

Preserving Madurese Language, Is It Important?

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia has a variety of regional languages that are used to communicate. Based on data from the Summer Institute of Linguistics, there are 735 regional languages in Indonesia. Of the 735 regional languages, the Madurese language is not included in the category of endangered because the number of speakers is still more than 100,000 people. However, BPS data shows that Madurese language speakers have continued to decline. In 1980, the number of Madurese speakers was 6,913,977 people. In 1990 there were 6,792,447 speakers. The data shows that every year around 12,153 Madurese speakers decrease. There are various reasons why the Madurese language is decreasing. Some of them, they feel ashamed to use the Madurese language because Madurese is considered the language of the middle to lower economic class and is synonymous with the language of people who are not educated. In daily life on Madura Island, the surrounding small islands, as well as overseas, children are also more often invited to communicate using Indonesian and rarely use Madurese as the language of daily communication. It would be a shame if the Madurese language would eventually become extinct because the Madurese language has enormous potential to be used as an Indonesian Absorption Source Language (*Bahasa Sumber Serapan/ BSS*). In certain matters Madurese is richer than Indonesian. Based on this explanation, with the potential for Madurese to be used as BSS Indonesian, raises the question: is it important to preserve the Madurese language amid the increasing abandonment of the Madurese language by its speakers?

Keywords: Madurese ; Regional Language

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the life span, a person will process and develop in line with age and developmental phases starting from infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age (Santrock, 2007). One of the important developments in a person's life is language, in which the meaning in the Big Indonesian Dictionary (1999) language is defined as an arbitrary sound symbol system, used by members of a society to work together, interact and identify themselves.

In line with that, Supriatna (1998) argued that humans are social creatures who always need other people to meet their needs. In fulfilling these needs, humans must communicate with other people, one of which is through language. According to Liebert, et al (1986) language is one of the communication tools used to convey intentions, ideas or ideas, which can be verbal or written. The language they have makes humans different from other creatures created by God (Dardjowidjojo in Hendrawati, 2001). An infographic artist named Alberto Lucas Lopez (in Nurilah, 2015) maps the languages spoken in the world as follows:

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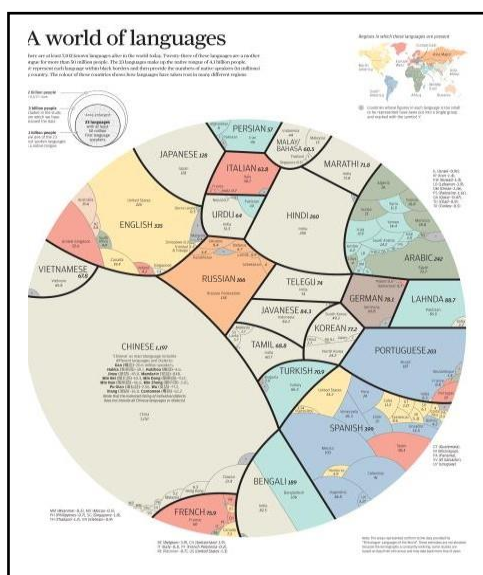


Figure 1
Infographics of Language Usage in the World Source: Nurilah (2015)

Based on this infographic, there are at least 7,102 types of languages in the world. Of these, only 23 are the most popular languages used by people around the world. Those 23 languages are considered mother tongue (Nurilah, 2015). Mother tongue is the first language understood. The mother tongue is the language used in everyday speech. All Indonesians living in big cities in Indonesia almost certainly use Indonesian as their mother tongue on a daily basis (www.englishlanguage.com/2013/09/mother-tongue-atau-language-mother-as.html).

The use of Indonesian as the mother tongue in daily communication can be caused because Indonesian is the language of unity. However, apart from having a unified language, Indonesia also has a variety of regional languages that are used to communicate by each ethnic group (tribe) in Indonesia. According to Macaryus (in Mulyana, 2008) based on data from SIL (Summer Institute of Linguistics) there are 735 regional languages in Indonesia. The distribution of these regional languages can be grouped into seven regions as follows:

Table 1

Language Classification Based on the Number of Speakers

No	Island	Number of Speakers				Amount
		More than 100.000	Less than 100.000	Not known	Extinct	
1	Java-Bali	12	4	1	-	17
2	Sumatra	28	19	-	-	47
3	Kalimantan	8	74	2	-	84
4	Sulawesi	18	94	-	-	112
5	Nusa Tenggara	13	52	8	-	73
6	Maluku	2	127	-	3	132
7	Irian Jaya	2	267	1	-	270
	Jumlah	83	637	12	3	735

Source: Macaryus dalam Mulyana (2008:123)



Of the 735 regional languages, 83 are declared healthy because their speakers are 100,000 or more, 637 are in an alarming condition, 12 are unknown, and 3 are declared extinct. Among those that are worrying, as many as 32 regional languages are in a state of near extinction because there are only 1-50 people left. Determining the status of a language as safe or endangered is in line with Krauss' opinion which distinguishes languages into three groups, namely endangered, alarming, and robust. More specifically, Dorian mentions three symptoms to identify worrying language, namely fewer speakers, fewer domains of use, and structural simplification (Macaryus in Mulyana, 2008).

Of the 735 regional languages, there is a tendency that many regional languages in Indonesia are no longer used as a means of communication in everyday life, even at the Fourth Javanese Language Congress in 2006 in Semarang, the Minister of National Education said that there are still many regional languages. Speakers such as Javanese are starting to be abandoned by speakers (Utari, 2013). The same thing also happened to Sundanese which began to fade as a language used in daily life (Trisa, 2015) and Madurese (Bawono, 2016).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Currently, almost all regional languages or mother tongues in the world are threatened with extinction because the number of speakers is decreasing, including the Madurese language, which every year, based on available data, always shows a decline (Bawono, 2016). Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics/ *Badan Pusat Statistik* (BPS) in 1980 and 1990 showed that Madurese speakers experienced a decline. In 1980, the number of speakers of Madurese language was 6,913,977 people (4.71% of the number of speakers of regional languages in Indonesia). In 1990 there were 6,792,447 speakers (4.29%). The data also shows that in a decade the number of Madurese speakers has decreased, namely around 121,530 people or every year there has been a decrease of 12,153 Madurese speakers (Azhar, 2016).

With an estimated number of speakers that are not small, there is actually a potential that can be said to be extraordinary for the development of regional languages. However, according to Mien A. Rifai, the development of the Madurese language is a cause for concern. Achmad Sofyan said the underlying reason was because Madurese were reluctant to use their own language. They feel ashamed to use the Madurese language, even according to Sri Ratnawati, there is a tendency for the Madurese generation to leave their mother tongue and prefer to use Indonesian because Madurese is considered the language of the lower middle class of the economy. Madurese language is synonymous with the language of uneducated people. Those who use the Madurese language are only backward people, so the tendency is prestige and lifestyle (Ekawati, 2016).

This condition also occurs in children. The phenomenon of the use of Indonesian in everyday life on the island of Madura, the surrounding small islands, as well as overseas, makes children, both at home and at school, more often invited to communicate using Indonesian and rarely use Madurese as their language of communication in everyday life. Raihany's research (2015) among public elementary school children in Pangarangan Village, Sumenep City District found that there had been a shift in the use of the Madurese language.

So it is a shame that the Madurese language will become extinct because the Madurese language has enormous potential to be used as an Indonesian Absorption Source Language (*Bahasa Sumber Serapan/ BSS*). In mystical and supernatural aspects, Madurese has a larger vocabulary than other languages, especially Indonesian. The Madurese language has more than 7 native Madurese words to refer to an object, namely "ghost". In an agricultural context, the Madurese language is rich in

vocabulary for explaining coconut plants. There are at least 16 words used to describe the parts of the coconut tree. The Madurese language is also rich in vocabulary that refers to animal names. There are at least 14 Madurese words for naming animal children (Azhar, 2016).

METHOD

This research is a literature study. In reviewing the collected literature, the author uses the Google Scholar database, by typing in the keywords: language, Madura, preservation, and preschool. The collected data is then processed and analyzed by the author.

