identity.

AMOUNT AND QUALITY OF DOCUMENTATION

The quantity and quality of Gorontalo language documentation are significant in efforts to preserve and revitalize the Tomini Bay area, but they are still limited. Existing documentation, such as primary dictionaries and traditional texts, does not cover all aspects of language, including vocabulary and the use of language in cultural contexts. The quality of documentation is also not optimal, with many

sources that are difficult to access, and most are still in print format. The improvement of digital-based documentation is very urgent, and linguists and local communities should be involved in collecting, compiling, and disseminating Gorontalo language materials to remain relevant in the era of globalization.

TABLE 8. Factor 9: Amount and Quality of Documentation.

Tingkat	Label	Deskripsi	Persentasi
0	Undocumented	Nomaterial exists.	5.16%
1	Inadequate	Only a few grammatical sketches, short word lists, and fragmentary texts. Audio and video recordings do not exist, are unusable, or are entirely unannotated.	18.71%
2	Fragmentary	Some grammatical sketches, word lists, and texts are helpful for limited linguistic research but with inadequate coverage. Audio and video recordings may be of varying quality, with or without annotation.	18.06%
3	Fair	There may be adequate or sufficient grammar, dictionaries, and texts, but no everyday media; audio and video recordings may exist in varying quality or degree of annotation.	25.81%
4	Good	There is one good grammar and several adequate grammars, dictionaries, texts, literature, and occasionally updated everyday media; adequate annotated high-quality audio and video recordings.	14.84%
5	Superlative	There are comprehensive grammar and dictionaries, extensive texts; and a constant flow of language materials. Abundant annotated high-quality audio and video recordings exist.	17.42%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that the documentation of this language was at level 3, with 25.81% of respondents reporting that the existing documentation was sufficient to support the research. However, the quality of multimedia and annotation was still limited. Although there are grammar, dictionaries, and some texts, the coverage and quality of audio-visual recordings are still minimal.

DISCUSSION

Based on the UNESCO-LVE framework, a thorough evaluation of the vitality status of a language must consider nine factors in an integrated manner. Table 9 presents a combined scale for all factors, which describes the overall vitality level of the Gorontalo language used in the Tomini Bay Area, Gorontalo Province. (1) intergenerational language transmission, (2) the absolute number of speakers, (3) the proportion of speakers in the total population, (4) trends in existing language domains, (5) Responding to New Domains and Media, (6) Materials for Language and Literacy Education, (7) Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use, (8) Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language, (9) Amount and Quality of Documentation

TABLE 9. Gorontalo Language Vitality Assessment Status

Factor	The Vitality of the Gorontalo Language
1. intergenerational language transmission	3
2. the absolute number of speakers	4
3. the proportion of speakers in the total population	3
4. trends in existing language domains	5

5. Responding to New Domains and Media	1
6. Materials for Language and Literacy Education	3
7. Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use	5
8. Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language	4
9. Amount and Quality of Documentation	3
Rata-Rata Vitalitas Bahasa Gorontalo	3.44

According to Dwyer's formulation of language vitality, the following are the categories that are usually used to determine language status based on vitality scores:

1. 0 - 1.4 : Critically endangered
2. 1.5 - 2.9 : Endangered
3. 3.0 - 3.9 : Vulnerable
4. 4.0 - 5.0 : Stable or safe

With an average score of 3.44, the vitality of the Gorontalo language is included in the vulnerable category. This suggests that although the language is still in use, certain factors could threaten its future viability.

The results of the survey on the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay area based on the UNESCO-LVE framework show several essential factors that affect the sustainability of this language. First, the transmission of language between generations is at level 3, indicating a decrease in the use of language among the younger generation, while the dominance of Indonesian and foreign languages in education and daily life is increasing. The older generation tends to speak the Gorontalo language to children no longer, instead encouraging their children to abandon the tribal language in order to achieve higher education and success, resulting in the Gorontalo language being endangered (Firdaus, 2018; Purwaka et al., 2020). The viability of a language is greatly influenced by the social stability of its speaking community and whether the language is still passed on to the younger generation (Pakendorf, 2024). The transmission of language between generations helps in describing the vitality status of a language (Hamzah et al., 2024).

The absolute number of speakers reaching 119,600 indicates a considerable number, but the proportion of speakers in the total population is starting to decline. Language extinctions are often associated with languages that have few speakers. As Krauss states (1992), languages with fewer than 100,000 speakers can potentially become extinct. The use of the Gorontalo language in the social domain is at level 5, which indicates that this language is still maintained in local traditions and culture, although its use in the formal realm, such as government and education is limited. This is as well as research Fitriyani & Subiyanto (2021), which shows that the Gorontalo language is often used in religious and cultural activities, such as in ritual communication in the Dikili tradition. However, the response to the new media is at level 1, which shows the low adaptation of the Gorontalo language on digital platforms and modern technology, weakening its position among the younger generation.

In the field of education and literacy, level 3 shows that efforts to include the Gorontalo language in the education system are still limited, with a lack of comprehensive teaching materials. The development of exciting and relevant local teaching materials in the Gorontalo language is critical to increasing the use of the Gorontalo language in formal education and strengthening its vitality (Bay et al., 2018). The government's attitude is at level 5, indicating local government support for language preservation, although policy implementation still needs

improvement. The community's attitude is at level 4, with pride in the language, especially among the older generation, although the younger generation is starting to be less interested.

Gorontalo language documentation is at level 3, with existing documentation efforts that are still limited in terms of quality and accessibility. The development of two-way translator applications and dictionaries of traditional terms based on computational linguistics shows that technology can increase the quantity and quality of Gorontalo language documentation, facilitate access to learning, and support language preservation in the digital era. This innovation strengthens the vitality of the language by providing relevant documentation accessible to the broader community, including the younger generation (Dako et al., 2015, 2017; Lihawa et al., 2016). The presence of language in the realm of technology can show vitality and protect and promote the language for young speakers (Cunliffe, 2024; Wood, 2024).

The study also shows that the UNESCO-LVE framework provides a comprehensive evaluation of the vitality of the Gorontalo language. However, further studies are needed, especially in multiethnic and urban areas, to understand the dynamics of the Gorontalo language in different socioeconomic contexts. Language vitality indicators must clearly explain how changes in people's attitudes towards a language occur. Suppose this indicator is not able to provide a strong explanation for the change in language attitudes in society. In that case, the measurement or analysis of language vitality will only be an academic activity that does not have a natural or practical impact on language preservation efforts (Gobbo, 2021). The assessment of the vitality of languages has been of particular concern for the past 20 years, spearheaded by UNESCO, which affirms that linguistic diversity is a valuable part of human heritage and that the loss of languages is a loss to all of humanity (Webster, 2022). Therefore, this research is part of an effort to preserve the endangered Gorontalo language, especially in the coastal area of the Tomini Bay Area, Gorontalo Province.

