



## Article

# Vitality of Lembak Language Bengkulu City in the Dynamics of Contemporary Society

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## A B S T R A C T

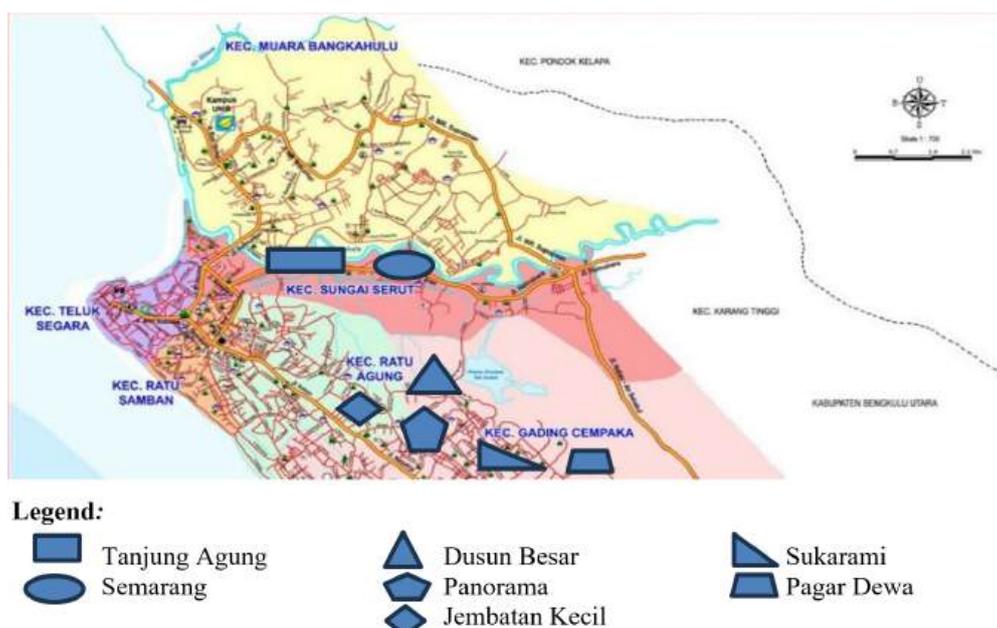
This study explored the current situation and challenges facing the preservation of the Lembak language among the Lembak ethnic group in Bengkulu City. With globalization and modernization, there were concerns about keeping indigenous languages like Lembak alive, especially with the influence of dominant languages. The study aimed to evaluate the vitality of the Lembak language, identify factors contributing to its preservation or decline, and provide recommendations for its sustained maintenance amid the continuously changing societal dynamics. Employing a mixed-method approach, the methodology encompassed cluster sampling for a survey comprising 210 respondents drawn from seven neighborhoods across three districts in Bengkulu City, alongside purposive sampling for interviews involving 36 respondents from diverse demographic strata encompassing varying age groups and occupational backgrounds, including parents, teachers, and students, all of whom were native Lembak speakers. Findings revealed an average vitality index of 0.38 for the Lembak language, signifying its endangered status. While the language remained prevalent among older age groups limited in their community, its usage notably declined among younger generations, partially due to language contact and a preference for dominant languages. This situation is exacerbated by the lack of formal support and promotion from the government, absence of official backing, insufficient formal teaching materials, minimal language documentation, and the necessity for the Lembak language to adapt to the new challenges of the digital era to remain relevant and develop. To ensure the Lembak language survives, it was suggested to raise awareness, improve education, and gain support from the government and other groups.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Lembak language, an ethnic language in Bengkulu province, Indonesia, has its phonological roots in Malay Col/Cul (Nindyawati et al., 2021) and was first recorded using the Ulu script, derived from the post-Pallava script (Sedyawati et al., 2004). It is spoken in Padang Ulak Tanding District and Padang City in Rejang Lebong Regency, as well as in several villages in Bengkulu City and Central Bengkulu Regency (Rahayu, 2018). In Bengkulu City, Lembak speakers are found in seven neighborhoods across three districts: Sukarami and Pagar Dewa (Selebar), Panorama, Dusun Besar, and Jembatan Kecil (Singaran Pati),

and Tanjung Agung and Semarang (Sungai Serut). The Lembak language often mixes with Malay Bengkulu and other immigrant languages. Its identity is weakening due to the strong influence of Malay Bengkulu, Indonesian, and other immigrant languages (Paulina, 2020).

The use of Lembak language declines due to diverse customs in mixed environments (Lipinia, Andra & Friantary, 2023). In cities like Bengkulu, interactions involve various languages and customs from different ethnicities, marginalizing Lembak language use. Children in such environments often adopt more common languages, neglecting Lembak. This leads to a decline in its role as



**Figure 1. Map of the Distribution of the Lembak Ethnic Group in Bengkulu City**

Source: <https://www.lamudi.co.id/journal/peta-kota-bengkulu/>

a cultural marker and communication tool, accelerating its extinction risk. Understanding these impacts is vital for protecting and revitalizing Lembak language.

The lack of teaching local languages in schools and the suboptimal teaching by parents makes this situation worse (Arono, 2016). In schools, local language lessons are often neglected, preventing students from formally learning and using the Lembak language. Additionally, many parents no longer use Lembak at home, choosing instead to speak Indonesian or other languages seen as more “useful” or prestigious. This leads to the younger generation losing their ability to speak Lembak and hearing it less in daily conversations. The combination of poor formal education and insufficient home teaching speeds up the decline of the Lembak language, making it more vulnerable to extinction. Therefore, research on the vitality of the Lembak language is essential to understand this issue better and to develop strategies to protect and preserve the language.

