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Digital Agency and the Preservation of the Banggai Language Among the Younger Generation in Banggai City

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ABSTRAK

Regional languages are essential components of cultural identity, serving not only as means of communication but also as vehicles for transmitting values, knowledge, and local wisdom across generations. Banggai, spoken in Banggai Laut Regency, has shown signs of declining use among younger generations in family and educational settings. Meanwhile, digital technology offers new opportunities for regional language use and dissemination. This study examines the forms, functions, and factors influencing Banggai language maintenance among young people in Banggai City through the perspective of digital agency, which views youth as active and creative users of digital technology. This qualitative case study involved 29 respondents who completed open-ended questionnaires and three informants who participated in in-depth interviews. Participants aged 15–30 years were purposively selected. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, with source and methodological triangulation. The findings show that 19 respondents use Banggai on social media, primarily in informal conversations with fellow speakers. However, none reported producing Banggai-language content or collaborating on content creation, while digital resources, such as dictionaries, were rarely used. Digital spaces help maintain language use and strengthen linguistic identity and pride, although their contribution to broader language use, learning, and intergenerational transmission remains largely potential. Key supporting factors include preservation motivation and family and school support. Major barriers include limited language use in families and communities, the influence of Indonesian and other languages, restricted vocabulary, social stigma, and scarce digital content and learning resources. Limited device and internet access were not reported as barriers. This study refines digital agency by distinguishing language-use agency from content-production and collaborative agency, highlighting the need for youth-driven digital resources supported by families, schools, and local governments.

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turnitin Page 8 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

1. INTRODUCTION

Regional languages are an essential part of cultural identity because they function not only as means of communication but also as vehicles for transmitting values, knowledge, history, and local wisdom across generations [1]. In multilingual societies such as Indonesia, the sustainability of regional languages depends heavily on the intensity of their use and the continuity of intergenerational transmission. When a language is used less frequently in everyday life, particularly by younger generations, this may indicate weakening language maintenance and an increasing potential for language shift [2].

This issue is relevant to the condition of the Banggai language in Banggai Laut Regency. Data from the Agency for Language Development and Cultivation indicate that the language still has a speech community and several dialects, but it is reportedly rarely used in subdistrict capitals, particularly among younger generations. Previous research found that only 13.74% of respondents frequently used Banggai within the family domain, while 43.43% used it occasionally and 42.83% never used it [3]. Another study found that Banggai language maintenance in the educational domain reached only 6.11% [4]. These figures indicate that Banggai faces challenges not only within families but also in educational environments.

Banggai City serves as a center of government, education, trade, and public services, bringing together speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds. This high intensity of language contact expands the use of Indonesian in various community activities [5]. Preliminary observations indicate that young people in Banggai City use Indonesian more frequently at school, in social interactions, and in digital communication, whereas Banggai is primarily used in family contexts and certain cultural activities. This pattern suggests a narrowing of the domains in which Banggai is used. It is consistent with findings that regional languages remain in use among younger generations in some family interactions but are more limited in peer interactions and written and digital communication [6].

At the same time, digital technology has transformed the spaces in which languages are used. Social media and messaging platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube have become integral to young people's lives [7]. These spaces may reinforce the dominance of Indonesian and foreign languages, but they can also provide regional languages with new domains of use through communication, content production, vocabulary dissemination, language learning, and the formation of communities based on local culture [8].

Three interrelated concepts frame this study. Language maintenance refers to the continuity of a language's use and intergenerational transmission despite pressures toward language shift. Linguistic agency refers to speakers' ability to undertake actions that shape language use and continuity consciously [9]. Digital agency extends this concept to technology-mediated environments, where young people make language choices, produce content, and establish interactions through digital technologies [10]. Linguistic agency explains why language maintenance depends on speakers' choices rather than solely on structural conditions, while digital agency identifies where these choices are currently

turnitin Page 8 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

turnitin Page 9 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

enacted: in digital communication, content production, and networked collaboration. Accordingly, digital spaces are viewed not merely as factors that may accelerate language shift but also as arenas that can strengthen the use and transmission of Banggai [11]. Young people are therefore positioned as actors exercising agency at different levels of practice rather than as passive subjects of language shift.

Previous studies have emphasized the roles of families, education, and young people's awareness in maintaining regional languages amid the dominance of Indonesian in urban settings [12], [13]. Sociolinguistic research has also examined language maintenance in other communities in Central Sulawesi [14], [15]. Studies on digital language maintenance have demonstrated that technology can expand local language use through documentation, learning media, and communication platforms [16]. Other research has examined digital media for Indigenous languages [17], Android-based dictionaries for the Lampung language [18], the use of social media for Punjabi and Setswana [19], and, through literature reviews, digital tools and social media for regional languages in Indonesia [11], [7]. However, these digital studies have largely focused on technological tools, platforms, or other language communities, whereas studies addressing family, education, and awareness have not integrated a digital agency perspective. To the best of the author's knowledge, no previous study has examined how young speakers themselves use everyday digital practices, namely private communication, content production, and collaboration, to maintain the Banggai language in Banggai City.