CONCLUSION

The vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay, especially Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency, is in a vulnerable status with an average vitality value of 3.44. which shows that although the language is still used, there is a threat to its continuity, especially among the younger generation. The main factors contributing to this vulnerability are the decline in intergenerational transmission and the dominance of the Indonesian language in the educational and social domains. Although the government and the community have made efforts to preserve the language through education and cultural activities, challenges such as limited resources, documentation, and the younger generation's interests still hinder conservation efforts. Stronger cooperation between the government, communities, and educational institutions is urgently needed to strengthen the vitality of the Gorontalo language.

In facing this challenge, collaborative efforts are needed between the government, the community, and educational institutions to strengthen language transmission to the younger generation and expand the use of Gorontalo language in digital media. The development of more comprehensive learning materials, as well as language documentation in digital form, will be an essential step in maintaining the sustainability of the Gorontalo language.

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Commented [A13]: The conclusion could be improved by briefly summarizing the key findings to reinforce the study's main points. It would also benefit from discussing the broader implications for linguistics and language preservation, along with specific recommendations for stakeholders to take action. Highlighting areas for future research could encourage further exploration of this important topic. Additionally, emphasizing the cultural significance of the Gorontalo language would resonate more with readers, making the issue feel more urgent and relatable. A heartfelt call to action and a compelling closing statement would leave a lasting impression and inspire readers to engage with the cause.

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**8. Bukti Konfirmasi Hasil Perbaikan atas Review
Kedua
(4 April 2025)**

A. Bukti Konfirmasi Hasil Perbaikan atas Review Kedua

7/8/25, 12:37 AM

Email Universitas Negeri Gorontalo - Revised Manuscript Submission – Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Region...



Asna Ntelu <asna.ntelu@ung.ac.id>

Revised Manuscript Submission – Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regional Language Extinction

Asna Ntelu <asna.ntelu@ung.ac.id>

4 April 2025 pukul 07.46

Kepada: "Dr. Anis Nadiyah Che Abdul Rahman" <aniscar@ukm.edu.my>

Dear Dr. Anis Nadiyah Che Abdul Rahman,
Editor, GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies

Assalamu'alaikum and warm greetings,


Thank you very much for your email and for the opportunity to revise and improve our manuscript titled "*Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regional Language Extinction.*"

Attached to this email is the revised version of our manuscript, which has been carefully updated in accordance with the suggestions and comments provided by the reviewers. We truly appreciate the constructive feedback and hope that the revisions meet the expectations for publication in the upcoming May issue.

Please do not hesitate to let us know if further revisions or clarifications are required.

Thank you once again for your time and consideration.

Warm regards,
Miss Asna Ntelu
Universitas Negeri Gorontalo

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Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regional Language Extinction

ABSTRACT

Language vitality reflects the sustainability of a language's use in broader society, influenced by dimensions such as status, demographics, and institutional support. This study evaluates the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Teluk Tomini, which is at risk of extinction due to socio-cultural shifts and linguistic dominance. A survey method was employed based on UNESCO's nine vitality indicators, which include intergenerational language transmission, the absolute number of speakers, the proportion of speakers in the total population, trends in existing language domains, responsiveness to new domains and media, materials for language and literacy education, governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies including official status and use, community members' attitudes toward their own language, and the amount and quality of documentation. Data were gathered from 155 respondents in Gorontalo and Bone Bolango regencies through questionnaires, observations, and interviews. Quantitative analysis was used to interpret the survey results, while qualitative analysis of interview data was conducted to enrich the understanding of sociolinguistic dynamics. Results indicate that the Gorontalo language is classified as "Vulnerable," with an average vitality score of 3.44. While still used in some areas, transmission to younger generations is declining, exacerbated by Indonesian's dominance in education and social domains. This study underscores the urgency of fostering collaboration among governments, educational institutions, and local communities to enhance awareness and preservation strategies. The development of digital learning materials is proposed as a novel approach to revitalizing the Gorontalo language and ensuring its sustainability for future generations.

Keywords: vitality; language; language extinction; language rescue; Tomini Bay

INTRODUCTION

The Gorontalo language is a regional language spoken by the Gorontalo ethnic community residing in Gorontalo City and several surrounding regencies, including Gorontalo, Bone Bolango, Pohuwato, Boalemo, and North Gorontalo. As part of the Austronesian language family, it plays a vital role as a marker of cultural identity, a means of communication, and a medium for preserving local traditions. Gorontalo Province, a relatively new administrative region in Eastern Indonesia, is home to over one million residents, most of whom also speak Indonesian as the national language and English as a foreign language. Strategically located between the Sulawesi Sea and Tomini Bay, the province is characterized by its multilingual and multicultural environment. Consequently, the use of the Gorontalo language is increasingly shaped by interactions with migrants and the growing influence of the tourism sektor (Djou et al., 2021, 2023; Firdaus, 2018; Napu, 2024; Zakaria et al., 2021). Gorontalo language is a means of communication, a buffer and developer of local culture, and an identity for the people of Gorontalo (Baruadi, 2013). The function of local languages is to support the development of the Indonesian language and national culture (Olii, 2021). However, its use has been in steady decline, particularly among younger generations. The Gorontalo language experienced a decline in use due to the arrival of immigrants who brought their language and culture, transforming Gorontalo into a multi-ethnic society. This encouraged the adaptation of immigrant languages by local communities, triggering the Language Development Agency of the Ministry of Education

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and Culture to classify Gorontalo as an endangered regional language (Usman, 2008; Zakaria et al., 2021). Language vitality validation data up to 2019 shows that Gorontalo is only spoken by a few speakers aged 20 years and above, causing this language to be endangered, similar to 24 other regional languages in 10 provinces in Indonesia (Purwaka et al., 2020). According to the 2020 Linguistic Statistics, the Gorontalo language is included in the 56 regional languages in Indonesia that are classified as vulnerable to critical (Rahardini & Niswah, 2022).

The vitality of the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay Coastal Area is threatened by the dominance of Indonesian and other ethnic languages, such as Bajo, Javanese, and Bugis-Makassar, as well as foreign languages, especially English, due to globalization and interaction with immigrants. The people of Gorontalo have a tradition of using the Gorontalo language, which is influenced by Arabic, Portuguese, Dutch, and Malay (Djou et al., 2023). The dominant language influence in global communication and trade now threatens the Gorontalo language in remote areas. Hence, Tomini Bay Coastal Region parents often encourage their children to leave the local language to achieve higher education and success (Firdaus, 2018). The decline in the use of the Gorontalo language can threaten cultural identity and traditional knowledge. Therefore, the importance of this research is to understand the vitality of the Gorontalo language as an effort to save the extinction of regional languages.

