



The Extinction of Local Languages in Indonesia and Strategies to Overcome (Comparative Study in West Kalimantan and North Maluku)

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Abstract

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The extinction of local languages in West Kalimantan and North Maluku is a growing concern. This study address the following questions: 1) How diverse are the local languages in West Kalimantan and North Maluku? 2) What is the current condition of these local languages? 3) How can the extinction of these languages be prevented? This research utilizes a comparative study method with a descriptive qualitative approach, focusing on the status of local languages in these regions. Data was collection through literature review, observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings indicate that many local languages in these areas are on the brink of extinction, primarily due to the diminishing number of speakers. Additionally, the dominance of the national language, Indonesian, has pushed local languages aside, especially among the younger generation who prefer using Indonesian in daily interactions. Despite this, the use of local languages remains strong within families and communities. If immediate action is not taken, these languages will likely become extinct in the coming decades. This research emphasizes the need for proactive measures to preserve these languages.

Abstrak:

Kata Kunci:
Bahasa Daerah;
Kepunahan;
Dayak,
Kalimantan
Barat; Maluku
Utara

Kepunahan bahasa daerah di Kalimantan Barat dan Maluku Utara menjadi perhatian yang semakin meningkat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjawab pertanyaan-pertanyaan berikut: 1) Seberapa beragamkah bahasa daerah di Kalimantan Barat dan Maluku Utara? 2) Bagaimana kondisi terkini bahasa-bahasa daerah tersebut? 3) Bagaimana cara mencegah kepunahan bahasa-bahasa ini? Penelitian ini menggunakan metode studi komparatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, yang berfokus pada status bahasa daerah di kedua wilayah ini. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui studi pustaka, observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa banyak bahasa daerah di wilayah ini berada di ambang kepunahan, terutama karena semakin berkurangnya jumlah penutur. Selain itu, dominasi bahasa nasional, yaitu Bahasa Indonesia, telah mendorong bahasa daerah ke posisi terpinggirkan, khususnya di kalangan generasi muda yang lebih memilih menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia dalam interaksi sehari-hari. Meskipun demikian, penggunaan bahasa daerah masih cukup kuat di dalam keluarga dan komunitas. Jika tidak ada tindakan segera, bahasa-bahasa ini kemungkinan akan punah dalam beberapa dekade mendatang. Penelitian ini menekankan perlunya langkah-langkah proaktif untuk melestarikan bahasa-bahasa daerah tersebut.

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, many people are 'reluctant' to use local languages in social life and in daily interactions, let alone using them at school or in formal places. It turns out that the reluctance to use local languages in daily activities does not only occur in urban communities, but has also spread to rural communities (Weidinger & Kordel, 2023). And what is even more worrying is that parents, especially families (husband and wife) who are newly married and have children, are reluctant to teach and use local languages to communicate with their children at home (Yusuf et al., 2022). They prefer and are more confident if their children are taught to speak Indonesian, even if they can speak a foreign language.

There are many local languages in Indonesia that are on the verge of extinction (Collins, 2022). This phenomenon has attracted the attention of many academics and scientists, especially linguistic experts. Many studies and seminars have been conducted by language observers as an effort to save local languages from becoming extinct. Various efforts have been and are being made to save local languages. This is quite reasonable considering that Indonesia is one of the countries that has the most local languages. Even second after Papua New Guinea (Evans et al., 2018).

Indonesia, as recorded in the book *Ethnologue: Language of The World* (2005), has more than 700 languages or around 742 local languages. Two of them are used as second languages without native language speakers. Three languages have experienced extinction, and hundreds of local languages are on the verge of extinction. This condition is caused by many factors, including the increasingly minimal number of speakers of this language. In fact, some local languages only have a few speakers left. Another factor is that the use of the National language is more dominant, causing local languages to be pushed aside and almost no longer used by the younger generation and children. According to Rigo, interaction and communication between ethnic groups that no longer use local languages has also pushed local languages to the brink of extinction (Rigo, 2021).