The novelty of this study lies in integrating Banggai language maintenance, younger generations, and the digital agency perspective within a single analytical framework. This framework views young people not as passive recipients of language maintenance efforts but as actors capable of creating, selecting, and developing language maintenance practices through digital technology [17]. This study aims to: (1) analyze the forms of Banggai language maintenance strategies employed by young people in Banggai City from a digital agency perspective; (2) describe the functions of these strategies in sustaining the Banggai language; and (3) identify the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting these strategies in digital spaces. These objectives are addressed through three research questions: (RQ1) What forms of Banggai language maintenance strategies do young people in Banggai City employ in digital spaces? (RQ2) What functions do these strategies serve in sustaining the Banggai language? (RQ3) What supporting and inhibiting factors influence these strategies?

2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of Banggai language maintenance strategies among young people within the social and digital contexts of Banggai City, an urban area serving as a center of social, educational, and cultural activities for the Banggai community. The qualitative approach was selected because it enables researchers to explore the meanings people construct around social phenomena in depth and within their contexts [20], including language-use practices, speakers' attitudes, linguistic identity, and everyday social experiences. Digital agency served as the primary theoretical lens, viewing young people

turnitin Page 9 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

turnitin Page 10 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

not as passive consumers of technology but as actors exercising agency in maintaining and revitalizing regional languages through digital devices and the internet. This perspective is consistent with findings that digital technology use among young people can enhance the visibility, social prestige, and pride associated with local languages [19].

This study was conducted in Banggai City, Banggai District, Banggai Laut Regency, Central Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The research site was purposively selected because Banggai City serves as a center of local government, education, economic activity, and socio-cultural interaction. These conditions make the city a relevant setting for examining language maintenance across generations and speaker groups, particularly the use of Banggai by young people in everyday life and digital spaces.

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to investigate the forms and functions of Banggai language maintenance strategies, as well as the factors facilitating and inhibiting these strategies among young people from a digital agency perspective. The research data consisted of responses to open-ended questionnaires from 29 respondents and in-depth interviews with three informants. The questionnaires were distributed through Google Forms, while face-to-face interviews were conducted to obtain more detailed explanations of participants' experiences, motivations, and Banggai language-use practices. Data collection took place in 2026. The research activities included instrument preparation, data collection, analysis, and report preparation.

Respondents and informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their relevance to the research focus. Participant criteria included young people aged 15–30 years who resided in or engaged in activities in Banggai City, had experience using the Banggai language, and used digital media in their everyday lives. Interview informants were selected to provide deeper insights into Banggai language use and their experiences in social and digital contexts. The three informants were W1 (Wilan), a 25-year-old working woman; W2 (Nova), a 24-year-old female university student; and W3 (Winda), a 25-year-old working woman. All three resided in Banggai City. The interviews complemented and were compared with the questionnaire findings rather than serving as the sole source of research data. The characteristics of respondents and informants provided contextual information for interpreting the findings.

Data were collected using two primary techniques. First, an open-ended questionnaire was administered through Google Forms, comprising 13 short essay questions in addition to questions about participants' names and ages. The questions covered experiences of acquiring and using Banggai, language-use situations, communication practices on social media, the use of digital dictionaries, motivations for using Banggai in digital spaces, the role of digital media in language maintenance, cultural values potentially at risk of being lost, challenges in language use, and young people's expectations regarding the continuity of the Banggai language. For organizational purposes, each question was assigned a code from Q1 to Q13 according to its sequence.

Second, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face with three informants. The interview guide was developed around three research focuses: forms of Banggai language maintenance strategies (B6–B16), functions of language maintenance strategies (C17–C22), and facilitating and inhibiting factors (D23–D30). The interviews

turnitin Page 10 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

turnitin Page 11 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

explored informants' experiences and perspectives regarding Banggai language-use practices, digital media utilization, motivations for maintaining the regional language, and challenges faced by younger generations. Interview W1 lasted approximately 30 minutes, while interview W3 was conducted at the informant's home. Information regarding the duration of interviews W2 and W3, as well as the location of interview W2, was to be verified against the research field notes. Interview questions could be asked in Indonesian or Banggai, depending on communication needs and the informants' comprehension.