The importance of local language as an essential asset plays a vital role in developing Indonesian vocabulary. Therefore, it is crucial to take strategic steps in maintaining, preserving, and promoting local languages (Ntelu et al., 2022; Ntelu & Djou, 2017). The study of language vitality is an essential basis for language conservation activities, which support efforts to protect local languages in Indonesia. Therefore, research on the vitality of the Gorontalo language it can be the right step to save the extinction of the Gorontalo language.

Fishman (1972) emphasises the importance of measuring language vitality based on several categories that include aspects such as the number of speakers, diversity of use, adaptability, and relevance in social and cultural contexts (Medeiros, 2017). Applying language vitality in research can help develop effective and sustainable plans to save endangered languages, including ongoing revitalization and preservation efforts (Gobbo, 2021). In the study of language vitality, researchers used a unique measuring tool to assess the condition of the language among its speakers, which later determined the status of the language in several categories (Zhou & Ang, 2024).

Benu (2023), through the results of his research, shows that local languages in Kupang City still have significant vitality with efforts to preserve local languages through the use of language in public signs and essential institutions. Firdaus (2018) shows that the Suwawa-Gorontalo language is considered stable and steady but threatens extinction. Ibrahim (2011) shows that mapping language vitality is the primary key to understanding the linguistic status of tribes in Indonesia. With this vitality mapping, it can be a solution for designing a program to save regional languages from the risk of extinction. Marica dan Duwila ((2017) show that the vitality status of the Ternate Language is in the worrying category. Aritonang (2016) also examined the vitality of the Talondo language by reporting the results of the evaluation of group sub-indices based on respondent characteristics such as gender, age, education, and occupation, which showed that the sustainability of the Talondo language had decreased.

[This research differs from some of these studies, especially on the object of the Gorontalo language and locations in the Tomini Bay Area, namely Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency. The novelty of this research lies in a specific location, highlighting the unique sociolinguistic and ethnolinguistic dynamics in the Tomini Bay area that affect the vitality of the Gorontalo language, targeting the regional language rescue strategy in the Tomini Bay Area, Gorontalo Province.] This study aims to assess the vitality of the Gorontalo language by integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches within the framework of UNESCO's nine

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language vitality indicators. Through a comprehensive analysis of these indicators, the research seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing the language's sustainability. By building on the findings of prior studies, this study is expected to contribute significantly to the preservation of minority languages in the context of globalization

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language vitality refers to the sustainability of a language within a community, shaped by factors such as status, demographics, and institutional support (Dattamajumdar, 2020; Wickström, 2023). It plays a crucial role in designing effective preservation strategies, strengthening group identity, and formulating intervention policies for minority or endangered languages (Clément & Norton, 2021; Coluzzi et al., 2013). Vitality is reflected in the ability of a speech community to maintain language use, supported by the number of speakers, social recognition, and institutional backing (Ding, 2023; Landry et al., 2022). It is commonly measured through variables such as language use, dominance, preference, attitude, motivation, and proficiency—factors that are especially critical in multilingual societies where interlingual interactions significantly influence social and cultural dynamics (Rohmah & Wijyanti, 2023; Stern, 2017; Ying et al., 2015). In the context of globalization, minority languages are increasingly threatened by the widespread use of dominant languages, making efforts to understand and enhance language vitality ever more urgent (Moring et al., 2011; Zabadi et al., 2023). Grenoble and Whaley (2006) emphasize that languages used in daily communication across domains such as family, education, work, and social interactions exhibit high vitality. Holmes (2001) argues that language sustainability is reinforced when ethnic communities live in close proximity and continue to use their language in key domains. Pateda (1987) further explains that within social interactions, more actively used languages tend to dominate, while those used less frequently are likely to be displaced by dominant languages—potentially leading to extinction if not preserved (Malabar, 2015).

UNESCO has established a comprehensive framework for evaluating language vitality, particularly for endangered languages. Developed by UNESCO's Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages in 2003, this framework encompasses nine key factors: intergenerational transmission, the absolute number of speakers, the proportion of speakers within the total population, shifts in domains of language use, adaptability to new media, the availability of educational and literacy materials, governmental attitudes and policies, community perceptions of their language, and the quantity and quality of language documentation. This framework provides a systematic approach to assessing the status of languages and identifying targeted interventions for their preservation (UNESCO, 2011). The framework is widely acknowledged as an effective tool for assessing a language's vitality and determining the necessary interventions for its preservation (Chen, 2023; Moseley, 2010).

Previous studies have demonstrated that the application of UNESCO's framework provides valuable insights into the factors influencing language vitality across diverse sociocultural contexts. The Temiar language in Malaysia, for example, exhibits relatively high vitality due to its large speaker population and its role as a lingua franca (Hassan et al., 2015), while the Sihan language in Sarawak faces a high risk of extinction, having failed to meet most UNESCO vitality criteria (Mohamed & Hashim, 2012). Research on the Kensiu language highlights the critical role of intergenerational transmission, despite challenges arising from younger generations' preferences for the dominant language (Hamzah et al., 2024). Similarly, the So language community in Thailand shows varying degrees of vitality, influenced by local village dynamics and external policy support (Tehan & Markowski, 2017). In Europe, the Friuli language in Italy continues to decline in terms of young speakers and usage domains, despite its official recognition (De Cia, 2021).

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Commented [A10R9]: Thank you for the valuable suggestion. We have revised the literature review section by incorporating recent studies on the Gorontalo language and clearly identifying the research gap, particularly regarding the lack of empirical assessments on language vitality and preservation strategies in the Tomini Bay coastal region.

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Several regional languages in Indonesia are currently facing a significant decline in vitality due to the combined effects of dominant language pressure, limited transmission, and inadequate educational resources. [In Indonesia, the Leukon language confronts comparable challenges. According to the Expanded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS), the language is classified at level 6b, signifying a high risk of language loss driven by the social and cultural influence of the dominant language (Candrasari et al., 2018). In the context of the Malay language in North Sumatra, the study reveals a decline in vitality, with transmission classified as level 3 (endangered), a decreasing number of native speakers, and a narrowing scope of usage, underscoring the language's critical condition. The availability of educational materials and adequate documentation plays a crucial role in sustaining language vitality. However, the Malay language in North Sumatra is significantly undervalued in these areas, further jeopardizing its survival (Pramuniati et al., 2024). The vitality of the Sundanese language in Cianjur City is declining, particularly in terms of intergenerational transmission. However, it retains potential in areas such as new media, literacy, and documentation. Enhancing the vitality of the Sundanese language necessitates strengthening intergenerational transmission through increased usage within families, the promotion of language learning in schools and communities, and the development of teaching materials and broader literacy initiatives (Kurniawati et al., 2021).]

