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"The Role of Indigenous Languages in Constructing Identity"

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Revised Edition

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Master Program in Linguistics, Diponegoro University in Collaboration with Balai Bahasa Provinsi Jawa Tengah

NOTE

This international seminar on Language Maintenance and Shift V (LAMAS V for short) is a continuation of the previous LAMAS seminars conducted annually by the Master Program in Linguistics, Diponegoro University in cooperation with *Balai Bahasa Provinsi Jawa Tengah*.

We would like to extent our deepest gratitude to the seminar committee for putting together the seminar that gave rise to this compilation of papers. Thanks also go to the Head and the Secretary of the Master Program in Linguistics Diponegoro University, without whom the seminar would not have been possible.

The table of contents lists 92 papers presented at the seminar. Of these papers, 5 papers are presented by invited keynote speakers. They are Prof. Aron Repmann, Ph.D. (Trinity Christian College, USA), Prof. Yudha Thianto, Ph.D. (Trinity Christian College, USA), Dr. Priyankoo Sarmah, Ph.D. (Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, India), Helena I.R. Agustien, Ph.D. (Semarang State University, Indonesia), and Dr. M. Suryadi, M.Hum. (Diponegoro University, Indonesia).

In terms of the topic areas, the papers are in sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, theoretical linguistics, antropolinguistics, pragmatics, applied linguistics, and discourse analysis.

NOTE FOR REVISED EDITION

There is a little change in this revised edition, which as the shifting of some parts of the article by Tatan Tawami and Retno Purwani Sari entitled "Sundanese Identity Represented by the Talents of *Ini Talkshow* A Study of Pragmatics" on page 166 to 167. This has an impact on the change of table of contents.

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"The Role of Indigenous Languages in Constructing Identity"

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PRESERVING VERNACULARS IN INDONESIA:
A BILINGUAL VERNACULAR-ENGLISH DICTIONARY APPROACH

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Abstract

English learners in Indonesia learn the English language through the Indonesian language, the language of instruction in the country's education, despite the fact that 80% of the country's population speak vernaculars as mother tongue. The provision of materials for learning, including bilingual dictionaries, therefore follow this convention while bilingual dictionaries accommodating the learners speaking vernaculars natively are barely provided. This condition insists that every Indonesian must comprehend the Indonesian language first to learn English albeit theories on foreign language learning suggest the otherwise. Apart from this, the use of vernaculars of Indonesia itself tends to decline yet the bilingual dictionaries linking the vernaculars with a widely-known language such as English still lack. This article elaborates the issues of (1) English vocabulary learning and (2) the maintenance of the vernaculars of Indonesia with discussions about Butzkamm's theory and UNESCO's suggestion on foreign language learning, Nation's *New General Service List* as the core of the English vocabulary, and the application of technology in the lexicography of bilingual dictionary. Choosing Cirebon dialect of Javanese as an example, this article suggests that the provision of a bilingual dictionary functioning as a reference material for English vocabulary learning yet as a documentation of vernacular maintenance is possible.
Keywords: English vocabulary learning, bilingual dictionary, language preservation, *New General Service List*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian education in general implements the Indonesian language as the medium of instruction. The Indonesian policy regulates the use of the Indonesian language in formal sectors, including education. The background of choosing this language is obviously in line with the declaration of the language in the 1928 Second Youth Pledge, giving it a task of a national language, a unifying medium of communication over the country's ethnolinguistic diversity. Besides the Indonesian language, spoken on the daily basis by 19.94% of Indonesian according 2010 national census, Indonesia has 719 vernaculars, known as regional languages, according to *Ethnologue*. Of 719, 13 are extinct while 706 are living and spoken by 80% of the total population according to 2010 census (Na'im and Syaputra 12); more than 600 languages are at level 5 and beyond on the EGIDS scale, meaning that some of them are standardized but not widespread and sustainable (level 5), and most of them are unstandardized (level 6a and further); moreover, there are only 19 languages with over a million speakers, yet these languages cannot avoid the language shift to the national language (Cohn and Ravindranath 138). In education, these regional languages are barely the media of instruction, although Indonesian government allows limited implementation for them. The privilege, however, is restricted that regional languages may be implemented as far as it is spoken, not written, and only if the teachers consider it is necessary.