Based on preliminary observations, Lembak language-speaking region has experienced an increase in the arrival of migrants from various ethnicities such as Rejang, Serawai, Minang, Javanese, Batak, Sundanese, Bugis, Lintang, Ogan Ilir, and Palembang in the last ten years. These migrants, for the most part, come to Bengkulu City for work-related reasons and seeking a better life as civil servants, employees, and traders. The increasing influx of migrants from various

ethnicities to Lembak language-speaking region reflects the dynamics of urban development but also has an impact on the identity and sustainability of the Lembak language amid diverse linguistic interactions.

Considering this situation, cultural acculturation has the potential to occur through significant opportunities for interethnic marriages. Interactions between cultures in Indonesia generally use the National Language, which is Indonesian. This condition affects the use of regional languages, where Indonesian has the potential to replace the use of regional languages. Linguistic diversity creates a diglossia situation among speakers (Firman, Astar & Nugroho, 2023). In this context, Lembak community is faced with the necessity to decisively choose a language.

Research on the vitality of Lembak language in Bengkulu City has not been conducted until now. Although there are related studies, such as code-mixing by Misriani (2019), an evaluation of the use of Lembak language in schools by Dahlia (2019), and directive speech acts by Diani & Basuki (2022), these three studies only provide limited descriptions and focus on specific aspects to preserve a small part of the language.

Regarding the language vitality studies in Sumatra, Abidin (2019) researched the Duanu language in the village of Tagaraja, Riau, and found that the language vitality index of Duanu is “endangered.” Budiono & Novita (2021) identified the vitality status of the Mentawai language,

specifically the Sipora Pagai dialect in the Mentawai Islands, finding a decline in its vitality concerning transmission, availability of teaching materials, literacy, types, and quality of documentation. Furthermore, Budiono, Handayani & Winarti (2023) studied the vitality of the Lampung language in Pekon Penengahan, Pesisir Barat, and indicated its vulnerable status, dominated by intergenerational language transmission and susceptible language use domains.

The research on the vitality of regional languages in Indonesia has been conducted, such as the vitality projection of the Betawi language in Jakarta by Siregar, Anjani & Yahaya (2023). The results indicate that the use of the Betawi language is still concerning, although there is hope for improvement with the right strategies. Amir, Mustava, Sari, Nurhikmah & Rahim (2023) investigated the vitality and subordination of regional languages in Maluku, showing that 14 languages are experiencing decline. Firman, Astar & Nugroho (2023) studied the Moronene language in Bombana Regency, with results indicating an average index of “experiencing decline.” All these studies reflect serious challenges to the sustainability of regional languages in Indonesia.

Research on the vitality of Lembak language in Bengkulu City reveals a significant research gap, as there has been no specific study measuring the level of vitality of Lembak language in this city. The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive approach, using a qualitative-quantitative method to detail the determinants of Lembak language vitality. In this context, this research can make a significant contribution by providing an in-depth understanding of the dynamics and challenges faced by Lembak language in the local community. Furthermore, research on Lembak language in Bengkulu City can also offer a contrast and unique insight into the overall vitality conditions of regional languages in Indonesia. By focusing on Lembak language in Bengkulu City, this research is expected to make a valuable contribution to a broader understanding of the vitality of regional languages in Indonesia.

In this context, the research issue is focused on how to measure the level of vitality of Lembak language in Bengkulu City. This process involves a detailed description of each indicator that determines language vitality, with the aim of determining the status or category of the vitality

of Lembak language in Bengkulu City. The results of this research are expected to provide a relevant foundation for determining appropriate steps in managing and preserving Lembak language in Bengkulu City.

## II. METHODS

### Research Design

This research adopted a mixed methods approach to present a nuanced theoretical framework for the empirical data collected through qualitative and quantitative methods, aiming to deliver informative information and establish dynamic relationships between structure and agency through mechanism-based explanations (Mukumbang, 2023; Yavuz, 2023). Quantitative data were obtained through comprehensive index analysis based on respondent responses from a questionnaire containing 90 questions covering ten language vitality indicators with varying numbers of questions in each indicator. Meanwhile, qualitative data were utilized to analyze language within social, cultural, political, and economic contexts to understand the impact of these factors on language use, variation, and social interaction through language, by conducting open interviews with Lembak language speakers in Bengkulu City (Palumbo, 2023). This approach provided a profound understanding of the social context and dynamics of the Lembak community in the era of globalization.

### Respondents

The research population encompasses all speakers of the Lembak language residing in seven sub-districts across three Districts in Bengkulu City, including Sukarami and Pagar Dewa (Selebar District), Panorama, Dusun Besar, and Jembatan Kecil (Singaran Pati District), as well as Tanjung Agung and Semarang (Sungai Serut District). Sample selection for quantitative data of questionnaire utilized specifically cluster sampling with designated clusters representing Lembak language usage in Bengkulu City. The process ensured representativeness across age groups and social strata within the Lembak community. Samples were categorized based on gender, age, marital status, education level, employment status, and occupation type, following guidelines from Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (2017). With 210 respondents selected based on native

Lembak language speaker classification, the approach ensures balanced representation across language-speaking groups in the area. Appendix 1 shows characteristics of the sample comprising native Lembak language speakers.

Qualitative interview data utilized a probability-based clustering sampling technique to accurately represent Lembak language speakers in Bengkulu City, determining language vitality status. Respondents, each with distinct characteristics, were interviewed per indicator. Further details on respondents are available in Appendix 2.