These studies underscore the necessity of an integrated approach to assessing and preserving minority languages. The UNESCO framework offers systematic guidance for evaluating language status, while quantitative and qualitative methods can be employed to explore critical aspects of language vitality, including community attitudes, shifts in language usage domains, and the availability of educational resources. For instance, research by Rohmah dan Wijayanti (2023) by combining demographic surveys with in-depth interviews, this approach evaluates community attitudes toward linguistic minorities in Indonesia. It not only offers a comprehensive understanding of a language's actual conditions but also informs the development of more effective intervention strategies.

Research on the Gorontalo language has been conducted from various perspectives, including its function as a marker of cultural identity and a means of communication within the local community (Baruadi, 2013; Olii, 2021), as well as the threat of language endangerment due to the dominance of Indonesian and migrant languages (Usman, 2008; Zakaria et al., 2021). Statistical data indicate that Gorontalo is now spoken by only a small portion of the population over the age of 20, classifying it as a vulnerable language (Purwaka et al., 2020; Rahardini & Niswah, 2022). Studies by Firdaus (2018) dan Ibrahim (2011) emphasize the importance of intergenerational transmission and vitality mapping as the foundation for preservation policies. In addition, Djou et al. (2023) and Lihawa et al. (2016) highlight the historical aspects and documentation of traditional vocabulary. Napu (2024) examines the linguistic landscape of Gorontalo City, revealing a trend toward bilingualism through the use of Indonesian, English, and Arabic in public signage. However, these studies have not specifically assessed the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal region of Teluk Tomini using measurable indicators. This study fills that gap by evaluating language use, transmission, and community attitudes toward Gorontalo based on UNESCO's nine vitality indicators, while proposing contextual preservation strategies grounded in the sociolinguistic and ethnolinguistic dynamics of the region.]

METHOD

This study was conducted in the coastal region of Tomini Bay, specifically in Gorontalo Regency and Bone Bolango Regency, selected due to their vulnerability to the potential extinction of the Gorontalo language. This vulnerability is largely attributed to intensive language contact with speakers of other languages, particularly in tourist areas. A mixed-methods approach was

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employed, combining quantitative strategies to assess language status through measurable indicators and qualitative approaches to explore the sociocultural factors influencing language use(Bordonaba-Plou, 2022). By combining these methods, the study offers a more nuanced and contextual analysis, supporting the development of more targeted and effective language preservation strategies in the coastal region.

This study employs a purposive sampling technique to select respondents deemed relevant to the research objectives. Respondents were chosen based on specific criteria, including residence in the coastal area of Tomini Bay, a minimum age of 15 years, and proficiency in the Gorontalo language, both active and passive. Additionally, demographic diversity—such as variations in age, gender, and education level—was considered to ensure the data accurately reflect the characteristics of coastal communities. A total of 155 respondents were selected, representing a sufficient sample size to provide a comprehensive understanding of the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the region. To complement the data collected from the community, interviews were conducted with indigenous leaders, government officials, and language practitioners, offering institutional and cultural perspectives to enrich the study's findings. Data collection in this study was carried out using a survey method. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) surveys are designed to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data from individuals using instruments such as questionnaires and interviews, with the aim of identifying trends, attitudes, or characteristics within a population. In the context of this study, the survey method was applied to explore the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Teluk Tomini

In this study, the survey method was employed to investigate the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay. Data were collected through a combination of questionnaires, observations, and interviews, providing a comprehensive understanding of the language's current status and usage dynamics. The survey in this study is based on nine factors formulated by UNESCO's Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages to assess language vitality. These factors include intergenerational language transmission, which measures the extent to which a language is passed from one generation to the next; the absolute number of speakers, indicating the total number of users; the proportion of speakers within the population, reflecting the percentage of users in the community; shifting domains of language use, which evaluates the variety of social contexts in which the language is utilized; response to new domains and media, assessing the language's adaptability to technology and digital platforms; availability of educational and literacy materials, such as textbooks and dictionaries; government and institutional attitudes and policies, including the language's official status; community attitudes toward their language, reflecting the level of appreciation and value assigned by the community; and the amount and quality of language documentation, which examines the extent to which the language has been recorded in written, audio, or video formats. These nine factors were incorporated into a questionnaire using a rating scale from 0 to 5, providing a quantifiable assessment of the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay. This framework also serves as a foundation for strategic analyses aimed at language preservation.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the research approach, this study employed a combination of survey, observation, and interview methods. Data from observations and interviews complement the data obtained from the survey. Contributing to a more robust and nuanced analysis. A series of formal and informal interviews were conducted with participants to gather detailed information about their biographical and linguistic backgrounds, language use in various social contexts, and attitudes toward the Gorontalo language. These interviews were specifically designed to capture dimensions not fully addressed through surveys, such as individual perceptions and patterns of language use in specific contexts. Observations further enriched the dataset by allowing researchers to directly observe language use in natural settings,

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offering critical context to validate and enhance the survey findings. All collected data were analyzed using UNESCO’s nine language vitality criteria, as outlined during the UNESCO Expert Meeting in March 2003. By integrating these methodologies, the study provided a comprehensive assessment of the vitality of the Gorontalo language and ensured the reliability and depth of its findings (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Lewis, 2009).

Data analysis in this study employed a quantitative approach complemented by qualitative analysis to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the research findings. According to Mahsun (2011), Data analysis is the process of classifying, grouping, and equalizing similar data, as well as separating and grouping different data. Data analysis was carried out quantitatively. Technically, quantitative data analysis includes (1) describing the analysis techniques used, including descriptive statistics in the form of averages and percentages, (2) presenting the results of the analysis in the form of tables, histograms, bar charts, line charts, or other relevant diagrams, (3) analyzing percentages based on statements obtained from research instruments, (4) providing interpretations of descriptive statistical data, which are generally in the form of averages and percentages, and (5) supplementing data analysis with interviews to understand the problems revealed in the research (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2022). This approach aligns with Creswell’s (2014) perspective, which emphasizes that quantitative data analysis involves organizing data, conducting statistical analyses, and interpreting results to address research questions and test hypotheses. Creswell also underscores the importance of presenting data in various visual formats, such as tables and diagrams, to enhance reader comprehension. Furthermore, Creswell advocates supplementing statistical data with qualitative methods, such as interviews, to provide deeper contextual insights into the study’s findings. This study adopts this principle, integrating Mahsun’s (2011) and Creswell’s (2014) steps for data analysis. By combining these quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the analysis not only yields measurable data but also offers a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

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Commented [A24R23]: Thank you for the suggestion. I have revised the abstract by including the qualitative component of the study to reflect the mixed-methods approach used.