Apart from that, the declining interest and tendency of Indonesian people towards using local languages in communicating and interacting certainly cannot be separated from several factors: First, the influence of the modern lifestyle which is rapidly being spread through various media such as television, the internet, and so on. Second, there is no central or local government policy to require or recommend the use of local languages in schools. Even in the mulok curriculum in schools, mulok is local languages only reach the elementary school level. Third, there is a lack of local language media

which can be a tool for spreading people's thoughts and ideas. Fourth, there is a wrong assumption that using local languages seems plebeian and *ndeso*. Fifth, the influence of modern education which prioritizes materialistic aspects rather than seeking local identity and characteristics.

There are many articles that study local languages from grammatical, sociolinguistic and semantic aspects. However, of the many writings about local languages, there are only a few articles resulting from scientific research whose theme is language extinction, including Fanny Henry Tondo's article entitled *Extinction of Local Languages: Causal Factors and Ethnolinguistic Implications*. This article discusses the factors causing the extinction of local languages and their implications for ethnolinguistics. This article also discusses examples of local languages that are still alive, nearly extinct, and those that have become extinct (Rigo, 2021). Apart from that, Sudirman Wilian's work entitled *Minority Languages, Ethnic Identity, and Language Survival: The Case of Sumbawa Language in Lombok* also discusses one of the local languages in Lombok which is on the verge of extinction because it has minority speakers (Zein, 2020).

The next work is about *Brief Reflections on the Extinction of Various Local Languages in the Land of Papua* written by Frans Rumbrawer. This work examines the local languages of the tribes in Papua which are on the verge of extinction (Siregar, 2023). Furthermore, Taher et al work entitled *Language Preservation Parameter: Assesment of Bengkulu Malay Language Vitality Using Level Endangerment Index*, explains in detail the factors, causes, symptoms and treatment strategies (Taher et al., 2022). This work examines several local languages of the people of North Maluku which are on the verge of extinction because of the minority of speakers (Maggalatung et al., 2021).

Although various previous studies have discussed the extinction of local languages in Indonesia from grammatical, sociolinguistic, and ethnolinguistic perspectives- highlighting specific cases such as the Sumbawa language in Lombok, local languages in Papua, and Bengkulu Malay- there remains a significant gap in research that comparatively analyzes the factors contributing to language extinction and the strategies for language preservation across two different regions, such as West Kalimantan and North Maluku. Prior studies tend to be descriptive and focus on a single region or language, without considering the socio-cultural variables between regions that may influence the vitality of local languages (Adli & Guy, 2022). The novelty of this study lies in its comparative approach across two regions with distinct ethnic, cultural, and policy backgrounds, aiming to identify both general patterns and context-specific strategies to address the threat of local language extinction (Zhong et al., 2024). Thus, this research

not only enriches the academic discourse on language preservation but also offers more relevant and applicable policy recommendations for sustaining the existence of local languages in Indonesia.

This article tries to answer the following problem formulations: 1) how is the diversity of local languages in West Kalimantan and North Maluku? 2) how is the condition of local languages in West Kalimantan and North Maluku and 3) how to overcome the extinction of local languages in West Kalimantan and North Maluku?

METHODS

This research uses a comparative study method with a sociological approach that is descriptive qualitative in nature (Thomann & Maggetti, 2020). This method was chosen because it allows the researcher to compare the condition of local languages in two regions, namely West Kalimantan and North Maluku, to understand the differences and similarities that occur. The sociological approach is used to observe the phenomenon of local language extinction within the context of social life, while the descriptive qualitative nature helps to describe the condition of local languages in a detailed and in-depth manner based on the data obtained (Li & Bonk, 2025).

This research focuses on the problem of local language extinction in West Kalimantan and North Maluku. These two regions were selected because they have a strong foundation for the use of local languages in daily activities (Mu'ti, 2025; Syarif & Thabrani, 2024), which aligns with Fishman's (1991) theory of Reversing Language Shift (RLS), emphasizing the importance of intergenerational transmission and the use of local languages in informal domains as key factors in language maintenance. According to this theory, the vitality of a local language is sustained not only by institutional support but also through consistent usage within families and communities. Amid social changes and modernization, some people in these regions still preserve the use of local languages in their daily interactions and conversations (Ufie et al., 2021).