The researcher served as the primary research instrument and was responsible for data collection, organization, analysis, and interpretation. Supporting instruments, including questionnaire and interview guides, were used to ensure that data collection remained aligned with the research questions. The collected data were then organized according to question codes and analytical focuses, enabling comparisons between respondents' answers and interview informants' explanations.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During data condensation, questionnaire responses and interview transcripts were examined to identify information relevant to the research focus. Coding was conducted using three main categories: forms of maintenance strategies, functions of these strategies, and factors facilitating and inhibiting Banggai language maintenance. Initial categories were established deductively based on the research questions and subsequently developed inductively according to patterns emerging from the data. Additional categories, such as social prestige and stigma, as well as the limited availability of digital content and learning resources, were incorporated when supported by respondents' answers or interview findings.

During data display, coded findings were organized into tables, matrices, and descriptive narratives. Questionnaire findings were reported according to the number of respondents expressing particular experiences or perspectives, while interview findings were used to clarify contexts and provide deeper explanations of identified patterns. A respondent could report more than one experience or perspective; therefore, the total frequency across categories did not necessarily equal the overall number of respondents. Conclusions were subsequently drawn by comparing patterns in questionnaire responses with interview data and examining the consistency of the findings in relation to the research focus. This comparison supported a contextual interpretation of Banggai language maintenance strategies among young people from a digital agency perspective.

Research Ethics Considerations. This study was conducted under research authorization issued by the university under reference number 404/UN28.1.2/PM-PBIn/2026. In reporting the findings, the identities of respondents and informants were protected through the use of codes R1–R29 for questionnaire respondents and W1–W3 for interview informants. The collected data were used for academic research purposes, with due consideration given to the confidentiality of participants' personal information. Information regarding the research objectives and participant consent was reported in accordance with the procedures actually implemented during data collection. For participants aged 15–17 years, parental or guardian consent and the participants' own

turnitin Page 11 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

turnitin Page 12 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

assent should be verified against the procedures implemented in the field and applicable ethical requirements.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings are organized around three research questions: the forms and functions of Banggai language maintenance strategies, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting these strategies among young people in Banggai City from a digital agency perspective. Questionnaire findings (R1–R29) and interview findings (W1–W3) are presented and compared. To distinguish what young people actually do from what they perceive as possible, each finding is labeled as an actual practice, perceived potential, not yet practiced, or not a barrier/factor. The interpretation columns in Tables 2–5 follow this classification.

In summary, young people's digital agency is evident in their use of Banggai in informal conversations with fellow speakers but has not yet extended to content production, collaboration, or the use of digital resources. Digital spaces primarily serve to maintain language use and strengthen linguistic identity, whereas their role in expanding language use and supporting intergenerational transmission largely remains a perceived potential. Motivation and support from families and schools are key facilitating factors. At the same time, the most frequently reported barriers include limited habitual language use in the community, the influence of other languages, limited vocabulary, social prestige, and the scarcity of Banggai-language digital resources.

Characteristics of Respondents and Informants

The questionnaire was completed by 29 respondents (R1–R29), and three informants (W1–W3) participated in in-depth interviews. The characteristics of the questionnaire respondents are presented in Table 1. All three interview informants were women aged 24–25 years: two were employed (W1 and W2), and one was a university student (W3). Most respondents (19 of 29) first learned Banggai from their parents or family at home, while four respondents learned it from teachers, primarily through local-content subjects in junior high school.

Table 1. Characteristics of Questionnaire Respondents (N = 29)

No.	Characteristic	Category	n	%
1	Age group	15–17 years	4	13.8
		18–24 years	18	62.1
		25–30 years	7	24.1
2	Gender	Male	14	48.3
		Female	15	51.7
3	Occupation/status	University students	11	37.9
		Employed (excluding teachers and content creators)	7	24.1
		School students	5	17.2
		Teachers	4	13.8
		Content creators	2	6.9
4	First learned Banggai from	Parents or family at home	19	65.5
		Schoolteachers	4	13.8
		Peers or the surrounding community	3	10.3
		Not specified	3	10.3

turnitin Page 12 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

turnitin Page 13 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

Forms of Banggai Language Maintenance Strategies in Digital Spaces

Table 2 summarizes the forms of Banggai language maintenance strategies employed in digital spaces across four aspects: the use of Banggai in digital communication, content production and dissemination, the use of digital networks, and the utilization of digital resources.

First, the use of Banggai in digital communication. A total of 19 out of 29 respondents (65.5%) reported using Banggai on social media, while 10 respondents did not. The most frequently mentioned platform was WhatsApp (12 respondents), followed by Instagram (2) and Facebook (1); six respondents did not specify a platform. The reported forms of use included chats (11 respondents), status updates (6), and comments (5). Such use was often highly limited: R6 used Banggai only occasionally in WhatsApp status captions, while R28 inserted only one or two words. Two of the three informants (W1 and W3) described similar patterns, namely greetings and brief conversations with friends, whereas W2 reported never using Banggai on social media. Banggai was chosen because it felt more familiar and was more easily understood by fellow speakers.