RESULT

KEY FACTORS IN LANGUAGE USE

INTERGENERATIONAL LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION

Intergenerational language transmission is an essential factor in the sustainability of a language because it involves the inheritance of language from the older generation to the younger generation through daily interactions and educational institutions. If the regional language is not used between parents and children, language skills will decrease, threatening the continuity of the language. Therefore, intergenerational transmission is a significant benchmark of language vitality, where well-passed languages are more resistant to the threat of extinction than those that fail to be transmitted.

TABEL 1. Factor 1: Intergenerational Language Transmission

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Speaker Population	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	There exists no speaker	0.65%
1	Critically endangered	The language is used mainly by very few speakers of the great-grandparental generation.	3.87%

2	Severely endangered	The language is used mainly by the grandparental generation and up	9.03%
3	Definitively endangered	The language is used mainly by the parental generation and up	51.61%
4	Unsafe	The language is used by some children in all domains; all children in limited domains use it.	8.39%
5	Safe	The language is used by all ages, from children up.	26.45%

The survey results showed that the transmission of the Gorontalo language between generations was at level 3, indicating a decline, with the majority of respondents (51.61%) reporting that the elderly and elderly generations mostly used this language. The gap in transmission, especially among the younger generation, risks accelerating the extinction of these languages if there are no intensive revitalization efforts. Therefore, conservation strategies that target children and vulnerable areas are urgently needed, such as integrating the Gorontalo language into formal education and increasing access to learning materials.

THE ABSOLUTE NUMBER OF SPEAKERS

The absolute number of speakers is an essential indicator in assessing the vitality of a language because the more native speakers there are, the greater the chances of the language surviving. This indicator covers all age groups and language use in various social, cultural, and economic contexts. The decline in speakers, especially among the younger generation, increases the risk of language extinction. This factor is not assessed by scale but rather by the actual number of speakers in the community, with small populations more vulnerable to threats. While the number of speakers is essential, other factors must also be considered to ensure the preservation of the language.

POPULATION SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION

Tabel 3.2 Jumlah Penduduk menurut Kabupaten/Kota, Daerah Perkotaan/Perdesaan, dan Jenis Kelamin
Population by Regency/Municipality, Urban/Rural Area and Sex

Kabupaten/Kota Regency/Municipality	Daerah Perkotaan (City)			Daerah Perdesaan (Rural)			Daerah Perkotaan/Perdesaan (Urban-Rural)		
	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Buolimo	15.454	16.118	31.572	440.301	56.633	496.934	74.155	72.775	146.930
Gorontalo	70.093	63.606	133.699	130.750	114.513	245.263	200.603	186.115	386.718
Pohuwato	10.498	20.496	30.994	140.034	52.657	192.691	75.439	71.348	146.787
Bono Boliango	32.310	34.676	66.986	51.240	40.574	91.814	63.550	62.650	126.200
Gorontalo Utara	10.304	11.140	21.444	55.111	51.806	106.917	65.615	62.948	128.563
Kabupaten/Kota	97.059	96.030	193.089	2.282	2.970	5.252	100.043	101.307	201.350
GORONTALO	255.119	244.976	500.095	596.461	675.182	1.271.643	441.563	421.150	862.713

FIGURE 1. Number of Population as a result of the 2020 population census long form

PENDIDIKAN

Tabel 6.4 Jumlah Penduduk Berumur 5 Tahun ke Atas Menurut Kabupaten/Kota, Bahasa Pertama Kali Dikuasai, dan Jenis Kelamin
Population 5 Years of Age and Over by Regency/Municipality, First Language Spoken, and Sex

Kabupaten/Kota Regency/Municipality	Bahasa Indonesia/Bahasa			Bahasa yang Pertama Dikuasai / First Language Spoken			Bahasa Asing / Foreign Language		
	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total	Laki-laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Kabupaten/Regency									
Buolimo	51.755	50.587	102.342	17.521	15.782	33.303	-	-	-
Gorontalo	113.015	133.057	246.072	31.258	49.382	80.640	5	-	5
Pohuwato	55.055	53.525	108.580	14.475	13.519	28.000	-	-	-
Bono Boliango	66.341	66.208	132.549	9.843	9.400	19.243	-	-	-
Gorontalo Utara	60.797	48.587	109.384	9.557	9.230	18.787	-	-	-
Kota/Municipality									
Gorontalo	87.008	88.735	175.743	4.437	6.606	11.043	11	-	11
GORONTALO	444.062	440.908	884.970	167.087	101.667	268.754	15	-	15

FIGURE 2. Data on the Number of Speakers from the 2020 Population Census Long Form

According to the UNESCO LVE framework, the data shows that the number of regional language speakers in Gorontalo and Bone Bolango Regencies reflects the "Vulnerable" condition. Gorontalo Regency has 100,560 regional language speakers (30.51% of the total Population), while Bone Bolango Regency only has 19,040 speakers (11.45%). With a total of 119,600 speakers from a combined Population of 495,776 people, the use of regional languages is still significant but vulnerable to extinction, especially in Bone Bolango. Urban areas face a faster decline in language use due to the dominance of national and foreign languages. To maintain the vitality of the language, a continuous revitalization program is needed, primarily through bilingual education and local Government policy support.

THE PROPORTION OF SPEAKERS IN THE TOTAL POPULATION

The proportion of speakers in the total population is a critical indicator in assessing the vitality of a language because the more significant the proportion of speakers, the higher the vitality of the language. If only a tiny portion of the population speaks the language, this indicates a decline in use and the threat of extinction, especially if the dominant language replaces the role of the local language. Understanding this proportion is essential for determining the urgency of language preservation and revitalization, as this factor reflects the percentage of target language users in the context of the overall population.

TABLE 2. Factor 3: The Proportion of Speakers in the Total Population

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Proportion of Speakers	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	None speak the language	1.29%
1	Critically endangered	Very few speak the language.	21.29%
2	Severely endangered	The majority speak the language.	20.00%
3	Definitively endangered	A majority speak the language	25.16%
4	Unsafe	Nearly all speak the language.	21.29%
5	Unsafe	All speak the language.	10.97%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay show that the highest level of the use of the Gorontalo language is in the category of "Experiencing Decline," with 25.16% of respondents reporting that most of the population still uses this language. Although the use of the Gorontalo language is still relatively common in most regions, the decline is noticeable, especially in formal use and among the younger generation. This shows that although the Gorontalo language has not yet reached a critical condition, signs of deterioration have begun to be seen, so more intensive preservation measures are needed.

