

The Worthy Research Approaches to Endangered Languages

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Linguistic,
Research, Worthy,
Endangered, Language

Received : 5 April

Revised : 18 April

Accepted: 20 May

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ABSTRACT

Research plays a crucial role in preserving languages by enhancing their use as a means of knowledge. Language serves various functions, including cognitive, enabling users to express thoughts. This research employs a combination of analysis methods, incorporating field data collection, classification, analysis, and concluding. It is important to integrate this data with information obtained from reference literature. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are utilized to achieve optimal outcomes at each stage of the research process. Preserving a language's distinct characteristics is essential for it to continue serving as a medium of knowledge. One effective approach for researching endangered languages is Sociosemiotic or Social Semiotic analysis. Sociosemiotics provides a valuable framework for understanding the dynamic signs and symbols present within a society. These variables of signs and symbols are crucial for effectively analyzing problems and developing solutions. The most important thing is to find the authenticity of the original form of the endangered language, see the actual conditions of the endangered language, investigate the impact of the endangered language as seen from the decrease in a variable in the communication habitat of its users, and formulate a preservation/preservation model for the endangered language

INTRODUCTION

Language preservation depends on research, which plays a crucial role in developing language as a medium of knowledge. Language research also contributes to policy development in language-related fields and language learning. The decline of regional languages in social interactions is a reality that needs to be addressed through research, as it reflects a lack of appreciation for cultural heritage. To prevent the fading of languages, the concept of language research should be explored, considering the challenges posed by globalization and the tendency to prioritize foreign languages over national and regional ones.

Language serves various functions, including cognitive functions that allow users to convey thoughts effectively. The study of language is essential as it continually evolves and adapts to the active lives of its users, evident in the addition of new words and phrases to the vocabulary. Language expansion is reflected in updated dictionary editions, such as the increase in entries from KBBI III to KBBI IV. However, if a language lacks dynamism, it risks losing vitality and becoming obsolete. Academic studies and the discovery of new language theories contribute to the vitality of a language.

There are endangered languages with minimal speakers in Indonesia, such as Tondano, Tanimbar, Ogan, Buru, Maku'a, and Betawi. The Betawi language, in particular, faces a crisis of existence with a diminishing use of its vocabulary in public communication. Research conducted by the Betawi Cultural Studies Center revealed that less than 12% of the Betawi vocabulary remains actively used by the Betawi people, and this downward trend is expected to continue. This decline threatens the Betawi people's identity and values.

To protect endangered languages, each mother tongue must have a minimum of 100,000 speakers. Efforts to prevent language extinction and promote language preservation involve

- Implementing language policies through local regulations,
- Ensuring the use of mother tongues in educational institutions,
- Avoiding the replacement of mother tongues with the national language, and
- Encouraging daily communication in the mother tongue.

Regional regulations have refined language policies, such as the Regional Regulation of Central Java Province Number 17 of 2012, focusing on the Javanese language, literature, and script. On the other hand, the use of mother tongues in educational institutions contrasts with the Ministry of Education's program to establish international standard schools, which predominantly use English as the language of instruction for specific subjects. This program has faced opposition due to concerns about its potential impact on national identity and the development of the Indonesian language. The government's efforts to protect and develop the Indonesian language are ongoing, and the outcome of a recent lawsuit challenging the use of foreign languages in education is yet to be decided.

On the other hand, in response to the declining student performance in understanding the Indonesian language, as evidenced by decreasing scores in the National Examination for Indonesian subjects, the former Minister of Education, M.Nuh, plans to review the Indonesian curriculum. This decision was prompted

by many students who failed the Indonesian subject in the national exams in 2011. Of the 11,443 failed students, 51.44 per cent failed mathematics, and 38.43 per cent did not pass the Indonesian subject. To address this issue, efforts will be made to enhance the quality of Indonesian language teachers through specialized training.

Thirdly, it is essential to avoid replacing regional languages with the national language. The emphasis on promoting a popular national language, and even international languages, has affected the usage of regional languages. Criticisms arise regarding the dominance of the national language over regional languages and the displacement caused by international languages. English, the most widely spoken language globally, has faced opposition due to its historical association with colonialism and its adverse impact on colonized people's lives. Resistance to English domination is expressed by various groups, including those engaged in anti-colonial movements, European parliament members, political opponents in English-speaking countries, advocates for indigenous languages, and English-speaking intellectuals. Figures such as Mahatma Gandhi and Ngugi wa Thiong'o have criticized the harmful effects of English in their respective countries. Hywel Coleman from the University of Leeds challenges the notion that English represents progress, highlighting that economic development only partially depends on adopting English as the official language. Many countries need help to develop despite embracing English, impeding efforts to preserve linguistic diversity.