### Data Collection

Data collection in this research utilized a 90-item questionnaire technique guided and adopted from Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (2017). Opened-interviewed were supported to observe the use of Lembak language in social life.

### Data Analysis

Data from respondents, consisting of responses to various process options, are organized in tabular form using the Excel program to obtain frequency values for each question. Subsequently, to determine the vitality level, the data from Excel is processed using SPSS. The calculation of index values is done using the formula:

$$I = \frac{(X - X_{min})}{(X_{max} - X_{min})}$$

*Explanation:*

$I$  : Index

$X_{min}$  : Minimum Value

$X$  : Average Value

$X_{max}$  : Maximum Value

After obtaining the index values for each variable and their correlation with the language vitality level table, data checking was carried out to evaluate the input data. Then, the data interpretation utilized indicators for measuring the sustainability of the Lembak language in Bengkulu City. These indicators included intergenerational transmission, number and proportion of speakers, language use domains, speakers' attitudes, government attitudes and regulations, availability of teaching materials and literacy, quantity and quality of documents, language contact and bilingualism, and response to new domains and media (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2017).

The index range used was 0-1, divided into six categories of vitality status (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa Kementerian Pendidikan

dan Kebudayaan, 2017). The index range and categories of language vitality status could be seen in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Language Vitality Status Categories in Index Calculation**

No.	Status	Index
1	Safe	0.81 – 1.00
2	Vulnerable	0.61 – 0.80
3	Declining	0.41 – 0.60
4	Endangered	0.21 – 0.40
5	Critical	0.01 – 0.20
6	Extinct	0.00

## III. RESULTS

### The Vitality of Lembak Language: Indicators and Speaker Characteristics Relationship

Referring to the cumulative calculation of data, the language vitality index values of the Lembak ethnic group in Bengkulu City for each indicator range from 0.07 to 0.88, as depicted in Table 2.

**Table 2. Language Vitality Index Values of Lembak Language in Bengkulu City**

No	Indicators		Category
1	Number of Lembak Language Speakers	0.88	Safe
2	Language Contacts	0.51	Declining
3	Bilingualism in Lembak Community	0.55	Declining
4	Dominant Position	0.47	Declining
5	Domain of Lembak Language Use	0.34	Endangered
6	Language Attitudes	0.37	Endangered
7	Language Regulation	0.22	Endangered
8	Language Learning	0.24	Endangered
9	Language Documentation	0.07	Critical
10	New Challenges	0.16	Critical
<b>Average Value</b>		<b>0.38</b>	<b>Endangered</b>

Based on the cumulative index calculations, the average value reached 0.38. From these results, the Lembak ethnic language could be categorized as "Endangered" in the speech domain that was the focus of this research. Although this data might not have represented all speakers of the Lembak ethnic language, the figure provided an overview of the condition of the Lembak ethnic language based on the perceptions of its speakers. Further discussion on the vitality of the Lembak language based on each indicator was elaborated to provide a more holistic and contextual understanding of the language dynamics in the local community.

### Speaker of Lembak language

Based on the questionnaire data, further exploration was conducted on the Absolute Number of Speakers and the Proportion of the Number of Speakers to the Total Population, as depicted in the following table.

Table 3 indicates the dominance of Lembak language speakers compared to other local languages in the surrounding area. Residents in that area prefer using the Lembak language. However, the data also reflects that the community speaking Lembak language still maintains the ability to use it.

Meanwhile, interview data showed similar statements from nine Lembak speakers over the age of 20 and one speaker under 20:

“More people use the Lembak language in our area compared to other local languages, as reflected in daily interactions. Residents here tend to choose Lembak as the main language for social interactions, with the community still proficient in its use despite changes (Respondent 3, 19 years; Respondent 56, 29 years; Respondent 60, 31 years; Respondent 66, 33 years; Respondent 71, 38 years; Respondent 128, 43 years; Respondent 133, 47 years; Respondent 141, 51 years; Respondent 146, 55 years; and Respondent 201, 63 years).

However, interview data showed contradictory statements from three Lembak speakers under the

age of 20:

“It is true that more people use the Lembak language in our area compared to other local languages. Residents here tend to choose Lembak as the main language for social interactions. However, not all communities are proficient in its use. In our family, for example, only my father is a Lembak speaker, while my mother comes from another region. We prefer to use Malay Bengkulu in daily conversations and avoid interactions using Lembak. Although we engage in Lembak interactions and can understand our interlocutors, we still respond in Malay Bengkulu (Respondent 7, 17 years; and Respondent 11, 18 years).

The data from survey and interview indicate the dominance of Lembak language speakers compared to other local languages, with a preference for using Lembak in social interactions. However, not all communities are proficient in its use. Some respondents, especially those whose mothers are not native speakers, prefer Malay Bengkulu in daily conversations, even though they still understand Lembak when used by others.