> Representative quotations: "Yes, on WhatsApp, such as asking how someone is doing and where they are going" (W3, female, 24 years old, university student). "It is easier to understand what is meant because one's own language is more understandable" (W1, female, 25 years old, employed).

Second, content production and dissemination. None of the respondents or informants reported having created Banggai-language content, such as videos, written posts, or songs. Only R5 mentioned uploads among the forms of language use but did not specify their content. Two respondents were content creators (R13 and R24), yet neither reported producing Banggai-language content. Some respondents knew that such content existed and attracted audiences; R15, for example, mentioned a Banggai-language creator whose content was watched by many people. Several respondents explained why they had not engaged in content production themselves: they had not received encouragement or invitations to write or post (R4), had no plans to introduce Banggai into digital spaces (R11), or felt more comfortable speaking face-to-face because using the language digitally felt awkward (R17).

> Representative quotation: "I have never created content myself. However, I use it fairly often in WhatsApp chats" (R9, female, 16 years old, school student).

Third, the use of digital networks. No respondents or informants reported collaborating with peers or communities to produce or disseminate Banggai-language content; W1 explicitly stated that such collaboration had never occurred. Digital networks were used only within familiar circles of speakers. For example, R26 used Banggai on Instagram only with people who were "on the same wavelength." Collaborative ideas emerged only as proposals, including campaigns highlighting the importance of Banggai and online Banggai-language events (R10), content strategies for campaigns (R26), and disseminating information about language preservation through social media (R3).

Fourth, the use of digital resources. Of the 29 respondents, 16 had never used Banggai dictionaries or reference resources. Only R25 mentioned online resources, such as Facebook or artificial intelligence. Seven respondents reported having used a dictionary without specifying the medium (R1, R7, R9, R13, R20, R22, and R24), while two used

turnitin Page 13 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

turnitin Page 14 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

only printed dictionaries (R14 and R16). One response was unclear (R18), and two respondents stated that digital dictionaries or applications were unavailable or difficult to access (R21 and R27). None of the three informants had used digital dictionaries or applications or developed their own digital resources. W2 used only a printed dictionary and saved Banggai-language YouTube videos to listen to.

Representative quotation: "Banggai digital dictionaries and language applications do not exist, even after I searched repeatedly. Therefore, I have never used them" (R27, male, 15 years old, school student).

Table 2. Forms of Banggai Language Maintenance Strategies in Digital Spaces

No.	Indicator	Findings	Source	Interpretation
1	Use of Banggai in digital communication	19 of 29 respondents used Banggai on social media (chats: 11; status updates: 6; comments: 5), primarily on WhatsApp; 10 respondents did not. W1 and W3 used it for greetings and brief conversations, while W2 never used it.	Q4; B6–B7	Actual practice: Language choice in private, informal interactions with fellow speakers, often limited to greetings or one or two words.
2	Content production and dissemination	No respondents or informants created Banggai-language content, including the two content creators (R13 and R24).	Q4; B8–B10	Not yet practiced: Digital spaces have not been utilized as a means of language content production and dissemination.
3	Use of digital networks	No collaboration with peers or communities was reported. Use was limited to familiar circles of speakers, while collaboration remained at the proposal stage (R3, R10, R26).	B11–B12; Q4, Q8	Not yet practiced: Digital networks have not yet become collective spaces for language maintenance.
4	Use of digital resources	Only R25 mentioned online resources; 16 respondents had never used dictionaries, and two stated that digital dictionaries were unavailable or difficult to access (R21, R27). The informants neither used nor created digital resources; W2 saved YouTube videos.	Q5; B13–B16	Limited practice: Resource use was minimal and primarily consumptive, without the development of digital resources.

Functions of Banggai Language Maintenance Strategies

Table 3 shows that Banggai language maintenance strategies in digital spaces serve four functions: maintaining language use, expanding domains of use, supporting language learning and intergenerational transmission, and strengthening linguistic identity and visibility. The table also distinguishes functions that are already being performed from those that remain perceived potentials.

First, maintaining language use. For respondents and informants who use Banggai, social media provides a familiar space for conversation. W1 described digital spaces as more private, allowing greater freedom and openness when communicating with friends from the same region, while W3 associated them with more regular language use through WhatsApp. In contrast, W2 stated that her digital activities were not routine because she rarely used Banggai in everyday life. This function is therefore evident among users but does not extend to respondents who do not use Banggai online.

turnitin Page 14 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

turnitin Page 15 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

Representative quotation: "Social media feels more private because I can communicate with friends from the same region. When asking how they are doing, I feel freer and more open" (W1, female, 25 years old, employed).