Furthermore, using the mother tongue in daily communication plays a vital role in preserving and diversifying cultures, maintaining ethnic identities, facilitating social adaptation, and fostering linguistic sensitivity. To prevent language extinction, research is crucial in exploring various approaches and strengthening the advantages of using native languages.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following findings from linguistic research highlight the dynamic nature of language. For instance, in Japanese, the verb is positioned at the end of a sentence, while in Turkish and Irian Jaya, similar patterns are observed. Based on these observations, researchers have concluded that all languages worldwide exhibit a word order where sentences end with verbs. These conclusions are drawn from empirical evidence, emphasizing the importance of real-world observations.

The significance of word order can be observed in many languages (Verhaar, 1996: 7). In Budiman Sulaiman's research, the Acehnese language features nasal vowels represented by the sounds a, i, e, and u. Haryati Soebadio's study (1964) on Sanskrit reveals the presence of voiceless consonants without aspiration (k, c, t, and p), voiceless and aspirated consonants (ch, ch, th, and ph), sibilant or hiss consonants (s), and voiced ending consonants without aspiration (g, j, d, and b), along with soft consonants (n and m). Duration et al.'s research (1978) identifies ascending diphthongs (oi, ai, and au) in Indonesian. Similarly, the Upper Banjar language exhibits ai, ui, and au as ascending diphthongs.

Zainuddin et al.'s study (1978) on the Madurese language reveals ascending diphthongs (oi, ai, and ui).

Sudaryanto et al.'s research (1982) focuses on Javanese. It demonstrates that diphthongs are only found in affective words, including ascending diphthongs (UI) as seen in the word "uijo" (very green) and descending diphthongs (ua), as exemplified by the word "Sabang" (very red). Furthermore, language research on word classes can be validated through empirical data (Harimurti, 1982, p. 22). These research findings highlight their practical value for language enthusiasts, language communities, language researchers, and language learners.

METHOD

This study employs a combination of analysis methods to conduct the research process. Field data is collected and subjected to classification, analysis, and ultimate conclusions. It is essential to integrate this data with information obtained from reference literature. Qualitative and quantitative approaches are utilized to ensure optimal outcomes at each research stage. The research underlying this scientific article begins by thoroughly examining existing literature. This condition entails broadening perspectives and gathering as much relevant literature data as possible to serve as a foundation for the research. However, more than relying on literature is required. The key to meaningful discussions and conclusive findings lies in conducting a comparative analysis that triangulates between literary theories and empirical evidence. The strength of logical reasoning forms the basis for success in research, formulating ideas and counterarguments.

In summary, the research methodology employed in this case involves gathering pertinent ideas from conservative sources related to the research problem. Comparisons are sought between theoretical frameworks and empirical data, followed by an analysis of their relative relevance and potential biases. Hermeneutics and heuristics consistently underpin the research methodology adopted in this study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The advantages of studying linguistics extend to various aspects of life, serving as a valuable resource for enhancing knowledge in different disciplines, understanding intertribal conflicts, providing theoretical insights for linguists, and offering practical benefits for non-linguists. Language proficiency plays a significant role in delving into other fields, such as anthropology, enabling researchers to comprehend the linguistic aspects of isolated tribes' natural environments. Language can also serve as a mediator for peace when disputes arise between tribes. Linguists can benefit by discovering new concepts or revising established theories with contemporary perspectives. Non-linguistic experts can benefit practically by effectively communicating their findings to the public.

The utility of linguistic studies can be categorized into practical and theoretical applications. Practical use refers to the knowledge employed to explain language phenomena to students. For example, linguistic arguments can help clarify why the word "tari + me- = menari" and not "Mentari" is used. Theoretical use, on the other hand, empowers students, future educators, or community members to conduct research or describe languages of their interest. These benefits underscore the significance of language as an essential aspect of life that can be further developed through advancements in other scientific domains.

The roles of language encompass three main tasks: descriptive and explanatory, predictive and exploratory, and control. Descriptive and explanatory tasks involve analyzing the causes and effects of language by describing its characteristics. Predictive and exploratory tasks involve formulating hypotheses and making observations to draw inferences about the language under study, providing a foundation for subsequent theories. The task of control involves shaping language conditions to achieve desired outcomes and discovering new aspects within linguistics.