### Language Contact

In the context of this indicator, we explore various aspects of language contact, such as Relative Village-City Distance, Speaker Mobility, Ethnic Group Visits to Speaker Areas, and Community Access to Mass Media in other languages. Table 4 indicates that Language contact in this area reflects

**Table 3. Speakers of Lembak Language**

Serial No.	Statement	Percentage (%)	
		Yes	No
11	Compared to speakers of other local languages in my area, speakers of Lembak language are more numerous.	91.47	8.53
74	The population in this area has more people who speak Lembak than speak other local languages.	91.43	8.57
80	Lembak-speaking community is still able to use this language well.	80.96	9.04
<b>Average</b>		<b>87.95</b>	<b>12.05</b>

**Table 4. Language Contact**

Serial No.	Statement	Percentage (%)	
		Yes	No
1	Lembak language speakers prefer radio broadcasts in other languages.	71.43	28.57
26	This area is far from the city (administrative center).	00.00	100
33	Many Lembak language speakers reside for an extended period in other areas.	27.48	72.52
35	Lembak community can enjoy national television broadcasts.	100	00,00
37	This area is difficult to access from other regions and from the city.	00.00	100
50	I live in a Lembak-speaking environment.	100	00.00
78	Lembak language speakers often travel to other regions.	32.81	67.19
84	Many people from other ethnic groups come to my area.	72.48	27.52
<b>Average</b>		<b>50.53</b>	<b>49.47</b>

a strong attachment and identity to the use of the Lembak language in everyday life. Although in the city center of Bengkulu, the data shows that the community maintains significant interlanguage interactions. The use of the Lembak language is not only a means of communication but also creates social and cultural bonds amid urban dynamics. The Lembak-speaking community in this area can maintain the identity and sustainability of the Lembak language, emphasizing the role of language as a crucial element in preserving cultural heritage and community identity.

On one hand, interview data showed that:

“I prefer listening to radio broadcasts in other languages because I’m interested in certain programs not available in Lembak. However, if there are broadcasts in Lembak, I’ll choose to listen to them.” Only a small number of Lembak speakers live elsewhere for extended periods due to strong cultural ties (Respondent 201, 63 years; Respondent 133, 47 years; Respondent 60, 31 years; and Respondent 7, 17 years). Additionally, many other ethnic groups settle in our area (12 respondents).

On the other hand, interview data also indicated:

“My sibling married someone from a different ethnic group and still lives in their area (Respondent 141, 51 years; Respondent 146, 55 years; Respondent 66, 33 years; Respondent 71, 38 years). My child lives in another city after becoming a civil servant (Respondent 71, 55 years). Two of my siblings are pursuing higher education in Yogyakarta (Respondent 11, 18 years).”

The survey and interview results indicated a variety of preferences and diverse life conditions

among respondents. Some opted for non-Lembak radio programs due to specific interests, while others remained in their hometowns due to cultural attachments. Additionally, differences in family structures, such as interethnic marriages or pursuing education and careers elsewhere, were observed.

### **Bilingualism/Multilingualism in the Lembak Community**

Language contact in Bengkulu City yields an intriguing phenomenon of bilingualism or multilingualism. Apart from Lembak language speakers, the dominance of Bengkulu Malay and the presence of Indonesian contribute to linguistic complexity. Bengkulu City residents, particularly Lembak language speakers, can master up to seven languages simultaneously, fostering a dynamic and intricate multicultural environment. This section highlights proficiency in Lembak Language, Other Local, National, and Foreign Languages.

The data in Table 5 indicated that the Lembak community could preserve language diversity. Intensive interaction with other languages created a dynamic bilingual ecosystem. High language proficiency, especially in Indonesian and other local languages, demonstrated the community’s adaptability in facing linguistic dynamics. Although the challenges of preserving the Lembak language were significant, the preserved language diversity reflected resilience in dealing with the complexity of language interactions in a multilingual society.

**Table 5: Bilingualism or Multilingualism in Lembak Community**

Serial No.	Statement	Percentage (%)	
		Yes	No
3	Many members of my ethnic group can speak Indonesian well.	95.71	4.29
23	I am proficient in the Lembak language.	87.14	12.86
27	My family can use Lembak language well.	83.33	16.67
32	Many people from other groups can speak Lembak language.	14.29	85.74
36	I am proficient in another local language.	100	00.00
44	My family can use another local language well.	95.23	4.77
48	I am also fluent in a foreign language.	13.33	86.67
52	My family can use a foreign language.	18.10	81.9
54	My family can use Indonesian well.	96.67	3.33
57	Children can still speak this local language well.	76.19	23.81
59	I can speak Indonesian well.	100	00.00
88	Many members of my ethnic group can also use other local languages well.	92.85	7.15
89	Many members of my ethnic group can also speak foreign languages.	22.86	77.14
<b>Average</b>		<b>54.83</b>	<b>45.17</b>

The interview results from 12 respondents of various ages indicate that:

“Many members of my ethnic group are proficient in speaking Indonesian and Bengkulu Malay. They prefer and are more comfortable using Indonesian in formal communication and Bengkulu Malay with friends outside the Lembak tribe in daily interactions. Few people from other ethnic groups can speak Lembak because it is primarily used by the Lembak tribe in intra-tribal interactions (12 respondents of various ages).”

The survey and interviews above indicate that the dominance of Indonesian and Bengkulu Malay usage can gradually reduce the use of Lembak. The scarcity of other ethnic groups mastering Lembak reduces opportunities for inter-group interactions, which can impact the lack of support and preservation of Lembak in broader environments.

### The Dominant Position of Lembak Community

In this indicator, the analysis focuses on the role of the Lembak ethnic group in various sectors such as government, trade, arts, and agriculture. In-depth research on the dominant role of this ethnic group provides a profound understanding of the strength and significance of the Lembak language in the social and economic context of the region.

The data in Table 6 reflects the relatively less dominant position of the Lembak ethnic group in various aspects of community life apart from agriculture. Continuous monitoring and support are needed to maintain the sustainability of the Lembak language's role and the positive contributions of the Lembak ethnic group to local social and economic dynamics.

Interview results from 12 respondents of various occupations indicate that:

“So, we usually use the Lembak language in official events like government affairs, healthcare, and business, if the person we're talking to is also Lembak. But in

places like Lembak farming and arts, of course, the Lembak language is the most commonly used because we, the Lembak ethnic group, handle many affairs there (12 respondents from various occupations).”