Second, expanding domains of use. The informants recognized this opportunity but considered it unrealized. W2 noted that people from other regions could see and read the language, making Banggai more widely known, while W1 stated that this was possible, "but it has not yet spread widely at present." Among the respondents, seven identified audience adaptation as a factor limiting this expansion. Indonesian was preferred to maintain formality and ensure broader comprehension (R5, R20), because friends did not understand Banggai (R12, R26), or because of the situation and the communication partner's limitations (R8, R17, R24).

Third, supporting learning and intergenerational transmission. Actual learning practices remained limited. W2 reported helping her younger sibling complete a regional-language assignment for a local-content subject, while W3 stated that using Banggai greatly helped peers communicate. However, no participant reported learning the language through digital applications or platforms. Seventeen of the 29 respondents considered digital media important for language preservation, mentioning videos, social media content, digital dictionaries and learning materials, and campaigns. Four respondents considered the current contribution of digital media insufficient, citing the difficulty of finding Banggai content and vocabulary online (R27), the limited scale of existing efforts (R28), the rarity of learning through social media (R29), and school restrictions on device use and limited online learning resources (R21).

Representative quotation: "It can help my younger sibling complete regional-language homework for the local-content subject" (W2, female, 25 years old, employed).

Fourth, strengthening identity and visibility. All three informants expressed pride in using Banggai. W1 was proud that the language continued to be used in the present era, W2 felt that she was contributing to its preservation, and W3 was proud of her own regional language. In the questionnaire, pride, identity, and the desire to preserve the language motivated 18 respondents (see Table 4). Thus, the identity-related function is evident in practice, whereas increased visibility remains a perceived potential.

Table 3. Functions of Banggai Language Maintenance Strategies among Young People in Banggai City

No.	Indicator	Findings	Source	Interpretation
1	Maintaining language use	Users felt freer, more familiar, and more open when communicating with fellow speakers in digital spaces (W1, W3, and respondents who mentioned familiarity); W2 did not use Banggai regularly.	C17–C18; Q6	Actual practice: Digital spaces help sustain language use within speakers' social circles.
2	Expanding domains of use	Informants recognized opportunities to introduce Banggai to people from other regions but stated that it had "not yet spread widely." Seven respondents adapted their language to their audiences and chose Indonesian instead.	C19; Q6–Q7	Perceived potential: The opportunity is recognized but has not yet been realized in practice.
3	Supporting learning and	W2 helped her younger sibling with a local-content assignment; no participants	C20; Q8	Perceived potential: Digital language

turnitin Page 15 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

turnitin Page 16 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

	intergenerational transmission	reported learning through applications or platforms. Seventeen respondents considered digital media important, while four viewed its current contribution as insufficient.		learning has not yet been established as a regular practice.
4	Strengthening identity and visibility	All three informants expressed pride and felt they were contributing to language preservation; 18 respondents were motivated by pride, identity, and preservation.	C21–C22; Q6, Q11	Actual practice: Identity and pride are evident; increased visibility remains a perceived potential.

Supporting Factors for Banggai Language Maintenance Strategies

Table 4 presents three aspects of supporting factors: attitudes and motivation, social environmental support, and digital media.

First, attitudes and motivation. A total of 18 out of 29 respondents cited pride, identity, the desire to preserve the language, or cultural values as reasons for continuing to use the Banggai language, and all three informants expressed similar views. W2 hoped that the language would not end with her but would be passed on to the next generation. However, this motivation was also fragile: some respondents felt less motivated because they rarely heard Banggai spoken in their surroundings (R2, R14), not everyone understood the language (R12, R20), they felt that the language had little impact on their lives (R21, R23), or Indonesian was used more widely (R29).

> Representative quotation: "The factors that keep me motivated to use the Banggai language are pride in my regional identity and culture, as well as the desire to preserve the language so that it does not disappear." (R11, female, 19 years old, university student).

Second, social environmental support. All three informants reported receiving support from their families, for example, through reminders and assistance when they encountered unfamiliar vocabulary (W2). W1 added that the school offered extracurricular Banggai language activities. The questionnaire findings were consistent with these accounts: 19 respondents had first learned Banggai from their parents or family, while four had learned it from teachers. Several respondents also identified a Banggai-speaking environment (R7), supportive friends (R27), and family members and village elders (R28) as motivating factors.

> Representative quotation: "Of course, my family supports it because the school already offers extracurricular Banggai language activities, which provide support for the Banggai language." (W1, female, 25 years old, employed).