Data collection involved four main techniques: literature review, observation, interviews, and documentation (Alam, 2021). The literature review was conducted by analyzing scholarly articles, government publications, local education policies, and ethnolinguistic reports relevant to the research focus. Observations were carried out in selected urban and rural settings in West Kalimantan (including Pontianak, Sambas, and nearby villages) and North Maluku (such as Ternate, Tidore, and adjacent districts), focusing on language practices in homes, public spaces, and educational institutions.

Interviews were conducted with 30 purposively selected informants, including traditional leaders, language elders, parents, teachers, and young speakers. Snowball sampling was also used to identify additional key informants with deep knowledge or active roles in local language transmission. These interviews were semi-structured and aimed to explore individual experiences, community perceptions, and intergenerational language dynamics.

In addition, institutional stakeholders such as local language activists and cultural center representatives were consulted to gain insight into existing revitalization efforts. Documentation methods included the collection and analysis of local signage, school curriculum content, event recordings, and community media that reflect the presence or absence of local languages in public life.

Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Mu'ti, 2025; Syarif & Thabrani, 2024). Data reduction was performed by categorizing and condensing the raw data to focus on key themes related to language vitality, transmission patterns, and sociocultural influences. The reduced data were then organized into visual and narrative formats to facilitate pattern identification. Finally, conclusions were drawn to compare the underlying factors contributing to language endangerment and to identify both shared and region-specific preservation strategies across West Kalimantan and North Maluku.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Language is a communication tool used by humans to express ideas, ideas, feelings and experiences with one another. Language is something very important for our lives. In this case, Fowler argues that "language plays a great rule in our life. Perhaps because of its familiarity, we rarely observe it, taking it rather for granted, as we do breathing or walking. The effects of language are remarkable, and include much of what distinguishes man from the animals, but language has no place in our educational program or in the speculations of our philosophers (Fowler, 2022).

Even though the number of local language speakers in Indonesia is still quite large, the quantity of speakers of each local language varies. Some local languages still have quite a large number of speakers, while others are only used by a small number of speakers, making them minority languages. However, according to Ahearn, a small number of speakers is not always an indicator of minority because there are some local languages which, even though the number of speakers is small, are very loyal in using

the local language in daily communication and interactions so that the possibility of language extinction is not too vulnerable (Ahearn, 2021).

In terms of numbers, according to the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL, 2001), Javanese occupies the top position as a local language with the largest number of speakers, namely around 75.200.000 speakers. The second position is filled by Sundanese speakers with a total of 27.000.000 speakers, followed by Malay with a total of 20.000.000 speakers. The next position is Madurese with 13.694.000 speakers, Minangkabau with 6.500.000 speakers, and Batak spoken by 5.150.000 people. This is followed by Bugis, Balinese, Acehnese, Sasak, Makassar, Lampung and Rejang languages (Aji et al., 2022).

Aside from the local languages mentioned, many others are still spoken by a small number of people, with some nearing extinction. According to Wurm as cited in Rigo, (2021), local languages can be classified into five categories: 1) Potentially endangered languages, spoken by few and overshadowed by the national language; 2) Endangered languages, where the younger generation no longer speaks them; 3) Seriously endangered languages, spoken only by people over 50; 4) Moribund languages, spoken only by the elderly over 70; and 5) Extinct languages, with no speakers or only one remaining speaker (Leonard, 2023).

Many linguists have studied and devoted a lot of attention to the phenomenon or symptoms of extinction of minority local languages in developing countries. According to them, the main cause of the extinction of minority languages is because many parents no longer want to actively use and speak their local language in daily interaction and communication and also no longer teach and tradition it to their offspring (Nguyen & Hamid, 2021). Meanwhile, according to Landweer, the extinction of local languages is not caused by the cessation of speakers of these languages in using and speaking the local language, but because of the choice of language use of the majority of the speaking community (Rosiak, 2023). Apart from the two factors above, language extinction is also caused by pressure from the majority language in multilingual regions or countries such as Indonesian society (Siregar, 2022).

