

EXPLORING THE LANGUAGE ATTITUDES OF THE TOLAKI COMMUNITY IN KENDARI: A COMPREHENSIVE SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study explores the language attitudes of the Tolaki people in Kendari City, Southeast Sulawesi, focusing on their perceptions of the Tolaki language in comparison to immigrant or dominant languages such as Indonesian. As a sociolinguistic investigation, the research examines how language pride, loyalty, and awareness influence language maintenance or contribute to language shift. The study targets all native speakers of the Tolaki language residing in Kendari, a city administratively divided into 10 sub-districts. A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted to ensure a representative sample. Stratified sampling was employed to select participants based on demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and occupation. In the first stage, six sub-districts—Abeli, Kendari, Poasia, Puwatu, Kambu, and Wua-wua—were chosen due to their high concentration of Tolaki speakers. A total of 322 respondents participated in the study. Data were collected using structured questionnaires to measure language attitudes, semi-structured interviews to explore deeper personal and cultural insights, and direct observation to assess actual language use in daily contexts. The quantitative data were processed using SPSS, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that language attitudes among Tolaki speakers—especially concerning pride in using the language, loyalty to its use, and awareness of its norms—were generally low. This decline in positive language attitudes, particularly among younger generations, has contributed to a noticeable language shift. The Tolaki language is increasingly marginalized in daily communication, indicating a weakening intergenerational transmission and a growing dominance of Indonesian in informal and public domains.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a critical component of cultural identity, serving not only as a medium of communication but also as a marker of social belonging and ethnic pride (Abtahian, Cohn, & Pepinsky, 2016; Fitriati & Wardani, 2020). For indigenous communities, the preservation of local languages is essential for maintaining their cultural heritage and passing on traditions to future generations. However, with the rise of global and national languages, many indigenous languages face the risk of extinction (Darma & Siregar, 2017). In Indonesia, a country known for its linguistic diversity, this trend is particularly evident. The Tolaki language, spoken by the Tolaki people in Southeast Sulawesi, is one such language facing the threat of marginalization and decline in everyday use. The Tolaki community, predominantly residing in Kendari City and surrounding regions, has experienced significant language shifts in recent years. Although the Tolaki language was

once a vital component of everyday life, it is increasingly being replaced by Indonesian, the national language, and other regional languages such as Bugis. This shift is particularly pronounced among younger generations, who often perceive Indonesian as a more prestigious and socially advantageous language (Awad, 2016; Arafah, Putra, & Arafah, 2022). This phenomenon aligns with broader global trends where local languages are displaced by dominant national or international languages. Language attitude, which refers to the feelings, beliefs, and behaviors people have toward a language, plays a crucial role in the maintenance or decline of a language. Positive language attitudes, characterized by pride, loyalty, and adherence to language norms, can foster language preservation. In contrast, negative attitudes may lead to language abandonment as speakers favor languages associated with higher social mobility or economic opportunities. In the case of the Tolaki community, understanding these attitudes is key to addressing the ongoing language shift.

Research on language attitudes often focuses on three main dimensions: language loyalty, pride, and awareness of language norms (Arafah, Putra, & Arafah, 2022). Language loyalty reflects the desire of speakers to maintain and use their language within their community, resisting external pressures to adopt other languages (Fitriati & Wardani, 2020). Language pride refers to the emotional connection and sense of identity speakers derive from their language. Awareness of language norms entails the use of the language in a way that aligns with its traditional rules and structure (Marhadi & Syahrin, 2021). Together, these components form the foundation of language maintenance efforts. Previous studies have shown that when speakers of a minority language lose their sense of loyalty or pride, a language shift becomes almost inevitable. In regions where socioeconomic factors favor the use of dominant languages, such as in education, business, and government, local languages often suffer (Pehala, Fernandez, & Abdullah, 2017). For the Tolaki people, the growing use of Indonesian in schools, workplaces, and public spaces has contributed to a gradual erosion of their native language. Among younger Tolaki speakers, the Tolaki language is increasingly perceived as less relevant or useful for modern life.