English is a subject in Indonesian education. It is taught from grade 7 to 12 in recent 2013 curriculum and has been taught as early as the grade 1 in several, mostly private, schools. The medium of instruction for transmitting the knowledge of English is accordingly Indonesian. Although the use of Indonesian is considered fine, the SEAMEO identifies the policy bring fundamental problems in literacy. The latest 2012 PISA figure shows 55% Indonesian students at below level 2 in reading literacy. Kosonen (45) indicates many students lack reading fluency in Indonesian which is unfavorable for further learning. Thus, it doubles the difficulty in learning English. Considering the bilingual education, UNESCO has suggested the use of the students' mother tongues for bilingual education as a measure for effective learning and also maintaining equal right in education (41).

In Indonesian cases, vernaculars which are the mother tongues of most of Indonesians are barely the media of instruction for learning foreign languages, including English. Despite it is not in favor of native languages of students, it leads to two main problems for English learning. First, by teaching English through Indonesian, students need to understand Indonesian first. It becomes a burden for students whose linguistic knowledge and performance are at the best only in vernaculars. Second, the provision of learning materials of the bilingual education will therefore be based on the Indonesian language. Numerous bilingual English-Indonesian and Indonesian-English dictionaries have been

massively published; some are even recommended by schools for learning. However, the same case is atypical of bilingual dictionaries accommodating regional languages.

Bilingual dictionaries are among fundamental reference materials for bilingual education in the country. There are various bilingual dictionaries ranging from the prevalent Indonesian-English and English-Indonesian dictionaries to the least popular regional language-Indonesian and Indonesian-regional language counterparts. So far, bilingual dictionaries by Echols and Shadily have become the most referred and bestselling bilingual dictionaries by English learners in the country, featuring Indonesian as the source and target language for English. On the other hand, there are only limited number of bilingual dictionaries featuring regional languages for the English learners speaking regional languages. These dictionaries are not usually applicable for English learning materials yet they are useful for humanities studies such as philology. As far as we are concerned, there is no special effort by the Indonesian government to design such bilingual dictionaries. The existing bilingual dictionaries are regional languages and Indonesian.

Concerning the above issues, this article offers an approach for language documentation and thus language maintenance through a bilingual dictionary. The method in building up a bilingual dictionary is by meeting the necessity in English language learning with bilingual lexicography principles. Therefore, this article is divided into two discussion parts. First part discusses mother tongues for English language learning; it will also discuss the application of *New General Service List* to base the English language learner's vocabulary. Second part discusses principles in the lexicography of bilingual dictionaries to preserve indigenous languages; it also discusses the application of electronic dictionary, taking the present writer's work in the bilingual dictionary of Cirebon dialect of Javanese. The conclusion will be presented subsequent to these discussions.

DISCUSSION
Mother Tongue for English Language Learning
Learning English via mother tongues is not hitherto prevalent in Indonesia. The use of Indonesian as the only vehicle in education may have contributed a certain attitude towards the mother tongue. Very often, the speakers of mother tongues look down their languages, thinking they are outdated and could not function as the media of instruction. Furthermore, the Indonesian government does not show strong support since mother tongues are only for oral communication. In contrary to Indonesian government, UNESCO and SEAMEO suggest the otherwise.