Third, digital media. The role of digital media as a supporting factor was limited and individual in nature. W2 stated that the internet made it easier for her to look up Banggai vocabulary she did not know, while W3 explained that easy access sparked her curiosity to communicate in the language. In contrast, W1 stated that easy access did not affect her language use. Questionnaire responses indicated very limited use of digital resources (see Table 2); therefore, digital media had not yet emerged as a major supporting factor.

turnitin Page 16 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

turnitin Page 17 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

Table 4. Supporting Factors for Banggai Language Maintenance Strategies through Digital Spaces

No.	Indicator	Findings	Source	Interpretation
1	Attitudes and motivation	Eighteen out of 29 respondents cited pride, identity, language preservation, or cultural values, and all three informants expressed similar views. Motivation declined when the language was rarely heard or was not understood by interlocutors (R2, R12, R14, R20, R21, R23, R29).	Q11; D23	Actual supporting factor: Awareness of and motivation to preserve the language are evident, but remain fragile.
2	Social environmental support	All three informants received family support; W1 mentioned extracurricular Banggai language activities at school; 19 respondents had learned the language from family members and four from teachers.	Q1, Q11; D24	Actual supporting factor: Families and schools provide environments for language learning and use.
3	Digital media	W2 and W3 reported that internet access helped them look up vocabulary and stimulated curiosity, whereas W1 reported no effect. The use of digital resources was very limited.	D25; Q5	Limited supporting factor: Digital media provides individual assistance but has not yet become a major supporting factor.

Potential and Actual Barriers to Banggai Language Maintenance Strategies

Table 5 examines potential barriers identified in the interview guide, including the dominance of other languages, limited Banggai language proficiency, limited digital access or literacy, and insufficient environmental support. It also considers two barriers that emerged from the data: prestige-related attitudes and social stigma, and the scarcity of Banggai-language digital resources. These factors are distinguished according to whether they were actually experienced as barriers.

First, the dominance of other languages. A total of 16 out of 29 respondents identified the influence of Indonesian, slang, foreign languages, modern and digital culture, or the arrival of speakers of other languages as challenges or causes of declining Banggai language use. The informants' views were divided: W2 considered the dominance of Indonesian and foreign languages to have a substantial influence, while also motivating her to use the regional language to prevent its extinction. In contrast, W1 and W3 stated that other languages did not affect them.

Second, limited Banggai language proficiency. W2 stated that limited vocabulary was a "major obstacle" to communication, while W3 explained that vocabulary deficiencies hindered communication and led to the mixing of Banggai and Indonesian. W1 did not experience this problem. In the questionnaire, five respondents cited limited fluency or vocabulary as reasons for rarely using Banggai (R1, R3, R13, R15, R16), and many switched to Indonesian when they did not know a particular word.

Third, pronunciation and dialect variation. W1 identified differences in pronunciation and accent among peers as an obstacle, while R21 stated that word meanings and pronunciations varied across locations and were inconsistent. This factor was experienced as a barrier, but was mentioned by considerably fewer participants than vocabulary limitations.

Fourth, prestige-related attitudes and social stigma. Six respondents identified prestige, embarrassment, lack of confidence, or stigma as challenges (R8, R9, R15, R19,

turnitin Page 17 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

turnitin Page 18 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

R22, R29). This factor was not included in the initial interview guide and emerged from the questionnaire data.

> Representative quotation: "The existence of the mistaken perception that using a regional language is outdated or less cool than using colloquial Indonesian or a foreign language." (R9, female, 16 years old, school student).

Fifth, digital access and resources. All three informants reported no difficulties with internet access, devices, or technological skills; therefore, access itself was not a barrier. Their concerns centered on the scarcity of content and learning resources: six respondents stated that Banggai-language digital content, dictionaries, or learning materials were insufficient or difficult to find (R2, R18, R21, R22, R27, R28). R21 added that new regulations prohibited students from bringing mobile devices to school.

Sixth, environmental support and habitual use. All three informants stated that they did not lack support because their families and communities were supportive. However, 14 out of 29 respondents identified the lack of habitual Banggai language use within families, public spaces, schools, or local government initiatives as a challenge (R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R10, R11, R15, R18, R19, R20, R26, R27, R28). Thus, the support perceived by the informants does not necessarily mean that the surrounding environment has established Banggai as a habitual language of communication.

> Representative quotations: "One of the challenges is an environment in which people are not accustomed to using the Banggai language." (R6, male, 24 years old, university student). "Many parents in the current generation prefer to use Indonesian when communicating with their children from an early age." (R19, female, 30 years old, employed).