Survey data and interview results indicate that the Lembak language does not have dominance in official domains but is only dominant among members of the Lembak ethnic community itself.

### Domain of Lembak Language Usage

The use of language in several specific domains, such as language use in formal settings, households, religion, and education, are the focus of questions to the respondents. The result of survey is shown in Table 7.

Table 7 indicates that the use of the Lembak language plays a significant role in the daily lives of its community, including communication within their ethnic group, family conversations, artistic and traditional activities, worship, and market transactions. However, it is less dominant in formal settings such as school instruction.

Interview results with 12 respondents from various professions show that:

“Lembak language is not used in scientific contexts, such as discussing scientific knowledge at school or creating official documents and services in institutions. Indonesian is more commonly used in formal settings (Respondents 73, 79, 55/teachers; respondents 80, 168, 163/civil servants; respondents 21, 22, 23/students). In trading, we also do not use the Lembak language for promotion or other trading activities. We more often use Indonesian or Malay Bengkulu, which is more widely understood by the diverse Bengkulu community. The Lembak language is used for all activities that involve only the Lembak ethnic group, whether official or unofficial (respondents 83, 165, 167/entrepreneurs).”

The survey and interviews showed that Lembak was not used formally in government or education but only in non-formal settings within

**Table 6. The Dominant Position of Lembak Community**

Serial No.	Statement	Percentage (%)	
		Yes	No
5	Lembak ethnic group plays a crucial role in governance.	13.33	86.67
6	I useLembak language when dealing with healthcare officials.	45.39	54.61
12	Lembak ethnic group plays a vital role in trade.	70	30
41	Lembak ethnic group plays a significant role in agriculture.	90.47	9.53
81	I derive many benefits from the Lembak language.	20.48	79.52
83	Lembak ethnic group plays a crucial role in the arts.	49.52	50.48
85	Lembak language is considered the most important language in this region.	41.43	58.57
<b>Average</b>		<b>47.23</b>	<b>52.77</b>

**Table 7: Domain of Lembak Language Usage**

Serial No.	Statement	Percentage (%)	
		Yes	No
4	The Lembak language can also be used to discuss modern scientific knowledge.	5.71	94.29
13	Lembak language is used in government letters addressed to members of my ethnic group.	00.00	100
14	I use Lembak language to communicate with members of my ethnic group.	88.10	11.90
15	The Lembak language should be used in arts and traditional ceremonies.	96.67	3.33
18	I use the Lembak language to speak with family members at home.	83.33	16.67
24	Letters from school to me generally use Lembak language.	00.00	100
46	Lembak language is taught in formal schools.	00.00	100
51	Lembak language is used by district or sub-district officials when speaking with people from my ethnic group.	90.48	9.52
58	Lembak language is used in religious worship.	18.10	81.90
60	I use Lembak language to pray to the Almighty.	00.00	100
62	Teachers or school principals speak in Lembak language when communicating with me.	19.05	80.95
66	Lembak language is used in writing lease or sale agreements.	00.00	100
70	Lembak language is used in schools to deliver lessons to students.	00.00	100
77	My partner and I speak the same regional language.	78.57	21.43
79	Bargaining activities in the market use Lembak language.	33.33	66.67
82	I use the regional language to write letters or messages on WhatsApp to my family.	78.57	21.43
87	Lembak language is mandatory in public services on certain days.	00.00	100
90	Lembak language is used to advertise goods for sale.	14.29	85.71
<b>Average</b>		<b>33.68</b>	<b>66.32</b>

**Table 8. Language Attitudes**

Statement	Percentage(%)		
	Yes	No	
10	Every member of Lembak ethnic group should master the Lembak language.	23.80	76.20
19	I am proud of the Lembak language.	100	00.00
20	The use of the Lembak language is recommended by the government.	7.14	92.86
30	Lembak language is more important than other languages.	5.71	94.29
45	There are regulations that hinder the use of Lembak language.	10.95	89.05
55	The government appreciates the use of Lembak language.	20	80
61	The government is developing and protecting Lembak language.	15.24	84.76
65	Customary institutions are developing the Lembak language to ensure its continued use.	75.24	24.76
67	Customary institutions protect Lembak language well.	89.05	10.95
73	Lembak language is more beneficial than other regional languages.	23.81	76.19
<b>Average</b>		<b>37.09</b>	<b>62.91</b>

the Lembak community, such as at home, in arts, religion, and commerce.

### Language Attitudes

This includes the attitudes of the community, government, and institutions toward Lembak language. Evaluating these attitudes provides a comprehensive overview of perceptions, support, and acceptance of the language in the societal context.

Table 8 indicates that the community and

traditional institutions of the Lembak community demonstrate a positive attitude toward the protection, development, and preservation of the Lembak language, and are more dominant in supporting it. The government and various other parties also support the importance of the Lembak language, although there is a perception that some obstacles still exist in its preservation.

The interviews with the 12 respondents highlight the mixed attitudes towards the Lembak language, with a strong emphasis on the role of

traditional institutions and the lack of governmental support.

“Learning Lembak is important for our identity, but the government doesn’t seem to prioritize it and the government does not actively promote it. We see more efforts from traditional institutions than from the government in preserving our language.” (12 respondents from various occupations)

The result of survey and interview highlighted a strong pride in the Lembak language among its speakers, coupled with significant support from traditional institutions. However, the lack of formal support and promotion from the government poses challenges to its preservation and vitality.