Local Language Diversity in West Kalimantan and North Maluku

Language has a very important role in society, because through language people can communicate easily. Language cannot be separated from human life and is always present in every activity. Humans are social creatures who never interact with other humans. Interaction is very important for every human being. Therefore, in interacting

with various parties, tools, facilities or media are really needed, namely language. The results of ethnolinguistic research conducted by the Dayakology Institute for almost 10 years (1998-2008) in West Kalimantan, found 151 subtribes with 168 diverse Dayak languages and each language has its own characteristics (Tartillah, 2022). The following are 10 local languages used to communicate by the Dayak tribe in West Kalimantan:

Bakatik language: Bakatik is a local language in West Kalimantan, classified under the Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian family, with approximately 86,392 speakers. It comprises four dialects: Moro Betung, Ambawang Satu, Sahan, and Rodaya, each distributed across different regencies. Dialectometric analysis indicates that Bakatik constitutes a distinct language, showing more than 81% difference from other regional languages (Sommerlot, 2020; Blevins & Kaufman, 2023)

Galik language : Galik is a local language unique to West Kalimantan, spoken in Sanggau Regency. It comprises four dialects-Mandong, Engkahan, Kasromego, and Tanap-with internal differences ranging between 50–81%. Speaker populations vary, with Kasromego being the largest (~5,000) and Engkahan the smallest (553). Dialectometric analysis shows over 81% difference from other regional languages, confirming Galik as a distinct language (Patriantoro & Rahmani, 2023).

Ribun language: Ribun is a local Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) language spoken exclusively in Sanggau Regency, West Kalimantan. It borders Galik to the north, Malay and Bakatik to the south, and Malay to the east. Dialectometric analysis reveals five dialects-Respons, Empodis, Upe, Semongan, and Gunam-with internal variation between 50–81%, indicating they belong to the same language (Purwani et al., 2024).

Taman language: Taman is a local Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) language spoken in Kapuas Hulu Regency, West Kalimantan, with around 1,493 speakers. It borders Malay in all directions and comprises three dialects-Taman Kapuas, Taman Embaloh, and Kalis-based on dialectometric differences between 50–81%. With over 81% difference from other regional languages, Taman is classified as a distinct language (Taggok & Hawari, 2021).

Uud Danum Language: Uud Danum is an Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) language spoken in the upper Melawi River area, Melawi Regency, with around 957 speakers concentrated in Ambalau District. It borders Malay to the north and west, while data for the south and east remains unavailable. The language is closely related to Uud Danum spoken in Central Kalimantan and is also found along the Embaloh River (Avé, 2024).

Madurese Language: is spread across several districts and cities in West Kalimantan. The distribution of the Madurese language in the north, south, west and east borders on the Malay language. This Madurese language belongs to the Austronesian, Malay-Polynesian class. Madurese speakers are scattered in city centers, such as in Sanggau, Kubu Raya, Bengkayang, Singkawang and Pontianak districts. However, only the Sungai Rasau area, Sungai Pinyuh District, Pontianak Regency was caught. It turns out, based on dialectometric calculations, Madurese is a separate language because the percentage difference is more than 81% with other languages in West Kalimantan (Endardi et al., 2023).

Malay language: Malay is the most widely spoken language in West Kalimantan, with speakers distributed across urban and rural areas. It belongs to the Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) family and borders several languages including Ribun, Galik, Bakatik, Taman, and Uud Danum. Dialectometric analysis identifies 15 dialects of Malay in the region. With over 81% difference compared to other regional languages, Malay is recognized as a distinct language in West Kalimantan (Pepinsky et al., 2024).

Bukat language: Bukat is an Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) language spoken by a minority group in Kapuas Hulu Regency, West Kalimantan, primarily in Putussibau District. With around 600 speakers concentrated in Nanga Uvat and Mate villages, it borders the Punan and Kayaan languages in all directions. Dialectometric analysis shows over 81% difference from other regional languages, confirming Bukat as a distinct language in West Kalimantan (Guntur et al., 2024).

Punan language: Punan is an Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) language spoken in Kapuas Hulu Regency, West Kalimantan, bordering Bukat, Kayaan, and Uud Danum. It is used in several villages, including Tanjung Lokang, with around 143 families of speakers. Dialectometric analysis shows over 81% difference from other regional languages, confirming Punan as a distinct language in West Kalimantan Avé, (2024).