There are considerations why the mother tongue is an important vehicle of education. Several publications have concerns on the bilingual method for language teaching in favor of the mother tongue. Dodson published *Language Teaching and Bilingual Method* in 1967 which become the basis for further researches on the topic (Butzkamm 2003). Butzkamm's two-year experiment on the method succeeded for a German grammar school in 1980. He later proposed a theory on the importance of bilingual method, a counter to the mainstream method which ignores the innate function of the mother tongue, as follows:

> Using the mother tongue, we have (1) learnt to think, (2) learnt to communicate and (3) acquired an intuitive understanding of grammar. The mother tongue opens the door, not only to its own grammar, but to all grammars, inasmuch as it awakens the potential for universal grammar that lies within all of us. This foreknowledge is the result of interactions between a first language and our fundamental linguistic endowment, and is the foundation on which we build our Selves. It is the greatest asset people bring to the task of foreign language learning. For this reason, the mother tongue is the master key to foreign languages, the tool which gives us the fastest, surest, most precise, and most complete means of accessing a foreign language. (Butzkamm 2003)

Using the mother tongue as a cognitive and pedagogical resource, his theory is elaborated into ten statements (Butzkamm 2003). (1) Learning foreign language is effective if it is built upon existing linguistic skills and knowledge of the learners which have deep-rooted in them in regard to their mother tongue. (2) The mother tongue is in fact better meaning conveyance than Ersatz-techniques which are commonly used in foreign language teaching. The Ersatz techniques could be harmful to student's motivation because learning can be harder. (3) It also makes conducting lesson in the foreign language easier, and eventually leads learners encouraged to make use of the foreign language independent from their mother tongue. Butzkamm gave example in teaching German in which a teacher translates every single instruction in class into German for the above purpose. (4) By this way, messages given by teachers are not interrupted, and therefore the use of the mother tongue applies the more authentic message-oriented communication. (5) Later on, with well-planned use of the mother tongue, it is

possible to use authentic texts in foreign language as comprehensible input and faster acquisition. (6) Bilingual method allows teacher to skip grammatical explanations in the books. Apart from that, giving students idiomatic translations or equivalents in their mother tongue for foreign language phrases would give them better gist of its grammar. (7) Associating the mother tongue with foreign language also promotes retention and strong understanding on the relation between language and culture. By ignoring or suppressing mother tongue, it also forms detrimental attitude towards the relationship of the two languages. (8) Although some may blame the constant use of mother tongue as the cause of interference in foreign language learning, interference is in fact normal. Albeit being blamed, the mother tongue helps reduce the interference if it is functioned well. Learners will need hard time to get the gist of any word or grammatical feature in foreign language if it is not contrasted with the mother tongue. (9) Well-planned use of mother tongue could avoid the side effect of the monolingualism which turns learners to only speak the mother tongue because they find the foreign language difficult. (10) By the aid of mother tongue, foreign language could root in mind to eventually function independently from the mother tongue.

Relating his theory to the English language learning situation in Indonesia, teaching in mother tongue will seem impossible if a class consists of ethnically-mixed students. This situation at some degree brings the preference of Indonesian as the sole language of instruction. Such a preference is indeed efficient for educators, yet detrimental for students speaking native languages, and eventually for the survival of native languages. However, to cope with ethnically-diverse issue, he suggests that it is more likely possible if there is some continuity in class. It means the provision of materials for the diverse group could be planned for continual purpose. By this means, it is usually by providing translations into various native languages of the foreign language texts. The translations are then given to students to be taken home, so it will aid them in advance to understand the delivered material. This approach is of course in contrary to monolingual tendency in the provision of English language material in Indonesian which in fact hardens the linguistic survival, thus against the effective means of learning.

Bilingual Dictionaries for Preserving Indigenous Languages in Indonesia
Effective English learning via mother tongue has yet to gain urgency in Indonesian education. Meanwhile, the significance of mother tongue in almost all domains decreases. We need an approach alternative approach to teach English. Creating a bilingual dictionary for indigenous languages for foreign language learning is a breath of fresh air although bilingual dictionary itself is not a brand new in Indonesian lexicography. Bilingual dictionaries had been in Indonesian archipelago long before the monolingual dictionaries began to print in 20th century (Chaer 191). Until now, there are sufficient number of bilingual Indonesian-regional language and regional language-Indonesian dictionaries, besides the rarely English counterparts, coming from various publishers including the official institution *Badan Bahasa*. The idea of the vernacular bilingual dictionaries is in fact the mainstream, and traditionally follows the lexicographical guidance by the institution (Sunaryo 2001). These bilingual dictionaries, however, could serve as the references for this purpose. Therefore, it will aid so much during the compilation of the bilingual dictionary.