### Language Regulation

Language regulation involves the government’s attitudes and policies toward the Lembak language. The government determines the direction of development policies, including those related to ethnic and cultural languages. Regulation indicators include policies, language status, regulations on the use of other languages, and sanctions for violations. The survey shows that:

Table 9 shows that parents often correct their children when they make mistakes in using the Lembak language. The use of the Lembak language is also limited using Indonesian and other regional languages. The government does not have any official rules about using the Lembak language. Current regulations are just community rules and norms that are not mandatory, and there are no official government regulations in place.

Interview results with 12 respondents from various professions show that:

“Parents often reprimand their children if they use the

Lembak language incorrectly, but in the workplace, this language is rarely used. There are no government regulations regarding this, and no local regulations support its use. The government should be more concerned,” said several teachers (Respondents 73, 79, 55).

In government offices, there are no special days to use the Lembak language, and it is rarely heard in official settings. There are no rules mandating the use of the Lembak language, and everyone prioritizes Indonesian. Although tradition is important, official support is lacking,” explained several civil servants (Respondents 80, 168, 163).

“Companies never request or allow the use of the Lembak language in official matters. Companies support the use of more widely spoken languages like Indonesian,” revealed several entrepreneurs (Respondents 83, 165, 167).

“I am often reprimanded by my parents if I use the Lembak language incorrectly. However, at university, Indonesian is more frequently used, so the Lembak language is less developed. Indonesian is considered to hinder the development of the Lembak language,” said several students (Respondents 21, 22, 23).

Survey and interview results indicate that there are only internal regulations from the Lembak community at the family level to maintain the Lembak language. However, there is no official support from the government, so the Lembak language is not developing well.

### Language Learning

Language learning plays an important role in preserving and passing down the Lembak language to younger generations. Indicators include intergenerational language transmission, readiness of instructional materials, and literacy material readiness.

**Table 9. Language Regulation**

Serial No.	Statement	Percentage (%)	
		Yes	No
7	People who do not use Lembak language will be isolated.	00.00	100
8	There is an obligation to use Lembak language in the government domain on certain days.	00.00	100
9	Parents always reprimand their children when they make mistakes in using Lembak language.	53.81	46.19
16	The use of Lembak language is hindered using other regional languages.	77.14	22.86
34	There are local regulations that promote the sustainability of this regional language.	00.00	100
40	Private companies allow the use of Lembak language in their dealings.	00.00	100
49	People who do not use Lembak language will be considered to violate customs.	00.00	100
68	The use of Indonesian language hinders the development of Lembak language.	70.48	29.52
76	People who do not use Lembak language will be disliked by many.	00.00	100
<b>Average</b>		<b>22,38</b>	<b>77,62</b>

**Table 10. Language Learning**

Serial No.	Statement	Percentage (%)	
		Yes	No
2	The grammar of this regional language has been compiled.	00.00	100
28	Many schoolbooks are written in Lembak language.	1.43	98.57
38	Every parent will teach Lembak language to their children.	87.14	12.86
63	There are adequate teaching materials for learning Lembak language.	00.00	100
69	The dictionary of this regional language has been compiled.	00.00	100
75	I will correct if someone is wrong in using Lembak language.	73.81	26.19
86	Many reading materials are available in Lembak language.	3.33	96.67
<b>Average</b>		<b>23.67</b>	<b>76.33</b>

**Table 11. Language Documentation**

Serial No.	Statement	Percentage (%)	
		Yes	No
21	This regional language already has a writing system.	33.33	96.67
22	Documentation about this regional language can be easily found.	00.00	100
25	Documentation about this regional language is organized in the form of books.	4.29	95.71
39	Documents about this regional language have been found since centuries ago.	4.76	95.24
42	There are many writings in Lembak language.	5.71	94.29
43	Documentation in the form of audio recordings can also be found.	00.00	100
56	There is already documentation about the history of Lembak language.	00.00	100
72	Lembak language has been well-documented.	00.00	100
<b>Average</b>		<b>6.87</b>	<b>93.13</b>

The result of survey shown in Table 10 indicates that Lembak language learning is only conducted by parents to their children or by elders to the younger generation in a traditional and incidental manner within the family and Lembak community environment. There are no instructional materials or books available for formal Lembak language education.

Interview with 12 respondents, including parents, teachers, and students show the following results:

“Parents always try to teach the Lembak language to their children at home. However, it is very difficult to find formal teaching materials that can be used. Many resources are still undocumented,” said several parents (Respondents 92, 97, 100, 172, 177, 180).

“Although there is a great desire to teach the Lembak language, without dictionaries and formal teaching materials, it is very difficult to create structured lessons. There are no textbooks in the Lembak language in schools. As teachers, we feel this is a major challenge in preserving the Lembak language,” explained several teachers (Respondents 83, 87, 90).

“I often learn the Lembak language from my parents, but at school, there is no adequate support in terms of

teaching materials,” said several students (Respondents 27, 29, 33).

The survey and interview results indicate that learning the Lembak language still heavily relies on intergenerational transmission within family and community environments. However, the lack of formal teaching materials such as schoolbooks and dictionaries pose a significant barrier. This has led to the Lembak language being less developed in official and educational settings.

### Language Documentation

Data regarding the Quality and Types of available Documentation is needed, with Types of documentation including written texts, audio recordings, and video recordings encompassing conversations or cultural performances to evaluate and understand the sustainability level and the availability of literary resources supporting the preservation of the Lembak language and culture.

The result of survey shown in Table 11 indicates that the documentation of the Lembak language is very limited and requires more intensive efforts to improve accessibility and the availability

of literary resources that support the preservation of the Lembak language and culture.