This study aims to explore the current state of language attitudes among the Tolaki community in Kendari City. Specifically, it seeks to investigate whether the Tolaki people still maintain a sense of pride, loyalty, and awareness toward their language, or whether they have shifted toward more dominant languages. The research also examines the impact of demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and occupation on language attitudes. By analyzing these factors, this study provides insights into the sociolinguistic dynamics that influence language use in the Tolaki community. One of the most striking findings from initial fieldwork is the significant disparity in language attitudes between different age groups (Sarmadan & Samsuddin, 2017). While older Tolaki speakers often express a strong attachment to their language, younger generations tend to favor Indonesian or other regional languages. This generational divide raises important questions about the future of the Tolaki language and the likelihood of its survival in the coming decades. The loss of language loyalty among younger Tolaki speakers suggests that without intervention, the language may continue to decline at an accelerated rate.

Additionally, the role of education in shaping language attitudes cannot be overlooked. In many cases, formal education in Indonesia prioritizes the use of Indonesian, which may inadvertently contribute to the diminishing use of local languages. The absence of Tolaki language instruction in schools further exacerbates this issue, as young Tolaki speakers have fewer opportunities to learn and use their native language in formal settings. This highlights the need for educational reforms that include local language curricula to promote the preservation of endangered languages like Tolaki. This study emphasizes the importance of community-driven efforts to revive and maintain the Tolaki language. While institutional support, such as government policies and educational programs, is crucial, grassroots

movements that encourage families and communities to use the language in everyday life are equally important. Through cultural events, language workshops, and media engagement, the Tolaki people can work collectively to ensure the survival of their language. These efforts will not only preserve the Tolaki language but also strengthen the community's cultural identity and resilience in the face of modernization.

Literature Review

The study of language attitudes has garnered significant attention in sociolinguistics, particularly regarding how these attitudes impact language maintenance and shift. In recent years, research has highlighted the intricate relationships between language use, identity, and socio-economic factors. This literature review examines key studies from 2016 onwards, focusing on the dynamics of language attitudes, the role of education, the influence of media and technology, and community efforts in language preservation. A growing body of literature emphasizes the connection between language attitudes and cultural identity. Arafah, Putra, and Arafah (2022) discuss how language pride, loyalty, and awareness of language norms significantly influence community members' decisions to maintain or abandon their local language. Their findings suggest that positive attitudes towards the Tolaki language are crucial for its survival, as speakers who feel pride in their language are more likely to use it consistently. Conversely, when younger generations perceive their native language as lacking prestige, they are more inclined to shift to dominant languages like Indonesian. This shift reflects broader societal trends, where languages associated with higher social status tend to overshadow local dialects. Awad (2016) further explores this theme, noting that many Tolaki speakers, particularly among the youth, regard their native language as obsolete. The author argues that this perception is detrimental to the language's vitality, as it fosters a cycle of language shift wherein younger speakers adopt Indonesian for its perceived benefits. Similarly, Yassi et al. (2022) highlight that language pride serves as a protective mechanism against language loss. Their research indicates that community members who identify strongly with their language are more likely to engage in its daily use and intergenerational transmission. Education plays a pivotal role in shaping language attitudes and behaviors. Umali (2016) asserts that formal education systems often prioritize the national language, resulting in the marginalization of local languages. In Indonesia, this trend is evident in the predominance of Indonesian as the medium of instruction, which can lead to decreased proficiency and usage of regional languages like Tolaki among students. Tódor and Degi (2016) emphasize the importance of incorporating local languages into educational curricula to mitigate language shift. They argue that bilingual education can enhance students' linguistic skills in both their native language and the national language, promoting a balanced linguistic identity.

Research by Darma and Siregar (2017) underscores the impact of educational policies on language maintenance. Their study illustrates that students educated primarily in Indonesian often develop a disconnect from their native language, which can lead to reduced loyalty and pride. In contrast, educational programs that actively promote local languages not only preserve linguistic diversity but also foster a sense of belonging and cultural identity among students. This finding highlights the need for educational reforms that integrate the Tolaki language into the curriculum, ensuring that future generations remain connected to their linguistic heritage. Recent advancements in media and technology have opened new avenues for language revitalization. Arafah et al. (2022) discuss how digital platforms, including social media, mobile applications, and online content, can significantly enhance the visibility of minority languages. They argue that these platforms are particularly effective in engaging younger audiences who are more inclined to consume media digitally. By creating

content in Tolaki, community members can promote active use of the language, helping to bridge the gap between traditional practices and contemporary communication methods.