Kayaan language: Kayaan is an Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) language spoken in Kapuas Hulu Regency, West Kalimantan, particularly in Putussibau District. It borders Bukat, Taman, and Punan languages. The Kayaan people, known as Dayak Kayaan Mendalam, live along the Mendalam River in nine villages. Dialectometric analysis shows over 81% difference from other regional languages, confirming Kayaan as a distinct language in West Kalimantan (Espree-Conaway, (2022),

Diversity of Local Languages in North Maluku

Language diversity is a form of a nation's cultural wealth that is of high value (Fatmawati, 2021). Various local languages that are still often used in daily conversation accompany the use of Indonesian as the main language of speech. This results in Indonesian society being dominated by bilingual or multilingual speakers. However, diversity in the use of this language can sometimes give rise to differences in perception between speakers (Schroedler et al., 2024).

The value of politeness may be one of the values that causes many misinterpretations. Criteria for politeness in a speech are usually assessed by the use of words, whether there is a greeting, the purpose of speaking, whether or not the situation or context in the speech is appropriate, self-attitude, honesty, vulgarity, effect on the speech partner, social class authority, and the adequacy of the speech. The often overlapping characteristics of politeness can cause differences in the perception of the value of politeness for speakers (Xafizovna, 2021).

In North Maluku, including West Halmahera Regency (Halbar), there are eleven local languages: Ternate, Tidore, Tabaru, Loloda, Sahu, Waiyoli, Gamkonora, Kayoa, East Makian, and West Makian. The Ternate language is spoken across 24 villages in South Jailolo District—such as Sidangoli Gam, Sidangoli Dehe, Tataleka, Ake Jailolo, Dodinga, and others—as well as in Sahu District (e.g., Susupu, Lako Ake Lamo, Taruba), and in South Ibu District (Asteria et al., 2021).

The Tabaru language in West Halmahera is spoken in four sub-districts and 33 villages, including Gamlenge and Taoru (South Jailolo); Ake Sibub, Maritango, Kie Ici, Tonguti Goin, and Naga (Ibu); Tuguis (North Ibu); and 18 villages in East Sahu such as Loce, Akelamo, and Tibobo. In North Ibu, it is also spoken in 11 other villages including Podol, Togowo, and Togereba Tua. Meanwhile, Central Halmahera hosts six local languages: Tidore, Tobelo, East Makian, Gebe, Patani, Sawai, and Weda, with Tidore spoken in Messa (North Weda), Woekob (Central Weda), and Paniti (North Patani). The Sula Islands Regency is home to seven local languages: Bajo, Sula, Mangole, Waitina, Kadai, Siboyo, Mange, and Taliabu (Perangin-Angin & Dewi, 2020).

In South Halmahera Regency, eight local languages are spoken: Kayoa, East Makian, West Makian, Saketa, Gane/Giman, Galela, and Bajo. The Kayoa language is distributed across four sub-districts and 22 villages, including Bakimiakc, Hatejawa, and Busua (West Kayoa); Sagawele, Ngute-Ngute, and Orimakurunga (South Kayoa); and 14 villages in Kayoa District such as Lingua, Lelei, and Guruapin. The East Makian language is found in five sub-districts and 35 villages, including Wailoa, Gurua, and Kota (Makian

Island); Lemo-Lerno, Oha, and Tabasama (West Gane); and Fulai, Tokaka, and Posi-Posi (Northwest Gane) (Muhamad et al., 2022).

Meanwhile, the Gane/Giman language is spread across 4 sub-districts and 38 sub-districts/villages. In South West Gane District there are the villages of Dowora, Sekley, Yamli, Gane Dalam, Jibubu, Awis and Tawa; in East Gane District there are the villages of Wosi, Akelamo, Bukit Indah, Rawa Jaya, Suka Maju, Bukit Raya, Sumber Makmur, Lalubi, Mafa, Foya, Tobaru, Spree Tobaru, Waimili, Tanjung Jere, Kebun Raja, Kota Low; in South East Gane District, there are Gane Luar, Rangaranga, Kowo, Sawat, and Gaimu Villages; in Middle East Gane District, there are Tabahidayah, Luim, Bisui, Lelewi, Tagea, Matuting, Matuting Tanjung, and Tabahijrah Villages (Arafah et al., 2023).