TRENDS IN EXISTING LANGUAGE DOMAINS

Trends in language use in various domains of life, such as home, school, workplace, and media, are essential indicators of language vitality. If the language is only used at home or among the elderly, while other languages dominate in the formal realm, such as schools and the media, this indicates a decline in use. In contrast, the widespread use of language across various domains shows good vitality.

TABLE 3. Factor 4: Trends in Existing Language Domains

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	Domains and Functions	Percentage of Respondents
0	Extinct	The language is not used in any domain and for any function.	0.00%
1	Minimal domains	The language is used only in a restricted domain and for a few functions.	18.71%
2	Limited or formal domains	The language is used in limited social domains and for several functions	10.97%
3	Dwindling domains	The language is used in home domains and for many functions, but the dominant language begins to penetrate even home domains.	23.23%
4	Multilingual parity	Two more languages may be used in most social domains and for most functions.	22.58%
5	Universal use	The language is used in all domains and for all functions	24.52%

The results of the survey on the vitality of the Gorontalo language in Tomini Bay based on Factor 4: Trends in Language Domain showed that the highest respondents were at level 5 as 24.52% of respondents reported the use of Gorontalo language in all regions and social functions, which reflects the community that is still strong in maintaining this language in the formal and informal realms. However, a downward trend was seen, with 23.23% of respondents reporting that this language was limited to home, and 22.58% of respondents reported the joint use of Gorontalo and other languages, reflecting the situation of diglossia. A further downward trend was reported by 18.71% of respondents who only used this language in limited situations, indicating that the Gorontalo language faces significant challenges under the dominance of Indonesian.

RESPONDING TO NEW DOMAINS AND MEDIA

In the digital era, new media such as the internet, social media, and digital applications provide opportunities and challenges for the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay area. While this media can be used to preserve language through digital content, the dominance of national and foreign languages threatens the use of the Gorontalo language, especially among the younger generation.

TABLE 4. Factor 5 : Responding to New Domains and Media

Grade	Degree of Endangerment	New Domains and Media Accepted by the Endangered Language	Percentage of Respondents
0	Inactive	The language is not used in any new domains.	1.94%
1	Minimal	The language is used in only a few new domains	31.61%
2	Coping	The language is used in some new domains.	21.29%
3	Receptive	The language is used in many domains.	14.19%
4	Robust/active	The language is used in most new domains..	18.71%
5	Dynamic	The language is used in all new domains.	12.26%

The Gorontalo language vitality survey results showed that the highest response was at level 1, with 31.61% of respondents reporting that adapting the Gorontalo language in the region and new media was very limited. This language is only used in a few new contexts, such as digital

media or work environments, but it is not yet widespread. This level 1 indicates that the use of the Gorontalo language in dealing with technological developments is still minimal, so there is a risk that this language will not be able to compete in the digital space.

MATERIALS FOR LANGUAGE AND LITERACY EDUCATION

Language education and literacy are essential in preserving the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay. The development of exciting and curriculum-appropriate learning materials, both formal and informal, is urgently needed so that the younger generation can still learn this language. The material must cover various levels, from basic to advanced, and use print, digital, and audiovisual media. Interactive textbooks, dictionaries, folklore, and online platforms will help expand the range of learning.

TABEL 5. Faktor 6: Materials for Language and Literacy Education

Grade	Accessibility of Written Materials	Percentage of Respondents
0	No orthography is available to the community.	9.03%
1	A practical orthography is known to the community, and some material is being written.	12.26%
2	Written materials exist, but they may only be helpful for some community members; for others, they may have a symbolic significance. Literacy education in the language is not a part of the school curriculum.	18.71%
3	Written materials exist, and children may be exposed to the written form at school. Literacy is not promoted through print media.	27.74%
4	Written materials exist, and at school, children are developing literacy in the language. Writing in the language is not used in administration.	14.84%
5	There is an established orthography literacy tradition with grammar, dictionaries, texts, literature, and everyday media. Writing in the language is used in administration and education.	17.42%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that in Factor 6: Materials for Language and Literacy Education, the highest response was at level 3, with 27.74% of respondents reporting that written materials were available and children were exposed to the Gorontalo language in schools, but literacy in this language has not been widely promoted. This indicates that despite efforts to introduce the Gorontalo language in written form, its spread in the educational environment is still limited. Therefore, more significant efforts are needed to integrate the Gorontalo language into the curriculum and expand the availability of literacy materials.

LANGUAGE POLICY, ATTITUDES, AND URGENCY OF DOCUMENTATION

ATTITUDES AND POLICIES OF GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL LANGUAGE, INCLUDING OFFICIAL STATUS AND USE

The government's language policy greatly influenced the use of the Gorontalo language, especially in Tomini Bay. Despite recognising the importance of regional languages, their implementation at the local level is often limited, with official use of the Gorontalo language generally only in cultural events and informal communication. More substantial support is needed in education and documentation, such as dictionary development and research projects, to keep the language alive amid the dominance of national and foreign languages.

TABLE 6. Factor 7: Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use

Grade	Degree of Support	Deskripsi	Percentage of Respondents
0	Prohibition	Minority languages are prohibited.	1.29%
1	Forced assimilation	The dominant language is the sole official language, while nondominant languages are neither recognized nor protected.	5.81%
2	Active assimilation	Government encourages assimilation to the dominant language. There is no protection for minority languages.	3.87%
3	Passive assimilation	No explicit policy exists for minority languages; the dominant language prevails in the public domain.	9.68%
4	Differentiated support	Minority languages are protected primarily as the language of the private domains. The use of the language is prestigious..	28.39%
5	Equal support	All languages are protected.	50.97%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that the government's support for the Gorontalo language was at level 5, with 50.97% of respondents reporting that the language was protected on an equal footing with other languages. Despite the inclusive policy, the use of the Gorontalo language is still more robust in the private sphere than in the public. As many as 28.39% of respondents noted support for the Gorontalo language in the local community, but this language has not been fully recognized as an official language in the formal realm. Challenges remain in strengthening policies that support the use of the Gorontalo language in the public and institutional spheres to ensure its preservation.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THEIR OWN LANGUAGE

The community's attitude towards the Gorontalo language in Tomini Bay significantly affects the continuity and vitality of the language. The community is divided into two groups: those firmly committed to preserving and using the Gorontalo language in their daily lives and cultural events and those more likely to use national or foreign languages, especially in education and employment. The first group sees the Gorontalo language as an essential ethnic identity, while the second group, especially the younger generation, prefers Indonesian or English, which is considered more relevant in the modern context.