Colfer et al. (2015) further emphasize the role of local media in sustaining minority languages. Their research highlights successful community-driven media initiatives that have effectively promoted the use of local languages in various contexts. For the Tolaki community, establishing radio programs, podcasts, and online resources in Tolaki could foster greater language engagement among younger speakers. By utilizing modern communication tools, communities can strengthen their linguistic identity while also adapting to the evolving media landscape. Community involvement is crucial for the successful preservation of local languages. Sailan (2020) advocates for the importance of community-based language programs and cultural events in fostering language loyalty and pride. Such initiatives create opportunities for speakers of all ages to come together and use their native language in social settings, reinforcing its cultural significance. Edwards (1992) supports this notion, arguing that grassroots movements empower communities to take ownership of their linguistic heritage and actively engage in preservation efforts.

Research by Zuraida (2019) emphasizes the significance of cultural festivals and events as platforms for promoting the use of local languages. By organizing activities that celebrate Tolaki culture, community leaders can encourage the use of the language in meaningful contexts, fostering pride among participants. Engaging elders as cultural ambassadors within these initiatives can facilitate the intergenerational transmission of language and culture, ensuring that younger generations inherit the linguistic and cultural knowledge of their community. recent literature underscores the complex interplay of factors influencing language attitudes and the challenges faced by regional languages like Tolaki in Indonesia. The findings highlight the importance of fostering positive attitudes, integrating local languages into education, leveraging media and technology, and promoting community engagement to ensure the survival of endangered languages. This literature review sets the stage for the current study, which seeks to investigate the specific language attitudes of the Tolaki community in Kendari City and the implications for future revitalization efforts.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The research design in this study utilizes a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide a comprehensive understanding of language attitudes among the Tolaki community in Kendari City. This design is anchored in a sequential explanatory model, which begins with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by qualitative inquiry aimed at enriching and interpreting the statistical findings. The rationale for this approach lies in its capacity to address the complexity of sociolinguistic phenomena by combining the strengths of both methodological paradigms. Quantitative methods, particularly through structured questionnaires, allow the researcher to identify broad patterns and trends in language attitudes related to pride, loyalty, and awareness of language norms. These patterns are examined across demographic variables such as age, gender, education, and occupation, providing statistical generalizations about the community. However, to move beyond numbers and uncover the underlying motivations, values, and cultural perceptions influencing these attitudes, qualitative methods are essential. Through semi-structured interviews and direct observations, the study explores personal narratives and social interactions that shape language behavior. This dual strategy ensures a richer and more nuanced analysis, revealing how social structures and individual experiences interact to influence the dynamics of language maintenance or shift within the Tolaki-speaking population.

Research Objects

The research focuses on native Tolaki speakers residing in Kendari City, Southeast Sulawesi. As a multilingual urban area divided into ten sub-districts, Kendari serves as an ideal setting to explore language attitudes amidst sociocultural and linguistic change. Six sub-districts—Abeli, Kendari, Poasia, Puwatu, Kambu, and Wua-wua—were purposively selected as the research sites due to their high concentration of Tolaki speakers and sociolinguistic significance. Multi-stage sampling was employed to ensure representativeness, beginning with stratified sampling based on social and demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, education, and occupation. From these strata, a sample of 322 respondents was drawn, representing a cross-section of adolescents, adults, and older individuals, both male and female, and including diverse occupational backgrounds such as students, self-employed workers, and civil servants.

Instruments and Data Collection Technique

Data collection utilized multiple instruments to ensure the validity and richness of the data. The primary instrument for quantitative data collection was a structured questionnaire designed to assess three core dimensions of language attitudes: pride in the Tolaki language, loyalty to its continued use, and awareness of its grammatical and pragmatic norms. Items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strong disagreement to strong agreement. To ensure clarity and cultural relevance, the questionnaire was pre-tested with a small group of Tolaki speakers and refined accordingly. Qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with 20 selected respondents, allowing for more nuanced insights into individual attitudes and motivations. These interviews explored personal experiences, perceptions of language utility, and intergenerational language transmission. In addition, direct observations were conducted in everyday social settings such as homes, markets, and community events, providing an empirical basis to compare self-reported attitudes with actual language practices.