Even though the people of North Maluku have various ethnicities and languages, this area, which is known as a conflict-prone area, has gradually experienced changes, especially in accepting differences in language, opinion, ethnicity or religion, as well as becoming an identity in each region or tribe.

Condition of Local Languages in West Kalimantan and North Maluku

As a nation consisting of various tribes and languages, even though the Indonesian people have a unified language, namely Indonesian, the Indonesian people still recognize the existence of hundreds of local languages (Sidi, 2020). In fact, the existence of this local language is maintained and maintained by the 1945 Constitution, article 36 which reads, "The state language is Indonesian. In areas that have their own languages, which are well maintained by their people (for example Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, and so on) these languages will also be respected and maintained by the State, and these languages are also part of the living Indonesian culture." Thus, the existence of a unified language is not considered to require erasing or displacing local languages as long as they are still maintained by their supporters (Doerr, 2024).

Condition of Local Languages in West Kalimantan : The local language that is still used and developing in West Kalimantan is the Dayak Kanayatn Ahe Dialect (BDKDA) which is used by the people in Mandor Village, Mandor District, Landak Regency. The Dayak tribe and language found in Landak Regency are spread across ten sub-districts, in these ten sub-districts the Dayak tribe and language are found with quite a large population (Arkanudin et al., 2021).

In creating language groupings, there are several aspects involved, namely language aspects, natural facts such as rivers, mountains, and traditional territories or binua. The most dominant aspect in naming a language is the language itself.

The Dayak Kanayatn language, Ahe dialect, serves not only as a symbol of local pride and identity but also as: (1) a supporter of the national language, (2) a medium of instruction in elementary schools, (3) a language used in traditional events like Gawai (rice harvest thanksgiving), Pantenten (weddings), and Badukun (shamanism), and (4) a means to document and preserve Indonesian linguistics, as it is an integral part of the country's language heritage (Arkanudin et al., 2021).

Thus, the position and function of the BDKDA is very important in relation to the growth, development and preservation of the local language itself. The role of BDKDA in the life of the Dayak Kanayatn community should be fostered, developed and preserved. Talking about language research in West Kalimantan, in fact the study of indigenous languages in West Kalimantan began in the mid-19th century by an American missionary in the form of brief notes, who then published these notes in the form of three letters in *The Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia*.

The notes made by this missionary contain the Dayak language spoken by the Oto people in Karangan. He explained the differences between Dayak language (D) and Malay language (M) in the area (Irawan et al., 2021). In this era there are still no records regarding language classification in West Kalimantan.

Reflecting on the publications carried out by the American Missionaries, research and knowledge on the distribution of local languages in West Kalimantan has not yet been fully reported. In fact, several articles that try to describe language use in this region have not looked at it thoroughly. Existing studies only focus on a few areas (Istianah & Suhandano, 2022). However, the studies that have been carried out are very useful in providing an idea of the distribution and classification of languages in this region. In fact, a non-governmental organization that operates in the field of Dayak culture, namely the Dayakology Institute, has conducted ethnolinguistic research on the Dayak community in West Kalimantan.

Linguistic research in West Kalimantan gained momentum when A.B. Hudson conducted a language survey in Borneo. Starting in South Kalimantan, he compiled a limited word list covering over 25 language variants and used these to classify languages in the Barito River valley (Bock, 2024). Following established traditions, Hudson used the term *Dayak* for languages unique to Kalimantan and not closely related to external regional languages, while the term *Melayu* was used for variants more closely aligned with Malay from South Sumatra (Bock, 2024).

Hudson continued his research on native languages in Sarawak and West Kalimantan during 1969–1970. He refined his earlier Malay–Dayak classification

(Hudson, 1967) by noting that Selako, although spoken by non-Muslims, is linguistically closer to Malay. To distinguish Selako from other indigenous languages labeled as "Mountain Dayak," he introduced the term *Dayak Melayik* for non-Muslim Dayak languages with strong Malayic features. Although he acknowledged that the term "Malay Dayak" was controversial (Vidal, 2023), Hudson preferred it over Cense and Uhlenbeck's (1958) classification, which had caused local resistance. He later proposed *Melayik* as a broader term for descendants of Old Malayic, including Malay, Iban, Selako, and Minangkabau.