As a scientific discipline, linguistics adheres to explicit, systematic, and objective criteria. It entails thorough and focused investigations without ambiguity, comprehensive formulations, and consistent patterns and components. Objectivity is crucial, aiming to describe language phenomena objectively without personal biases or subjective considerations.

Linguistics encompasses two main fields of study: microlinguistics and macro-linguistics. Microlinguistics focuses on language structure and factors internal to the language. It can be further divided into general theoretical linguistics, which explores broad linguistic principles, and exceptional theoretical linguistics, which investigates unique features of specific languages. Macrolinguistics, on the other hand, examines language concerning external factors and interdisciplinary perspectives. Anthropo-linguistics is an example of macro-linguistics, exploring the connections between language, language use, and culture. Mathematical linguistics comprises emerging disciplines like quantitative linguistics, computer linguistics, and algebraic linguistics. The philosophy of language investigates language as a human activity and linguistics's conceptual and theoretical foundations. Philology studies language, culture, institutions, and history through written materials. Semiotics focuses on studying symbols and signs, while epigraphy examines ancient inscriptions.

Regarding objectives, linguistics can be classified into theoretical and applied linguistics. Theoretical linguistics aims to establish language rules and principles applicable to different languages. It encompasses general theoretical linguistics, which investigates language universals, and exceptional theoretical linguistics, which focuses on specific languages' unique features. Applied linguistics, on the other hand, addresses practical language-related issues through research and activities in the field.

Additionally, the sociolinguistic framework is essential when studying endangered languages, as it provides valuable insights for analyzing and resolving problems related to symbols, signs, and societal dynamics.

In linguistics, various studies focus on different aspects of language with great attention and concentration. These studies can be categorized into general or theoretical linguistics, descriptive linguistics, comparative linguistics, historical linguistics, applied linguistics, and geographical linguistics. Descriptive linguistics involves the recording and analysis of language at a specific point in time. At the same time, its foundational ideas and predictions are based on a fundamental theory known as General Linguistics (GL). GL formulates a comprehensive theory of natural human language and provides a framework for understanding language as an activity, doctrine, and subject of study. Its objective is to identify broad categories of language phenomena, conduct research, and determine the systematic aspects of speech and language.

On the other hand, comparative linguistics compares the characteristics and facts of languages that may be similar or distant from each other. Historical-comparative linguistics, which emerged in the 19th century, compares two languages diachronically across different eras. The goal is to classify languages into language families, identify proto-languages from which these languages originated, and trace the historical spread of languages. Applied linguistics analyzes and studies general language theories to apply them to specific languages for language teaching, grammatical writing, translation, and language technology, including computerizing language. Contrastive linguistics examines language at a specific period, synchronic linguistics explores language at a particular time, and diachronic linguistics investigates language development over time.

The central focus of the linguistic study is language itself. Precisely it is meaning as explored within the field of linguistics. According to S.J. Warouw (1956), knowledge can be considered science if it meets specific criteria, such as being systematic, progressive, and autonomous within its domain. Based on these conditions, linguistics qualifies as a scientific discipline investigating human language.

As a scientific discipline, linguistics encompasses language research, hypothesis formulation, testing, and theory development. Linguists pay close attention to the structure and description of language. The subject of linguistics is language, which encompasses both spoken and written forms and is unique because its analysis tool is language itself. Linguistics is scientific due to its methodological approach, application of solid principles, clear goals of obtaining analytical results, and general statements covering all aspects of language. Therefore, the scientific study of language is well supported, leaving no doubt about the significance of linguistics. Linguistics serves two roles: developing language theories across various levels, including phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, and applying theoretical perspectives in compiling language analyses.

The author highlights the distinctiveness of language research compared to other scientific studies. Firstly, language research can dissect data across scientific fields. While sociological research focuses on society, language research can transcend disciplinary boundaries by utilizing the rules of language research, such as the subfield known as sociolinguistics. For instance, Fathurrahman's research captures students' language use in Islamic boarding schools with a sociolinguistic approach. Secondly, while research often focuses on communities or multiple segments, language research is deemed valid by examining individuals within the context of language.

Examples of such research include Soenjono's study (2000) on his grandson, Echa, which explores acquiring the Indonesian language in children. This research considers factors such as natural provisions, environmental influences, the order of language acquisition (phonology, syntax, semantics), acquisition schedule, the dominance of final syllables (e.g., "da" for bicycle), generalization of findings (e.g., syllable selection, speech development from single to multi-word utterances, acquisition of single words versus compound words). Similarly, Mahsun's research (1995) maps language synchronically and diachronically, and many more recent studies have been conducted in this area.