Data Analysis

The analysis of quantitative data was conducted using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics, including means, percentages, and frequencies, were used to summarize responses and highlight general patterns across demographic variables. Cross-tabulation was applied to explore variations in language attitudes between different groups, such as between age cohorts or gender categories. To further examine the relationships between demographic factors and language attitudes, correlation and regression analyses were employed. These inferential techniques enabled the identification of significant predictors of pride, loyalty, and awareness of Tolaki language norms, offering a statistical foundation for interpreting broader sociolinguistic trends.

Qualitative data from interviews and observations were analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved coding responses and identifying recurring themes related to language shift, cultural identity, generational dynamics, and the perceived prestige of the Tolaki language. Themes were derived inductively from the data and cross-referenced with quantitative findings for triangulation. For example, narratives from younger speakers expressing discomfort or disinterest in using Tolaki were interpreted in relation to survey results indicating lower levels of language pride among this demographic. Observational data corroborated these findings by revealing reduced Tolaki usage in public interactions among youth, particularly in favor of Indonesian.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, several strategies were implemented. The questionnaire's reliability was enhanced through pilot testing and revision. Triangulation across data sources—surveys, interviews, and observations—bolstered the validity of the interpretations. Ethical considerations were rigorously observed throughout the

research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were fully briefed on the objectives and procedures of the study. Participation was voluntary, and measures were taken to protect confidentiality and anonymity. The study received ethical approval from the appropriate local authorities and adhered to established guidelines for research in sociolinguistic and community-based settings. Through this comprehensive and ethically grounded research design, the study aims to provide meaningful insights into the evolving language attitudes of the Tolaki community and the factors influencing language maintenance and shift in Kendari City.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the Tolaki community's language attitudes in Kendari City reveals complex dynamics involving language pride, language loyalty, and awareness of language norms. The findings, drawn from quantitative data using SPSS analysis and qualitative insights from interviews and observations, suggest that while Tolaki remains a significant marker of identity among certain groups, its overall use is declining, particularly among the younger generation. This section discusses the results across these key dimensions, highlighting the factors contributing to the language shift and the potential pathways for revitalizing the Tolaki language. The survey results show that language pride is moderate overall, with notable differences between age groups and educational levels. On average, 51.67% of respondents expressed pride in using the Tolaki language. However, this pride is much stronger among older generations. Respondents aged 50 and above reported significantly higher levels of pride (68.3%) compared to adolescents (12-24 years), where pride was markedly lower at 39.8%. This generational gap points to a clear decline in emotional attachment to the language, particularly among younger Tolaki speakers.

This finding aligns with studies such as Yassi et al. (2022), which highlight that language pride often diminishes when a language is no longer seen as prestigious or useful. Interviews with younger respondents revealed that many view Indonesian as a language of upward mobility and success, while Tolaki is increasingly seen as outdated or unnecessary for their future aspirations. This decline in pride among the youth is concerning as it reflects broader trends of language shift, where younger generations adopt dominant languages in place of their native tongue. The data also shows that education plays a significant role in shaping language pride. Respondents with lower educational backgrounds, such as those with primary or junior high school education, expressed higher levels of pride in using Tolaki (65.8% for primary school graduates). In contrast, university graduates demonstrated lower levels of pride, with only 56.9% expressing pride in their native language. This suggests that exposure to formal education, which is primarily conducted in Indonesian, may weaken the attachment to local languages like Tolaki. Higher education often emphasizes the use of Indonesian as the medium of instruction, which is perceived as more relevant to academic and professional success. As Fishman (1991) and Darma & Siregar (2017) have noted, formal education systems in multilingual societies can contribute to language shift when minority languages are excluded from the curriculum. For Tolaki, the absence of institutional support within educational frameworks appears to be contributing to the erosion of pride in the language among more educated individuals.

The second key dimension of language attitude, language loyalty, presents an even more concerning picture. The data indicates that loyalty to the Tolaki language is notably low across all demographic groups, with an average loyalty score of 39.2%. This suggests that despite some residual pride in the language, many Tolaki speakers, especially the younger generation, are not committed to actively using or maintaining the language in their daily lives. The generational divide is stark here as well, with loyalty levels among adults and older individuals being higher than those observed among adolescents. In interviews, younger respondents frequently reported that they prefer to use Indonesian even when speaking with

fellow Tolaki speakers, especially in formal or public settings. This behavior reflects a clear shift in linguistic preference driven by the perceived socio-economic advantages of Indonesian. As noted by Holmes and Wilson (2017), language loyalty is a critical factor in language maintenance; when speakers lose their sense of responsibility toward their native language, its usage declines rapidly. The Tolaki community's low loyalty levels point toward a critical need for revitalization efforts if the language is to be preserved.