Hudson also gave the term 'Islamic Dayak' to the Muslim Dayak group. Hudson (1970) admits that these categories are still very rough and general. In Hudson's (1978) writings, the term 'Islainik Dayak' is no longer used in his writings. Collins (1999) considered Hudson's decision to be a wise decision. Based on the facts above, the language classification that has been carried out by a number of linguists in several areas of West Kalimantan generally uses a comparative linguistics approach (Sommerlot, 2020).

A diachronic dialectological study was conducted on Melawi Malay dialect variants along the Melawi River (Lumwanga, 2023). Language data were initially collected in 1998–1999 by the Language Center Research Team across 76 locations in 71 sub-districts of West Kalimantan. In 2008, five additional isolects from Kapuas Hulu expanded the coverage to 81 areas. Further research in 2009 added eight more isolects, bringing the total to 89 observation points across Ketapang, Kapuas Hulu, and Sanggau districts.

Condition of Local Languages in North Maluku : Ternate as one of the 36 languages spoken in North Maluku Province is also experiencing problems related to language shift which leads to language death (Timothy, 2020). This fact can be seen from the increasingly low level of use of this language in communication between speakers. This is because the very high level of community mobility occurs in Ternate.

Ternate City remains the center of trade and education in North Maluku, leading to high population mobility and linguistic diversity. Many students from various regions pursue higher education in the city, increasing the number of non-Ternate speakers. As a result, effective communication requires a common language, with Malay-Ternate serving as a lingua franca alongside Indonesian and foreign languages.

The widespread use of Malay-Ternate has made it a dominant language in North Maluku, particularly in Ternate. It has become the primary language for communication not only among speakers of different languages but also within the Ternate ethnic group, even in family settings. This has led to a language shift from Ternate to Malay-Ternate

(and Indonesian), resulting in Ternate speakers becoming multilingual with very low usage of the Ternate language, as Malay-Ternate and Indonesian dominate most communication domains.

Strategies and Steps to Overcome Local Language Extinction

One of the riches of the Indonesian nation that is rarely shared by other nations is the existence of various local languages that coexist with Indonesian. The diversity of local languages in Indonesia can have positive potential in developing and strengthening the position of the national language, namely Indonesian (Martono et al., 2022). Therefore, it would be unwise if local languages were considered to be 'disruptive' languages to Indonesian.

Local languages or what are also commonly called ethnic languages or mother tongues have become UNESCO's agenda by designating February 21 as International Mother Language Day. Oentarto Sindung Mawardi said that what UNESCO has done above shows how important it is to maintain the use and empower the function of local, ethnic or mother tongues among the supporting communities.

In this era of globalization, Indonesian people know or use at least three languages, namely: foreign languages, especially English, Indonesian and local languages. English is generally known through educational institutions, formal or non-formal. Through formal education, English is generally introduced (taught) at junior high school level (De Wilde et al., 2020).

However, now the phenomenon of English is starting to be introduced at primary school level, even in kindergarten. Through non-formal education, English is introduced at various language course institutions. Furthermore, they use the language they already know for various purposes. There are those who use the language for educational purposes. However, there are also those who use this language for business purposes, especially in the tourism sector, which is one of the mainstay fields in several regions in Indonesia which are rich in tourist destinations.

Indonesian was introduced and used in all provinces in Indonesia, especially as a result of these provinces being part of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). As is known, for the Republic of Indonesia, Indonesian has two positions, namely as a national language and as a state language.

Local languages are expected to be used purely in the realm of family, neighborhood and closeness (between members of the same ethnicity), the realm of custom, and the realm of religion. However, the reality is that the use of local languages has been

contaminated by the use of Indonesian language elements and has experienced a shift. This can be seen in the family domain, where in the family environment there has been a shift from local languages to local languages (Brisset et al., 2021). So, if this shift continues to occur, it is certain that in the future local languages in the family will be increasingly difficult to hope to support the sustainability of local languages.