Systematic research in linguistics involves three stages: preparation, implementation, and reporting of research results. During the preparation stage, the researcher plans to select a research topic, conduct a literature review, and design the research approach. Factors to consider when choosing a research topic include the potential benefits of the study, accessibility to data sources, funding availability, security, and comfort during the research process and outcomes. The benefits can be categorized into scientific, financial, and professional aspects. Scientific benefits involve discovering new concepts, developing and strengthening existing theories or concepts, and incorporating contemporary perspectives. Financial considerations ensure that the research can be funded adequately, and the professional aspect recognizes the researcher's expertise in language research.

Secondly, the implementation of research involves gathering, organizing, and systematically classifying data and analyzing it through observation, parsing, and exploration. Thirdly, research reporting involves presenting data obtained from the preparation and implementation stages.

The initial step researchers must take before conducting their study is to prepare a research design. This design includes a plan outlining the research steps, such as providing background information on the problem, formulating the research problem, stating research objectives, defining the scope, conducting a literature review, establishing a theoretical basis or framework, formulating hypotheses, determining the research method, organizing the systematics, and creating a research schedule (Tri Mastoyo, 2007: 33).

The background of the problem examines the factors that motivate researchers to study the language selected as the research subject. Despite ideal expectations, researchers need help with the challenges outlined in the problem formulation. The problem formulation aims to clearly and succinctly describe the

research problem. Before being explored in the research, initial answers to the problem are stated in the research objectives.

The scope of the research sets clear boundaries to ensure focus and avoid drifting without a specific direction. The literature review involves seeking relevant sources related to the research topic that previous researchers have reviewed. This condition aims to identify similarities, differences, and prominent aspects. The theoretical basis or framework serves as an analytical tool to analyze data. Grounded research (GR) refers to research based on new ideas or existing approaches further developed in the current study. GR also involves criticizing and evaluating existing theories, as the object, era, analysis, and research dynamics may differ from previous studies in linguistics or other scientific fields. Hypotheses are temporary assumptions that guide the study by examining whether the general assumptions are supported or refuted. Researchers strive for consistent data results and solid arguments supporting their findings.

The research method describes the techniques researchers use to collect data, ensuring validity and reliability for the reader. Systematics refers to the steps taken by researchers to present the research findings in a logical order. A systematic approach allows the reader to understand the research map fully and ensures a coherent chronology of the study. The research schedule indicates the duration and extent of data collection, reflecting the depth of the research. For example, during the reform era, language research explored the language used by demonstrators.

When examining reality in depth, the belief that languages will never become extinct is challenged. Evidence shows that several regional languages are facing extinction due to declining speakers. In North Sulawesi, for instance, languages like Kaidipang Besar, Bolaang Mongondow, Sangihe, Talaud, Tombulu, Tonsea, Tolour, Tampekawa, Tonsawang, Ponosakan, and Bantik are on the verge of extinction, with only a small number of speakers remaining. Similar concerns exist for at least ten regional languages in Papua and North Maluku, with 32 others facing the threat of extinction. Frans Rumbrawer's research in 1999 revealed that nine languages in Papua had already become extinct, while the remaining regional languages were at risk due to a dwindling number of speakers.

Research conducted by the Language Center from 1991 to 2008 identified 442 regional languages in Indonesia. According to Dendy Sugono, these regional languages risk extinction when the number of speakers falls below 100 (categorized as endangered) or when the language becomes dormant. The responsibility of preserving regional languages lies with native speakers and the local government, who should prioritize teaching the local language to children as their mother tongue before introducing national and foreign languages (Kompas, 26/7/2011, p.12).

Hunanatu Matoke, a concerned individual, focuses on preserving the Nuaula language, a regional language in Maluku Province. The Nuaula language is spoken in several villages, including Simalou, Kilometer 12, Kilometer 9, Hahualan, Bunara, Nia Monae, and Rouhua in Amahai District, Central Maluku Regency. Hunanatu was born on August 27, 1978, in Rouhua, Amahai District,