Interviews with 12 respondents, including parents, teachers, and students, revealed the following findings:

“It seems there is no official writing system for the Lembak language. Documents are also hard to find, especially in book form. Many people know the language, but there is no clear system for writing it. And when it comes to audio documents, there are almost none,” said several parents (Respondents 92, 97, 100, 172, 177, 180).

“In book form, there are almost no Lembak language documents. At school, we don’t have teaching materials in this language, let alone historical documents. Audio or video recordings of the Lembak language are also non-existent. It is very difficult to teach this language without adequate documentation. I have never found a book or recording about the Lembak language. Yet, this documentation is crucial for the preservation of the language,” explained several teachers (Respondents 83, 87, 90).

“I have never seen written or audio documents in the Lembak language. If there were more documentation, it might be easier to learn and preserve this language. The Lembak language writing system does not exist yet. It seems that historical documents or literature about this language are very scarce,” said several students (Respondents 27, 29, 33).

From the surveys and interview results, Lembak language documentation is very minimal and requires more intensive efforts to improve the accessibility and availability of literary resources that support the preservation of the Lembak language and culture.

### New Challenge

In Bengkulu City, various local and online media are present, albeit inconsistently. Analyzing the Lembak language’s response to new media reveals its adaptability and vitality in facing

technological and mass media transformations.

The result of survey shown in Table 12 indicates that the Lembak language is not ready for new challenges. It means more work is needed to blend technology and expand vocabulary for the language to survive and grow in the digital age.

Interviews with 12 respondents, including parents, teachers, and students, revealed key insights into the challenges facing Lembak language.

“The ability of the Lembak language to communicate on the internet is still lacking. This indicates the need for development to face the digital era,” said several parents (Respondents 92, 97, 100, 172, 177, 180).

“I have difficulty writing in the Lembak language on the computer without technical constraints. There is a need for technology integration to update the language system,” explained several teachers (Respondents 83, 87, 90).

“The Lembak language is still underused in the virtual world. We need more efforts to make this language more widely used on the internet,” added several students (Respondents 27, 29, 33).

From the survey and interview results, the Lembak language needs to adapt to the new challenges of the digital era to remain relevant and develop.

## IV. DISCUSSIONS

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of language preservation in maintaining cultural heritage and identity (Crystal, 2000; UNESCO, 2003). Despite these efforts, many minority languages, including the Lembak language, face significant challenges due to increasing language contact and the dominance of national languages (Bisang, Hock, & Winter, 2007). This study aimed to examine the current state of the Lembak language in Bengkulu City, focusing on its

**Table 12. New Challenge**

Serial No.	Statement	Percentage (%)	
		Yes	No
17	Lembak language is easily used for internet communication.	20.95	79.05
29	I can use a computer to write in the Lembak language without technical constraints.	20	80
31	The script system of this regional language has been incorporated into Unicode.	00.00	100
47	Many new vocabularies are discovered in Lembak language.	12.86	87,14
53	The vocabulary of Lembak language is developed in response to contemporary challenges.	8.10	91.90
64	Lembak language is widely used in the virtual (cyber) world.	27.14	72.86
71	Many people can be communicated with using the Lembak language on the internet.	22.38	77.61
<b>Average</b>		<b>15.92</b>	<b>84.08</b>

use in daily communication and intergenerational transmission. The findings reveal that while the Lembak language remains prevalent among older generations, younger speakers are increasingly shifting to Indonesian and Malay for everyday interactions. This shift underscores the urgent need for targeted language revitalization programs to ensure the sustainability of the Lembak language in the face of ongoing linguistic and cultural changes.

The results of this study revealed several key findings regarding the use of the Lembak language in Bengkulu City. First, while the language is still widely spoken among older generations, its use among younger people is declining. Second, the Lembak language faces significant challenges in being integrated into digital and modern communication platforms, as evidenced by the low percentage of respondents who use it for internet communication (20.95%). Additionally, the study found that the script system of the Lembak language has not been incorporated into Unicode, making it difficult to use in technological contexts. Finally, there is a noticeable lack of new vocabulary development in response to contemporary challenges, further hindering the language's adaptation and survival.

Unexpectedly, the study found that a significant number of younger Lembak speakers demonstrated a high level of bilingualism or even multilingualism, with many proficient in Indonesian, English, and other regional languages such as Bengkulu Malay and Minang. Contrary to the initial hypothesis that younger generations would predominantly use only Indonesian, 45% of respondents aged 18-25 reported frequent use of three or more languages in their daily lives. This multilingualism appears to be driven by increased mobility, higher educational attainment, and greater exposure to diverse linguistic environments. These findings suggest that the language dynamics among younger Lembak speakers are more complex than previously thought and warrant further investigation into the social and cultural factors promoting this linguistic versatility. According to Bisang, Hock, & Winter (2007), language loss can occur due to a gradual shift toward the dominant language in the context of language contact situations. This condition supports the views of Tando (2009) and Chaer (2010), who state that language extinction factors in the context of the Indonesian language involve the influence of the majority language

in the region of the regional language speakers, bilingualism or multilingualism, migration, and interethnic marriages.

The findings of this study align with previous research by Crystal (2000) and UNESCO (2003), which emphasize the importance of a language's vitality being reflected in its intergenerational transmission and daily use. Like Florey (2010), this study found that the younger generation of Lembak speakers still maintains a significant level of language use in their daily lives. However, this study diverges from Evans (2010), who suggested that urbanization inevitably leads to language decline; our data indicate that despite urban influences, the Lembak language remains robust among urban dwellers. These results suggest that, while some general trends observed in earlier studies hold true, the Lembak language community exhibits unique resilience that warrants further investigation.