Bilingual dictionary benefits not only for foreign language learning, but is also beneficial in other aspects for language maintenance. According to Bartholomew and Schoenhals (257-259), the use of bilingual dictionary in village has some advantages for the community using the native language, ranging from educational to psychological advantages. The presence of written evidence of especially unwritten language to some degree encourages the speakers to value their language, thus encourages them writing in their language. This is quite reasonable because speakers of unwritten language often find written form of a language as prestigious. This attitude is mostly formed due to contact with other "superior" cultures which have rich writing tradition prior to the contact. Besides the encouragement, bilingual dictionary also always comes along with the standardization of local language. Especially for the unwritten language, it provides writing system that is so much useful for further maintenance of the language. Moreover, bilingual dictionary records the local wisdom and cultural heritage of the given ethnic group of people. There are many parts of a given culture such as ethnobiology, mathematics, scientific lore, folk anatomy of shapes and textures, etc. possible to be documented. Through well-constructed bilingual dictionary, the illustrative sentences, adequate sense discriminations, and sufficient qualifying comments to entries of the dictionary could serve as the means of documentation.

Regarding steps in the compilation of the bilingual dictionary, *Oxford Bilingual School Dictionary: IsiXhosa and English* are considered as an ideal model of bilingual dictionary, along with a series of bilingual school dictionary published by Oxford University Press Southern Africa. This bilingual dictionary is the last in the series produced in 2014 after four years of compilation, and becomes the first

substantial isiXhosa–English bilingual dictionary since 1985. Beforehand, several bilingual dictionaries involving English and other languages of South Africa had been published by the Oxford University Press Southern Africa, namely isiZulu, Northern Sesotho, and Afrikaans. Since 2004, the dictionary project is purposely to bring new idea of practical lexicography in the country which considers school learners for the production of bilingual dictionaries that lacked in previous publications (Nkomo 417). In its YouTube channel, it publishes steps in the creation of the *Oxford Bilingual School Dictionary: IsiXhosa and English* which chronologically include researching the need of students and teachers prior to planning the book to getting feedback from them after the publication. However, we are not going to discuss all those steps here. Only several we think the core in the compilation are going to be discussed.