TABLE 7. Faktor 8: Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language

Grade	Deskripsi	Percentage
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		of Respondents
0	No one cares if the language is lost; all prefer to use a dominant language	2.58%
1	Only a few members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	9.03%
2	Some members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	10.32%
3	Many members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.	19.35%
4	Most members support language maintenance.	31.61%
5	All members value their language and wish to see it promoted	27.10%

The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that in Factor 8: Community Members' Attitudes towards Their Language, the highest response was at level 4, with 31.61% of respondents reporting strong support from most of the community for the maintenance of the Gorontalo language. This shows a positive awareness of the importance of language as a cultural identity.

AMOUNT AND QUALITY OF DOCUMENTATION

The quantity and quality of Gorontalo language documentation are significant in efforts to preserve and revitalize the Tomini Bay area, but they are still limited. Existing documentation, such as primary dictionaries and traditional texts, does not cover all aspects of language, including vocabulary and the use of language in cultural contexts. The quality of documentation is also not optimal, with many sources that are difficult to access, and most are still in print format. The improvement of digital-based documentation is very urgent, and linguists and local communities should be involved in collecting, compiling, and disseminating Gorontalo language materials to remain relevant in the era of globalization.

TABLE 8. Factor 9: Amount and Quality of Documentation.

Tingkat	Label	Deskripsi	Persentase
0	Undocumented	No material exists.	5.16%
1	Inadequate	Only a few grammatical sketches, short word lists, and fragmentary texts. Audio and video recordings do not exist, are unusable, or are entirely unannotated.	18.71%
2	Fragmentary	Some grammatical sketches, word lists, and texts are helpful for limited linguistic research but with inadequate coverage. Audio and video recordings may be of varying quality, with or without annotation.	18.06%
3	Fair	There may be adequate or sufficient grammar, dictionaries, and texts, but no everyday media; audio and video recordings may exist in varying quality or degree of annotation.	25.81%
4	Good	There is one good grammar and several adequate grammars, dictionaries, texts, literature, and occasionally updated everyday media; adequate annotated high-quality audio and video recordings.	14.84%

5	Superlative	There are comprehensive grammar and dictionaries, 17.42% extensive texts; and a constant flow of language materials. Abundant annotated high-quality audio and video recordings exist.
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The results of the Gorontalo language vitality survey in Tomini Bay showed that the documentation of this language was at level 3, with 25.81% of respondents reporting that the existing documentation was sufficient to support the research. However, the quality of multimedia and annotation was still limited. Although there are grammar, dictionaries, and some texts, the coverage and quality of audio-visual recordings are still minimal.

DISCUSSION

Based on the UNESCO-LVE framework, a thorough evaluation of the vitality status of a language must consider nine factors in an integrated manner. Table 9 presents a combined scale for all factors, which describes the overall vitality level of the Gorontalo language used in the Tomini Bay Area, Gorontalo Province. (1) intergenerational language transmission, (2) the absolute number of speakers, (3) the proportion of speakers in the total population, (4) trends in existing language domains, (5) Responding to New Domains and Media, (6) Materials for Language and Literacy Education, (7) Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Institutional Language, Including Official Status and Use, (8) Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language, (9) Amount and Quality of Documentation

TABLE 9. Gorontalo Language Vitality Assessment Status

Factor	The Vitality of the Gorontalo Language
1. intergenerational language transmission	3
2. the absolute number of speakers	4
3. the proportion of speakers in the total population	3
4. trends in existing language domains	5
5. Responding to New Domains and Media	1
6. Materials for Language and Literacy Education	3
7. Attitudes and Policies of Governments and Language Institutions, Including Official Status and Use	5
8. Community Members' Attitudes Toward Their Own Language	4
9. Amount and Quality of Documentation	3
Rata-Rata Vitalitas Bahasa Gorontalo	3.44

According to Dwyer's formulation of language vitality, the following are the categories that are usually used to determine language status based on vitality scores:

1. 0 - 1.4 : Critically endangered
2. 1.5 - 2.9 : Endangered
3. 3.0 - 3.9 : Vulnerable
4. 4.0 - 5.0 : Stable or safe

With an average score of 3.44, the vitality of the Gorontalo language is included in the vulnerable category. This suggests that although the language is still in use, certain factors could threaten its future viability.

The results of the survey on the vitality of the Gorontalo language in the Tomini Bay area based on the UNESCO-LVE framework show several essential factors that affect the sustainability of this language. First, the transmission of language between generations is at level 3, indicating a decrease in the use of language among the younger generation, while the dominance of Indonesian and foreign languages in education and daily life is increasing. The older generation tends to speak the Gorontalo language to children no longer, instead encouraging their children to abandon the tribal language in order to achieve higher education and success, resulting in the Gorontalo language being endangered (Firdaus, 2018; Purwaka et al., 2020). The viability of a language is greatly influenced by the social stability of its speaking community and whether the language is still passed on to the younger generation (Pakendorf, 2024). The transmission of language between generations helps in describing the vitality status of a language (Hamzah et al., 2024).

The absolute number of speakers reaching 119,600 indicates a considerable number, but the proportion of speakers in the total population is starting to decline. Language extinctions are often associated with languages that have few speakers. As Krauss states (1992), languages with fewer than 100,000 speakers can potentially become extinct. The use of the Gorontalo language in the social domain is at level 5, which indicates that this language is still maintained in local traditions and culture, although its use in the formal realm, such as government and education is limited. This is as well as research Fitriyani & Subiyanto (2021), which shows that the Gorontalo language is often used in religious and cultural activities, such as in ritual communication in the Dikili tradition. However, the response to the new media is at level 1, which shows the low adaptation of the Gorontalo language on digital platforms and modern technology, weakening its position among the younger generation.

In the field of education and literacy, level 3 shows that efforts to include the Gorontalo language in the education system are still limited, with a lack of comprehensive teaching materials. The development of exciting and relevant local teaching materials in the Gorontalo language is critical to increasing the use of the Gorontalo language in formal education and strengthening its vitality (Bay et al., 2018). The government's attitude is at level 5, indicating local government support for language preservation, although policy implementation still needs improvement. The community's attitude is at level 4, with pride in the language, especially among the older generation, although the younger generation is starting to be less interested.