The data on awareness of language norms shows a more encouraging result. On average, 62.1% of respondents demonstrated a moderate to high awareness of the proper use of Tolaki, including its grammatical rules and structure. Interestingly, respondents with higher education levels showed greater awareness, with 71% of university graduates reporting a solid understanding of the language's norms. This suggests that while formal education may reduce language pride and loyalty, it does not necessarily diminish speakers' awareness of their native language's proper usage. However, the higher awareness among educated respondents does not translate into frequent use of Tolaki. Many respondents with a strong understanding of the language's norms still preferred to use Indonesian, reflecting a gap between knowledge and practice. This is consistent with Umali's (2016) observation that awareness of language norms can persist even when the language itself is rarely used in daily communication. For Tolaki, this highlights the potential for leveraging speakers' existing knowledge of the language to encourage more active use, particularly through targeted educational and media programs. Age emerged as one of the most significant factors influencing language attitudes in this study. The findings indicate a clear generational shift away from Tolaki, with younger speakers showing less pride, loyalty, and usage of the language compared to older individuals. Adolescents and young adults, in particular, reported significantly lower levels of engagement with the Tolaki language, preferring to use Indonesian in most social and formal interactions. This generational divide reflects broader patterns observed in language shift research, where younger generations often adopt the dominant language of a region due to its perceived advantages. In line with research by Awad (2016) and Arafah et al. (2022), the shift among younger Tolaki speakers can be attributed to the socio-economic prestige associated with Indonesian. Many adolescents in Kendari City see Indonesian as a gateway to educational and career opportunities, while Tolaki is viewed as having limited practical value outside of informal settings. This shift poses a significant challenge for language preservation, as the younger generation plays a crucial role in the intergenerational transmission of the language.

The role of the education system in shaping language attitudes cannot be overlooked. In Indonesia, where the national language, Indonesian, is the primary medium of instruction, local languages like Tolaki are often sidelined. As observed in this study, respondents who had completed higher levels of education were less likely to use Tolaki regularly, even though they may still understand it. This trend is consistent with the findings of Tódor and Degi (2016), who argue that educational institutions in multilingual societies can inadvertently contribute to language shift by prioritizing dominant languages. Interviews with students revealed that most Tolaki-speaking children and adolescents are educated entirely in Indonesian, with little or no formal instruction in their native language. This lack of institutional support for Tolaki within the education system contributes to its marginalization, particularly among younger speakers who may never learn to read or write in Tolaki. Incorporating Tolaki into the local curriculum could be a key strategy for reversing this trend and fostering a stronger connection between younger generations and their native language. Occupational factors also play a role in shaping language attitudes and usage. The study found that farmers and housewives exhibited higher levels of pride and loyalty to the Tolaki language compared to students and professionals. Farmers, who often work in rural settings where Tolaki is still spoken, expressed the highest levels of pride (70%). In contrast, students and white-collar workers showed significantly lower levels of both pride and loyalty,

with students demonstrating the lowest engagement with the Tolaki language. This finding aligns with the observations of Colfer et al. (2015), who note that language use tends to decline in urbanized, professional environments where dominant languages offer more socio-economic benefits. For the Tolaki language, the challenge lies in finding ways to maintain its relevance not only in rural contexts but also in more urban, professional settings where Indonesian is dominant. Encouraging the use of Tolaki in cultural events, media, and technology could help bridge this gap.