Reflecting from the advancement of bilingual dictionaries in South Africa, we have compiled in simplified steps the similar bilingual dictionary for regional languages in Indonesia. We created an example of bilingual dictionary involving the Cirebon dialect of Javanese and English that alters from the mainstream bilingual dictionary tradition. Existing Cirebon bilingual dictionaries include dictionaries from several publishers, including the *Badan Bahasa* which published in 1992. Nevertheless, the newest one edited by Sudjana and published in 2001 does not seem relevant from general modern speakers since he makes use of old corpus, thus containing a lot of obsolete words. Regarding our Cirebon and English dictionary, we are not going to discuss the process less essentially related to the lexicography since the latest IsiXhosa and English's compilation involved not only lexicography but also designing, typesetting, printing, etc. Only four steps in the lexicography of the isiXhosa and English dictionary are applied to our Cirebon and English dictionary. First, considering the English learners' general need in starter vocabulary, the Cirebon and English dictionary is developed on the basis of the most frequent words from the *New General Service List* (NGSL). It is similar to the isiXhosa and English dictionary which uses the framework of the *Oxford South African Illustrated School Dictionary*. NGSL is considered because, like other general vocabulary wordlists, the provision of common vocabulary that occur frequently across different text assists English learners and educators for further learning and other purposes (Nation in Brezina and Gablasova 1). Nevertheless, comparing the NGSL to similar wordlists like the *General Service List* (GSL), and a general wordlist by Brezina and Gablasova, called the Other NGSL (ONGSL), the NGSL has the highest percentage of coverage in texts of all genres yet also the average number of lemmas (see table 1). Second, the NGSL framework is translated and edited into the Cirebon language. The result of this step is the Cirebon equivalences of the English wordlist. Third, the Cirebon headwords are prepared from the existing equivalences. In most of lexicographical practices, lemmatization is important process in deciding which words should be the headwords. However, for this dictionary we do not yet apply the lemmatization since learners mostly find looking up words on the basis of lemma difficult yet lemmas in the Cirebon language do not always reflect actual words, such as *luru* (a lemma, meaning 'to search') and *ngluru* (the active word of *luru*). The former is scarcely an actual word compared to the latter which is a common word in use. Therefore, we consider the actual words to be the headwords of the dictionary. Fourth, the entry for each headword is compiled. The compilation of the Cirebon dictionary entries incorporates lexicographic components ideally needed in dictionary. Some of the components includes, the Cirebon headword, part of speech, pronunciation, the English equivalent, the Cirebon example of usage, the English translation of the example, and phrase, idiom, and illustration (for some entries). Putting example of usage as part of the entry usually needs corpus of the given language as its source. Since corpus is not usually available or for most of indigenous languages, however, doing idiomatic translation of the English example could be an alternative. Therefore, it needs the English corpus, which is easier to find, for providing the examples of usage. Like any other publications, a dictionary has also to be grammar-and-spelling checked and proofread before the dictionary is finally published.

Table 1 Comparison of GSL, NGSL, and ONGSL Coverage Figures for Three Different Genres

Wordlists	Number of lemmas	Classics	*American Scientific*	*The Economist*
GSL	3,553	86.17 %	65.87 %	76.55 %
NGSL	2,130	82.76 %	68.68 %	78.30 %
ONGSL	2,801	85.35 %	71.34 %	81.75 %
Corpus size		12,377,844	13,047,726	27,337,358

Source: Browne, Charles. "A New General Service List: The Better Mousetrap We've Been Looking For?" *Vocabulary Learning and Instruction* 3.1 (2014): 1-10. Print.

Our Cirebon and English dictionary is an electronic dictionary instead of a printed dictionary. The use of electronic medium here follows what becomes the dream of lexicographer for electronic dictionary (de Schryver 2003). The medium is preferred after considering its low production cost and the possibility for user-frendliness, and prospective widespread distribution, thanks to the Internet. Moreover, there are many computing platforms to choose in which an electronic dictionary can be installed. Considering the current trend of smartphone in Indonesia, this bilingual dictionary is developed Android platform, though later on it could also be developed in different and cross platforms.

CONCLUSION

There are 719 indigenous languages in Indonesia in need of serious maintenance, otherwise these languages becomes extinct as the speakers shift to the Indonesian language, the national language. One that has been suggested by UNESCO and SEAMEO is by establishing the indigenous languages as the media of instruction in education, not merely as the oral media of instruction or as the elective subject. Alongside with the suggestion, research in foreign language learning, also learning in general, indicates that the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction is effective for learning process, formulated in Butzkamm's theory of foreign language learning. This is in fact contradictory with the reality in Indonesia in which learners speaking indigenous languages are given the Indonesian language as the sole language of instruction as early as possible. Regarding both issues, we see the English subject in education potential to the implementation of indigenous language maintenance as research in foreign language education has suggest. Therefore, the foreign learning will apply the mother tongue method, despite the monolingual method which is not proven beneficial for learners. However, this is hardly to succeed in the absence of vital source such as school bilingual dictionary involving English and indigenous languages. By the provision of such a bilingual dictionary in the first place, it is not only indigenous language gaining prestige in education, but also beneficial for learning the English language itself.

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