Table 5. Potential and Actual Barriers to Banggai Language Maintenance Strategies through Digital Spaces

No.	Indicator	Findings	Source	Interpretation
1	Dominance of other languages	Sixteen out of 29 respondents identified the influence of Indonesian, slang, foreign languages, or modern culture. W2 considered these influences substantial, whereas W1 and W3 did not.	Q7, Q10–Q12; D26	An actual barrier according to many respondents, but not perceived by two informants.
2	Limited Banggai language proficiency (vocabulary)	W2 and W3 stated that limited vocabulary hindered communication. Five respondents identified this as a reason for rarely using Banggai (R1, R3, R13, R15, R16), whereas W1 did not experience this problem.	Q7, Q11; D27–D28	An actual barrier at the individual level.
3	Pronunciation and dialect variation	W1 reported differences in accent among peers; R21 noted that word meanings and pronunciations varied across locations.	D27–D28; Q5	An actual barrier, but mentioned by relatively few participants.
4	Prestige-related attitudes and social stigma	Six respondents mentioned prestige, embarrassment, lack of confidence, or stigma (R8, R9, R15, R19, R22, R29).	Q10, Q12	An actual barrier that emerged from the data.
5	Limitations in digital access and resources	Device and internet access: none of the three informants reported difficulties. Digital content and learning resources: six respondents reported that these were insufficient or difficult to find (R2, R18, R21, R22, R27, R28).	D29; Q5, Q8, Q12	Access: not a barrier. Availability of digital resources: an actual barrier.

turnitin Page 18 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

turnitin Page 19 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

6	Lack of environmental support and habitual use	The informants felt supported; 14 respondents identified a lack of habitual use within families, public spaces, schools, or local government initiatives.	D30; Q10, Q12	Support: not a barrier for the informants. Environmental language habits: an actual barrier according to many respondents.

Overall, the most frequently reported barriers were the influence of other languages (16 respondents), the lack of habitual language use in the surrounding environment (14 respondents), limited vocabulary, prestige-related attitudes and stigma, and the scarcity of Banggai-language digital resources. Limited access to devices and the internet was not reported as a barrier. These findings indicate that the barriers to maintaining the Banggai language in digital spaces are predominantly social and linguistic, particularly habitual language use, vocabulary, and attitudes, and are also associated with resource availability rather than technological limitations.

DISCUSSION

Digital Agency between Interpersonal Use and Content Production

The main finding of this study is an uneven pattern of digital agency. Most respondents (19 out of 29) used the Banggai language for private communication with fellow speakers. However, none produced Banggai-language content or collaborated to do so, and digital resources were rarely utilized. This pattern both aligns with and differs from previous research. It aligns with findings that regional languages among younger generations are used less frequently in written and digital communication than in family interactions [6], as public and productive uses were the weakest in our data. However, it differs from those findings because most of our respondents used Banggai in digital interactions with fellow speakers, although often in very limited ways. Studies of Indigenous and minority languages have reported that digital technology can expand language use through documentation, learning media, and social media [16], [17], [19]. For the Banggai language, these roles have so far remained perceived possibilities rather than established practices. Notably, the two respondents who worked as content creators did not produce Banggai-language content, while R15 was aware of a Banggai-language content creator whose content attracted a large audience. This suggests that technological skills and access do not automatically lead young people to produce content in regional languages.

Why Private Use Does Not Lead to Public Production

Informants and respondents described digital spaces as familiar and comfortable environments for using Banggai with friends from the same region. However, when the audience was uncertain, some chose Indonesian to ensure that they would be understood. Several factors identified in the data may explain why the transition to public content production rarely occurs. First, audience considerations: seven respondents adjusted their language to suit their readers. Second, proficiency and confidence: limited vocabulary was mentioned by two informants and five respondents, while content production requires greater proficiency than casual conversation. Third, prestige-related attitudes and stigma, reported by six respondents, may make public posts vulnerable to being perceived as outdated. Fourth, the absence of encouragement and role models: R4 stated that no one had

turnitin Page 19 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

turnitin Page 20 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

encouraged them to post content, while several respondents reported that they had not found Banggai-language content or resources (R14, R21, R27). Fifth, dialect variation may make speakers hesitant to write in public spaces, although only a few respondents mentioned this issue. These explanations are interpretive because the data were not designed to measure causal relationships and should be examined in future research.

The Dominance of Other Languages, Habitual Use, and the Roles of Families and Schools

The most frequently reported barriers concerned the social environment rather than technology. Sixteen respondents mentioned the influence of Indonesian or other languages, and 14 identified the lack of habitual language use, whereas none of the three informants experienced access-related difficulties. These findings are consistent with the view that the expansion of Indonesian constitutes a major pressure toward regional language shift [2], as well as research emphasizing the roles of families, education, and young people's awareness [12], [13]. One respondent described how families had shifted to Indonesian when speaking with their children (R19), suggesting that language transmission issues arise within the family before extending into digital spaces. Schools also served as an important source of language learning for younger respondents: four respondents had first encountered Banggai through teachers, particularly through local-content subjects, and one of them (R21) reported not being a speaker and having heard the language only at school. The differences in informants' views—W2 considered the influence of other languages substantial, whereas W1 and W3 did not—indicate that the influence of other languages is not experienced uniformly. Therefore, the family support perceived by the informants does not guarantee that the surrounding environment has established habitual Banggai language use.