RESULT

Based on the results of the literature review, 3 book chapters, 6 books, 4 journals, 2 proceedings, 2 theses, and 4 other sources were found. The twenty-one collected literatures were then analyzed by the authors. Following are the details of the twenty one literatures:

Table 1
Literature search findings

No	Literature sources	Authors	Year
1	Journals	Azar, B	1997
2	Journals	Bawono, Y	2016
3	Journals	Raihany, A	2015
4	Journals	Utari, N. R. D	2013
5	Book Chapters	Azhar, I. N	2016
6	Book Chapters	Bawono, Y	2016
7	Book Chapters	Ekawati, R	2106
8	Books	Liebert, R. M, Wicks-Nelson, R, dan Kail, R. V	1986
9	Books	Mulyana, M.	2008
10	Books	Mussen, P. H, Conger. J. J, Kagan. J, dan Huston, A. C	1989
11	Books	Patmonodewo, S	2000
12	Books	Santrock, J. W	2007
13	Books	Small, M	1990
14	Proceedings	Azhar, I. N	2008
15	Proceedings	Azhar, I. N	2011
16	Theses	Hamboro, H	1995
17	Theses	Trisa, F	2015
18	Others	Hendrawati, S	2001
19	Others	Nurilah, A.	2015
20	Others	Rachmadi	2002
21	Others	Supriatna, A	1998

DISCUSSION

Humans are social creatures who always need other people to meet their needs. In fulfilling these needs, humans must communicate with other people, one of which is through language (Supriatna, 1998). The language they have makes humans different from other creatures created by God (Dardjowidjojo in Hendrawati, 2001).



The definition of language itself is one of the communication tools used to convey intentions, ideas or ideas, which can be verbal or written (Liebert, et al., 1986). Children learn language at an astonishing rate. At the age of approximately 4 years, children's language is well developed. Sentences are longer and more complex, and can convey two ideas in one sentence. The difference that occurs with adult language lies only in the style of pronunciation (Mussen, et al., 1989).

In Indonesia, children aged 4 years are considered preschoolers (Patmonodewo, 2000). According to Rachmadi (2002) at this time the ability that was formed and developed rapidly was language skills. This language ability requires certain skills. These skills include knowledge of objects or events, the ability to analyze all parts of language, the ability to form categories, the ability to learn to manipulate symbols, the ability to use language as a tool, the ability to understand and produce a sequence of actions, and the will to communicate. In adults, these skills can be fulfilled but for preschoolers these skills are not all fulfilled (Small, 1990).

To achieve these skills, preschoolers need to interact with their environment. This is as stated by Azar (1997) based on the results of previous research which showed that the role of interaction between parents of children either intentionally or unintentionally can improve children's language skills and abilities. Even more so in the Madurese language, because for learning even things that smell dirty and impolite, for example, the vocabulary for mentioning types of dirt and making curse sentences, Madurese language is richer than Indonesian. The Madurese language recognizes at least 4 words to refer to excrement, namely *clattong* (cow, horse, camel and buffalo dung), *temaco'* (for poultry), *cerek* and *taeh* for humans. Likewise in terms of cursing, the Madurese language recognizes at least 34 different types of cursing (Damanhuri in Azhar, 2011).

Thus, in interacting with preschoolers, it is necessary to pay attention to the language used, especially the vocabulary in Madurese which smells dirty and impolite because preschoolers are generally skilled in language. Most of them like to talk, especially in their groups, therefore children should be given the opportunity to speak. Some of them need to be trained to be good listeners (Patmonodewo, 2000).

Language plays an important role in children's social interactions. This is because in social interaction in which the communication process occurs, we need a tool that can be used as a mediator in dealing with the social environment, namely language (Hamboro, 1995). Research results show that the role of interaction between parents and children is very significant, which is reflected in the language used by children and which intentionally or unintentionally improves children's language skills and abilities (Azar, 1997).

However, the reality on the ground shows that language skills in preschool children are not supported by the environment, especially regional language skills (Madura). This is as stated by Azhar (2008) who argues that there are several things that indicate this, such as: 1) The lack of organized curricula and teaching activities for local content in the Madurese language; 2) The lack of "greatness" of local governments in Madura and other areas which the majority of the population is Madurese to carry out routine activities that smell of Madurese; and 3) There is no standardization in the field of spelling, terms and grammar of the Madurese language.

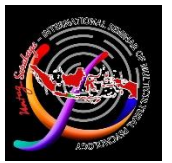
So that the Madurese language does not become extinct among the various languages in Indonesia, the absolute preservation of the Madurese language is not only the responsibility of the government, but the family as the smallest part of society can do it. The results of the research show that the role of interaction between parents and children is very significant which is reflected in the language used by children so that it can improve children's language skills and abilities.

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