Central Maluku Regency, Maluku Province. She attended Rouhua Presidential Instruction Elementary School from 1984 to 1990, followed by Tamilouw Middle School in Amahai District from 1990 to 1994, and Ambon City 3 Senior High School from 1995 to 1998. Despite facing challenges, such as walking 7 kilometres daily to attend school, her determination allowed her to continue her education. However, due to her parent's divorce, she could not pursue higher education. Instead, she made a living by selling bread and noodles in Ambon. After visiting various regions in Java and Papua during the 1999 Ambon religious conflict, Hunanatu realized that the Nuaula language, passed down by her ancestors, was at risk of extinction because younger generations were unfamiliar with many local language terms. When conditions in Ambon and Maluku improved, she returned to her hometown. In collaboration with British researcher Rosemary A Bolton, Hunanatu compiled the Indonesian-Nuaula Language Dictionary (Sou Naunue-Sou Manai), published in September 2005. This 203-page dictionary is now circulating among the people of Maluku and beyond. Hunanatu also established a Children's Playground to promote and introduce local languages. There are 102 regional languages in Maluku, two of which have already become extinct: Hukumina and Kayeli on Buru Island (Kompas, 16 July 2014, p.16).

Currently, there is a need for more researchers with integrity and dedication in formulating strategies and models for the preservation of endangered languages. In the context of the Nusantara language, only a few young researchers show interest in studying and delving deeper into it. The sole active and productive researcher devoted to the Betawi language is Iskandarsyah Siregar, the head of the Center for Betawi Studies and the Center for National Resilience Studies.

The diverse ethnic languages in Indonesia, categorized into Austronesian and non-Austronesian language families, face the threat of extinction due to the abandonment of non-Austronesian languages in eastern Indonesia due to urbanization and inter-ethnic marriages. According to Abdul Rachman Patji, from the LIPI Research Center for Community and Culture, due to their infrequent usage, it is estimated that only around 10% of ethnic languages will survive by the end of the 21st century, with 169 ethnic languages currently facing the threat of extinction (Kompas, 16/12/2011, p.14). Another estimation by Endang Turmudi from the LIPI Research Center for Society and Culture suggests that around 90% of the world's 6,500 languages will disappear by the end of the 20th century. Only 75 out of the 746 surviving languages in Indonesia are predicted to remain by the end of the 20th century. The causes of language extinction include war, natural disasters, urbanization, and intermarriage. Data from 1990 shows that only 15% of Indonesia's population spoke Indonesian as their mother tongue (Kompas, 20/8/2011, p.12). Out of approximately 700 ethnic languages in the archipelago, only 9 have a writing system or script. Languages without a writing system will gradually become extinct since there are no means to record them apart from oral communication.

On the other hand, languages with a script system have a better chance of survival due to documentation. However, if the number of speakers continues to decline, the language cannot be preserved through written means. The nine languages with scripts expected to survive are Acehnese, Batak, Lampung, Malay, Javanese, Balinese, Bugis, Sundanese, and Sasak. These nine languages fall into the Austronesian category (Kompas, 11/12/2013, p.12). In contrast, South America faces language extinction due to colonization and geographical conditions. With over 30 language families, South America surpasses Africa, Asia, and Europe combined, which only have 21 language families (Kompas, 2/1/2011, p.12).

Ultimately, when developing a research strategy for endangered languages, the crucial factors involved:

- Discovering the genuine essence of the original endangered language,
- Assessing its current state,
- Examining the effects of its decline on communication patterns, and
- Designing a preservation model.

These steps constitute the fundamental elements of this entire undertaking. If this step is taken precisely and maximally, it is almost predictable that the success of the grand vision of the research will be achieved.

CONCLUSION

The existence of language as a medium of knowledge is realized if a language does not lose its character. Language does not exist without history. Language cannot be sterilized from the reality that it refers to something. To become the language of science, the first thing to do is build a passion for language research to create a 'scientific community' in language. Transferring knowledge into language by juxtaposing it with the term transfer of technology is just a diversion from powerless scientists who have lost the subject of language (Saidi, 2011, p. 6).

Thus, the research of linguists (linguists) in national or local/regional languages is a form of academic concern so that language remains active at the level of communication interaction. Realizing language-based research needs to adhere to the stages of language research described above and be developed. The principal capital is the high awareness of prospective researchers that the reality shows that many languages, especially regional languages, are naturally extinct due to various factors. One strategy that can be used in researching languages, especially those that are endangered, is Sociosemiotic or Social Semiotic. Sociosemiotic as a framework is very important to read the signs and symbols that live and are dynamic in society. These sign and symbol variables are the key to determining the success of analyzing and concluding problems and their solutions.

In the end, in formulating a research strategy for endangered languages, the most important thing is to find the authenticity of the original form of the endangered language, see the actual conditions of the endangered language, investigate the impact of the endangered language as seen from the decrease in a variable in the communication habitat of its users, and formulate a

preservation/preservation model for the endangered language. Those are the most critical steps of this whole journey.

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