Gorontalo language documentation is at level 3, with existing documentation efforts that are still limited in terms of quality and accessibility. The development of two-way translator applications and dictionaries of traditional terms based on computational linguistics shows that technology can increase the quantity and quality of Gorontalo language documentation, facilitate access to learning, and support language preservation in the digital era. This innovation strengthens the vitality of the language by providing relevant documentation accessible to the broader community, including the younger generation (Dako et al., 2015, 2017; Lihawa et al., 2016). The presence of language in the realm of technology can show vitality and protect and promote the language for young speakers (Cunliffe, 2024; Wood, 2024).

The study also shows that the UNESCO-LVE framework provides a comprehensive evaluation of the vitality of the Gorontalo language. However, further studies are needed, especially in multiethnic and urban areas, to understand the dynamics of the Gorontalo language in different socioeconomic contexts. Language vitality indicators must clearly explain how changes in people's attitudes towards a language occur. Suppose this indicator is not able to provide a strong explanation for the change in language attitudes in society. In that case, the measurement or analysis of language vitality will only be an academic activity that does not have a natural or practical impact on language preservation efforts (Gobbo, 2021). The assessment of the vitality of languages has been of particular concern for the past 20 years, spearheaded by

UNESCO, which affirms that linguistic diversity is a valuable part of human heritage and that the loss of languages is a loss to all of humanity (Webster, 2022). Therefore, this research is part of an effort to preserve the endangered Gorontalo language, especially in the coastal area of the Tomini Bay Area, Gorontalo Province.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Gorontalo language in the coastal area of Tomini Bay, particularly in Gorontalo and Bone Bolango Regencies, is in a vulnerable condition, with an average vitality score of 3.44. While the language remains in use, its intergenerational transmission is weakening, particularly among younger speakers. This vulnerability is exacerbated by the dominance of Indonesian in educational and social settings, limited learning resources, and low youth engagement. These findings underscore the urgency of revitalization efforts that prioritize strengthening language transmission within families, integrating Gorontalo language into formal education, and expanding its presence in digital platforms. Collaboration among local communities, governments, and educational institutions is vital to sustaining the language. Beyond the local context, this research highlights broader implications for linguistic diversity and language preservation in multilingual societies. It calls on stakeholders to invest in digital language documentation, culturally responsive curricula, and community-driven programs. Future research should explore longitudinal changes in language use, especially in urban-migrant contexts, and evaluate the effectiveness of revitalization strategies. Emphasizing the cultural and identity value of the Gorontalo language is essential—not only for its survival but also for maintaining the region's rich intangible heritage. A collective, heartfelt commitment is needed to ensure that the Gorontalo language continues to live and thrive across generations.

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Commented [A25]: The conclusion could be improved by briefly summarizing the key findings to reinforce the study's main points. It would also benefit from discussing the broader implications for linguistics and language preservation, along with specific recommendations for stakeholders to take action. Highlighting areas for future research could encourage further exploration of this important topic. Additionally, emphasizing the cultural significance of the Gorontalo language would resonate more with readers, making the issue feel more urgent and relatable. A heartfelt call to action and a compelling closing statement would leave a lasting impression and inspire readers to engage with the cause.

Commented [A26R25]: Thank you for your valuable feedback. The conclusion has been revised to briefly summarize the key findings, highlight broader implications for language preservation and linguistic policy, and provide specific recommendations for stakeholders. I have also included directions for future research and emphasized the cultural significance of the Gorontalo language, along with a strong, collaborative call to action as a closing statement.

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**9. Bukti Konfirmasi Hasil Perbaikan atas Review
Kedua telah Diterima
(10 April 2025)**

A. Bukti Konfirmasi Hasil Perbaikan atas Review Kedua telah Diterima

7/8/25, 12:49 AM

Email Universitas Negeri Gorontalo - Revised Manuscript Submission – Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Region...



Asna Ntelu <asna.ntelu@ung.ac.id>

Revised Manuscript Submission – Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regional Language Extinction

ANIS NADIAH CHE ABDUL RAHMAN <aniscar@ukm.edu.my>
Kepada: Asna Ntelu <asna.ntelu@ung.ac.id>

10 April 2025 pukul 20.36

Dear Ms Asna Ntelu,

Thank you very much for your corrections.

I have submitted the decision to the editorial board for their review and further action. The editorial assistant will be in contact with you soon to provide any updates.

Thank you once again for your contributions.

Anis Nadiyah Che Abdul Rahman, PhD
Pusat Kajian Bahasa dan Linguistik | Centre for Research in Language and Linguistics
Fakulti Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan | Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
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**10. Bukti Konfirmasi Artikel Accepted
(21 April 2025)**

A. Bukti Konfirmasi Artikel Accepted

7/8/25, 3:20 AM

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Asna Ntelu <asna.ntelu@ung.ac.id>

[GEMA Online®] Publication fee:79684-Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regional Language Extinction

3 pesan

GEMA Editorial Assistant <gema_editor@ukm.edu.my>

21 April 2025 pukul 14.54

Kepada: Asna Ntelu <asna.ntelu@ung.ac.id>, Dakia N Djou <dakiadjou@ung.ac.id>, Sayama Malabar

<Sayama.malabar@ung.ac.id>, Jafar Lantowa <jafar.lantowa@ung.ac.id>

Cc: jgema@ukm.edu.my

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The editorial has agreed that this article has been accepted for the next publication. Based on the Journal's publication fee policy, your article is subject to a publication fee of RM 2187 (which is based on today's currency rate, equivalent to USD500) before we can publish it.

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21 April 2025 pukul 20.03

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I acknowledge receipt of your instructions regarding the publication fee of RM 2187 (USD 500). I will proceed with the payment as per your provided guidelines and will ensure that the payment is completed before the deadline of **Monday, 28 April 2025**.

Thank you again for your assistance. Please let me know if further information is required.

Warm regards,
Asna Nteli

[Kutipan teks disembunyikan]

**11. Bukti Konfirmasi Artikel Published Online
(29 Mei 2025)**

A. Bukti Konfirmasi Artikel Published Online

7/8/25, 4:43 AM

Email Universitas Negeri Gorontalo - [GEMA Online®] Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regional Language Extinc...



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[GEMA Online®] Language Vitality of Gorontalo: A Rescue from Regional Language Extinction

GEMA Editorial Assistant <gema_editor@ukm.edu.my>

29 Mei 2025 pukul 13.45

Kepada: Asna Ntelu <asna.ntelu@ung.ac.id>, Dakia N Djou <dakiadjou@ung.ac.id>, Sayama Malabar

<Sayama.malabar@ung.ac.id>, Jafar Lantowa <jafar.lantowa@ung.ac.id>

Cc: jgema@ukm.edu.my

Dear authors,

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On behalf of the editorial team, we extend our sincere appreciation for your valuable contribution and continued support of GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies.

Best wishes,

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(On behalf of Editor-in-Chief)

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