Refining the Concept of Digital Agency

These findings suggest that digital agency in language maintenance is multilayered rather than uniform. At the first level, choice agency: young people choose Banggai for interpersonal digital communication. At the second level, productive agency, they create and disseminate Banggai-language content. At the third level, collaborative agency, they work with peers and communities. Our respondents and informants demonstrated the first level, although with varying intensity, but none demonstrated the second or third levels, despite widespread recognition of the importance of language dissemination (17 respondents considered digital media important). This extends the concept of digital agency [10] and the view of agency as the capacity to act upon language [9] by demonstrating that agency in digital environments is not activated by technological access alone. Device and internet access were not barriers, yet content production did not occur because vocabulary, habitual language use in the social environment, social attitudes, and resource availability also played a role. These findings also add nuance to the view of digital spaces as both spaces for preservation and forces of erosion [8], [11]. In this context, digital spaces are environments where language maintenance already occurs

49

turnitin Page 20 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

turnitin Page 21 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

privately and could be extended into the public sphere if supportive conditions were established.

Practical Implications

Respondents themselves proposed measures that align with the identified barriers. To address the scarcity of resources, several respondents requested a comprehensive digital Indonesian–Banggai dictionary (R2, R16, R17, R26). The development of an Android-based dictionary for the Lampung language [18] illustrates the type of resource that could be developed. To address the lack of habitual use and encouragement, respondents proposed online Banggai language campaigns and events (R10), content strategies for campaigns (R26), and the dissemination of language preservation information through social media (R3). Schools could expand existing Banggai language extracurricular activities and local-content subjects into digital projects, such as videos, posts, and student-created glossaries, while taking into account the school device-use regulations mentioned by R21. Families should strengthen the habitual use of Banggai with children from an early age. Local governments and language institutions could support the development of content and learning materials that accommodate dialect variation, thereby reducing speakers' hesitation.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the sample consisted of 29 questionnaire respondents and three interview informants in a single city; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to the entire Banggai-speaking community or to rural areas. Second, all three interview informants were women aged 24–25, and the interviews were intended to deepen the findings rather than achieve data saturation. Third, the questionnaire responses consisted of short essays, some of which were very brief, meaning that coding depended on the researcher's interpretation. Consequently, the reported counts should be understood as indicative rather than as population estimates. Fourth, most of the evidence was based on self-reports and may have been influenced by social desirability bias and speakers' limited awareness of their own language use. Fifth, the age range of 15–30 years included both students and employed individuals, and the data were not analyzed separately by age group, gender, or platform. Finally, this study did not evaluate the effectiveness of any digital language revitalization program.

4. CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the forms, functions, and factors influencing Banggai language maintenance strategies among young people in Banggai City from the perspective of digital agency. Young people's digital agency is evident in their choice to use Banggai for interpersonal digital communication (19 out of 29 respondents), but it has not yet developed into content production, collaboration, or the utilization of digital resources.

Digital spaces currently function primarily to sustain language use and strengthen linguistic identity and pride, while their roles in expanding language use, learning, and intergenerational transmission remain perceived potentials. Motivation to preserve the

turnitin Page 21 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

turnitin Page 22 of 23 - Integrity Submission Submission ID trn:oid:::1:3698370658

language and support from families and schools are the main supporting factors. The most frequently reported actual barriers are the influence of Indonesian and other languages, the lack of habitual Banggai language use in the surrounding environment, limited vocabulary, prestige-related attitudes and social stigma, and the scarcity of Banggai-language digital content and learning resources. Access to devices and the internet is not a barrier.

These conclusions should be interpreted in light of the study's limitations: a small sample from a single urban area, three female interview informants aged 24–25, brief questionnaire responses, and reliance on self-reported data. The conclusions describe young Banggai language speakers in Banggai City and should not be generalized to the entire Banggai-speaking community.

In practical terms, language maintenance efforts should help young people move beyond being language users to becoming creators and disseminators of Banggai-language digital content. Recommended actions include developing digital dictionaries and learning materials that accommodate dialect variation, supporting youth-led content creation and campaigns, establishing habitual Banggai language use within families, and strengthening collaboration among schools, language communities, and local governments.

Future research could involve larger and more diverse samples in terms of age, gender, and geographical area; incorporate digital ethnography and content analysis to verify self-reported data; examine the explanations proposed in this study, including audience considerations, confidence, prestige-related attitudes, and resource availability; and evaluate the effectiveness of digital language revitalization programs.

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