The results of this study reveal several key insights into the vitality and challenges facing the Lembak language community. Firstly, the significant number of Lembak language speakers, particularly among the younger generation, underscores the language's continued importance within the community. This finding aligns with theories proposed by Crystal (2000) and UNESCO (2003), which emphasize the role of intergenerational transmission in maintaining language vitality. Additionally, our data suggest that despite urbanization and increased exposure to dominant languages such as Bengkulu Malay, the Lembak language remains resilient, with daily usage prevalent among community members. This resilience may be attributed to the strong sense of cultural identity associated with the language, as evidenced by its use in traditional customs and family communication.

The data from our study illustrate the impact of language contact on the vitality of the Lembak language community. For instance, during our interviews, respondents frequently mentioned their exposure to Bengkulu Malay through various media channels such as television, radio, and social media platforms. One respondent recounted how their children often preferred watching Bengkulu Malay programs on television over those in the Lembak language. This preference for the majority language highlights the pervasive influence of language contact in shaping language attitudes and usage patterns within the community.

Additionally, our observations of daily interactions among community members further underscored the dominance of Bengkulu Malay, particularly in formal settings such as schools and workplaces. These real-life examples provide compelling evidence of the challenges posed by language contact to the sustainability of the Lembak language.

From the results of this study, we can conclude that preferences towards the majority language and language contact influence are key factors in determining the sustainability of the Lembak language. Although the Lembak language is still widely used in daily life, especially among the elderly, this research indicates that its usage tends to decline among the younger generation. This is due to the dominance of Bengkulu Malay in mass media and formal environments such as schools and workplaces. Therefore, it can be assumed that the future sustainability of the Lembak language will be greatly influenced by efforts to strengthen cultural identity and preserve linguistic traditions amidst ongoing globalization and modernization.

In the context of these research findings, several recommendations can be made to support the preservation of the Lembak language. Firstly, it is crucial to raise awareness of the importance of the Lembak language among the younger generation. Educational programs that promote the use of the Lembak language in school curricula and extracurricular activities can help strengthen understanding and appreciation of the language. Additionally, steps should be taken to support the development of human resources capable of using and preserving the Lembak language, such as training for teachers and writers. Furthermore, support from the government and relevant institutions is vital in promoting activities and initiatives aimed at strengthening the status of the Lembak language within society. Concrete measures like these can help maintain the sustainability of the Lembak language amidst the ongoing challenges of modernization and globalization.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

This study provides valuable insights into the status of the Lembak language and the challenges it faces. By conducting interviews and analyzing language vitality indicators, we gained a comprehensive understanding of the situation. The advantage of this study lies in its use of a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative interviews with quantitative data analysis. This allowed for a more nuanced exploration of the issues surrounding the preservation of the Lembak language. However, it's important to acknowledge some limitations. One limitation is the relatively small sample size of the respondents, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study focused solely on Bengkulu City, limiting its broader applicability to other regions where the Lembak language is spoken. Despite these limitations, the methodology employed in this study provides a solid foundation for further research on language preservation efforts.

Deductions from the research indicate that while the Lembak language retains significance among older generations, its usage is declining, particularly among younger speakers. Factors such as language contact and preference for the majority language contribute to this decline. Therefore, efforts to preserve and revitalize the Lembak language are essential to ensure its survival for future generations. It is suggested that future research explore the effectiveness of language revitalization programs targeting the younger generation. Additionally, comparative studies with other ethnic languages facing similar challenges could provide valuable insights into best practices for language preservation efforts. Drawing pedagogic implications from this study, it is imperative to incorporate the Lembak language into formal education curricula and promote its use in daily life. Language revitalization initiatives, such as language classes and cultural programs, should be encouraged to instill pride and appreciation for the Lembak language among the community.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1. Survey Respondents Based on Characteristics

No.	Characteristics		Percentage (%)	Number of Respondents
1	Gender	Male	41	86
		Female	59	124
		<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>210</b>
2	Age	<20 years	26.19	55
		20-39 years	32.86	69
		40-59 years	35.24	74
		>60 years	5.71	12
		<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>210</b>
3	Merital Status	Single	41.90	88
		Merried	50.95	107
		Widow(er)	7.15	15
		<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>210</b>
4	Education	Not Schooled	00.00	0
		Primary	10.48	22
		Junior/Senior	51.43	108
		Beachelor	38.09	80
		<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>210</b>
5	Employment	Employed	74.29	156
		Unemployed	25.71	54
		<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>210</b>
6	Occupation	Teacher	12.86	27
		Employee	8.57	18
		Civil Servant	16.19	34
		Farmer	10	21
		Enterpreniur	22.86	48
		Laborer	3.81	8
		Students	17.14	36
		Unemployed	8.57	18
		<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>210</b>

### Appendix 2: Interview Respondents Based on Purposes

No.	Indicators	Ages				Occupations				Total Number
		<20	20-39	40-59	>60	Teacher	student	Civil Servan	Enter-preniur	
1	Speaker of Lombok language									
2	Language Contact	3	4	4	1	-	-	-	-	12
3	Bilingualism									
4	The Dominant Position of Lombok Community									
5	Domain of Language Usage	-	-	-	-	3	3	3	3	12
6	Language Attitudes									
7	Language Regulation									
8	Language Learning									
9	Language Documentation	-	3	3	-	3	3	-	-	12
10	New Challenge									
Total		3	7	7	1	6	6	3	3	36