The interviews with older Tolaki speakers and community leaders revealed a strong sense of concern about the erosion of cultural identity tied to the decline in Tolaki language use. Many older respondents expressed disappointment that younger generations no longer speak the language fluently, and some feared that the Tolaki language might disappear altogether if current trends continue. This mirrors findings by Sailan (2020), who noted that language loss in indigenous communities often leads to a weakening of cultural ties and a sense of disconnection from heritage. For the Tolaki community, language is not only a means of communication but also a crucial aspect of cultural heritage and identity. The loss of the language could lead to a fragmentation of cultural practices, traditions, and values that have been passed down through generations. Addressing this issue requires a concerted effort to promote the cultural significance of Tolaki through education, community programs, and public initiatives. Despite the challenges outlined above, the study also identifies opportunities for the revitalization of the Tolaki language. The relatively high awareness of language norms, particularly among educated speakers, suggests that there is still a foundation of knowledge that can be built upon. Language revitalization efforts could focus on leveraging this awareness through media engagement, digital platforms, and community-based language programs. As Arafah et al. (2022) suggest, the creation of digital content, such as social media campaigns, mobile applications, and educational videos in Tolaki, could engage younger generations and make the language more accessible in the digital age. Additionally, organizing community events that celebrate Tolaki culture and language could help foster a renewed.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the language attitudes of the Tolaki community in Kendari City, focusing on three critical dimensions: language pride, loyalty, and awareness of language norms. The findings indicate a troubling trend of language shift among the Tolaki people, particularly among younger generations. While older speakers maintain a strong emotional connection to the Tolaki language, younger individuals increasingly prefer Indonesian, perceiving it as more prestigious and advantageous for their future. This shift raises significant concerns about the future of the Tolaki language and its role in the community's cultural identity. The results revealed that language pride is moderate, with older generations expressing significantly higher levels of pride in their native language compared to younger speakers. This generational gap suggests that as societal values shift towards the national language, younger Tolaki speakers may no longer view their native language as an essential part of their identity. The impact of education cannot be overlooked; students educated primarily in Indonesian demonstrate lower levels of pride and loyalty to Tolaki, further contributing to the language's decline.

Moreover, the study highlighted the critical role of language loyalty in language maintenance. With an average loyalty score of only 39.2%, many Tolaki speakers, especially the youth, showed a lack of commitment to using their native language in daily life. This finding aligns with Fishman's theory of language shift, which posits that when younger generations do not actively use their language, it is at risk of being lost. To combat this trend, community-driven initiatives are essential to encourage the use of Tolaki in public and private

spaces, fostering a sense of responsibility toward the language. Awareness of language norms was relatively high among respondents, particularly those with higher education. However, this awareness does not necessarily translate into active usage. The disconnect between knowledge and practice indicates that while Tolaki speakers understand the language's grammatical rules, the practical utility of Indonesian in formal settings often overshadows their native language. This situation underscores the need for targeted language revitalization efforts that promote active use of Tolaki alongside maintaining awareness of its norms. The study's findings also point to the significant influence of age and education on language attitudes. Younger speakers, particularly those in educational settings, are increasingly adopting Indonesian due to its perceived economic and social advantages. This pattern suggests a broader cultural shift where the local language is marginalized in favor of a dominant language associated with modernity and progress. As highlighted by Arafah et al. (2022), such language shifts can lead to the erosion of cultural heritage and identity, making it imperative to address these attitudes through educational reforms. Community involvement is crucial for the revitalization of the Tolaki language. The study identified that farmers and community leaders expressed a strong desire to maintain and promote Tolaki, indicating that grassroots efforts could be a key factor in reversing language decline. Initiatives that celebrate Tolaki culture, such as festivals, workshops, and media campaigns, can help foster pride and encourage younger generations to engage with their native language. Engaging elders as cultural ambassadors can also facilitate intergenerational transmission, ensuring that knowledge of Tolaki is passed down effectively.

The findings of this study underscore the urgent need for concerted efforts to revitalize the Tolaki language. While challenges such as declining pride, loyalty, and usage among younger generations persist, there are opportunities for positive change. By integrating Tolaki into educational curricula, promoting its use in media, and encouraging community involvement, it is possible to foster a renewed sense of pride and commitment to the language. These efforts will not only preserve the Tolaki language but also strengthen the cultural identity of the Tolaki community, ensuring that future generations can connect with their heritage. Ultimately, the future of the Tolaki language depends on the collective actions of the community, educational institutions, and policymakers. By recognizing the value of their linguistic heritage and actively working to maintain it, the Tolaki people can combat the pressures of language shift and ensure the survival of their unique cultural identity in an increasingly globalized world. The study's insights provide a roadmap for future research and intervention strategies aimed at preserving endangered languages and supporting the communities that speak them.

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