The transition of the use of the mother tongue from a local language to Indonesian, the confusion of local language vocabulary (for example Indorah vocabulary: Indonesia-Daerah), the limited amount of local language vocabulary that has been absorbed into Indonesian, and the lack of concern of local governments towards the preservation of local languages indicate that the position has not yet been implemented and the proper function of local languages as formulated (Brisset et al., 2021). If this continues continuously, it is possible that the formulation of the position and function of local languages is just a slogan that is half-heartedly implemented.

Currently, there is awareness of the importance of local languages as the identity of a region or tribe. With this awareness, efforts have been made to maintain and develop local languages. Whether carried out by the government, language and culture observers from academic circles or from youth and community leaders. This is done so that local languages continue to exist among the people, so that local identity is not lost or extinct.

The development of local languages is a reflection of efforts to encourage local progress not only through local economic and physical development, but also socio-cultural development and the noble values they contain. This is in accordance with our national development philosophy with the aim of creating a society that is resilient in facing various threats, challenges and obstacles in achieving national and state goals.

Fostering and developing local languages as a form of embodiment of the Indonesian spirit does not have to shift the position of Indonesian as the national language and state language. The development and development of local languages is directed at empowering local languages (ethnic languages) that are more stable and have a harmonious relationship with the national language (Indonesian). Strengthening the position and function of local languages which are implemented in everyday life is actually a form of embodiment of the Indonesian spirit in a country that really appreciates unique diversity.

Strategy for Maintaining the Dayak Language in West Kalimantan

Language is part of human culture. Human culture can develop rapidly because of language which is used as a communication tool to convey opinions and ideas. Language extinction means the extinction of one of the forms of culture possessed by society. It cannot be denied that there are quite a number of local languages that have become extinct or are threatened with extinction. Some say that hundreds of local languages have become "deceased." UNESCO has also given a strong warning, very strong, regarding the threat of extinction of various local languages. In 2009 alone, UNESCO recorded more than a hundred local languages in Indonesia that were extinct or nearly extinct. A warning also came from the Language Development Department of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Other data that is quite worrying, as presented by Mandana Seyfeddinipur (2015), a linguist and director of the Endangered Languages Documentation Program at SOAS University, London, is that there are approximately 7,000 languages spoken throughout the world. However, only fifty of them are at risk of extinction.

This is also the case with 168 local languages from 151 Dayak sub-tribes in West Kalimantan Province, as quoted by the Pontianak Tribune from John Bamba, former Executive Director of the Dayakology Institute when he was a speaker at the Ethnolinguistic Research Seminar held by the Dayakologi Institute, in Jurung Dayakologi. Why does this happen to the Dayak language, even though the Dayak people are still quite large in Indonesia; Dayak people in Indonesia are recorded at 3,009,494 people or 1.27 percent of the total population of Indonesia, according to the 2010 BPS census (Hull, 2022).

According to Anthony C. Woodbury (n.d.), three factors contribute to language extinction: 1) Mass extermination (genocide) of an ethnic group, such as when European nations invaded the Tasmanian nation in Australia, leading to the loss of several languages; 2) Pressure for language communities to integrate with a dominant cultural group, such as when national languages are mandated in education; 3) Coercion for a community to abandon its language and culture, as seen with the Kurds in Turkey. Additionally, the absence of a written tradition in an ethnic group's culture can also contribute to language extinction.

The first factor is mass extermination (genocide) of an ethnic group. The history of the Dayak tribe is filled with bloody incidents. One of the shared cultures among the Dayak sub-tribes is ngayau. Ngayau culture is the habit of people from the Dayak tribe to hunt human heads. Human heads obtained from hunting can be used as offerings for

marriage. The more heads you get, the higher the person's rank. This culture stopped being practiced at the beginning of the 19th century AD with the agreement of the traditional leaders of each Dayak sub-tribe.

The history of the Dayak tribe from the Dutch colonial era to Japan is not widely known, at least in mainstream circles. As for writings regarding the history of the Dayak tribe, it is not much of a topic of discussion other than among those with special interests. However, as far back as history has been written, there has never been any mention of mass extermination (genocide) which wiped out the existence of the Dayak tribe in Indonesia. So, mass extermination cannot be said to be the cause of the gradual disappearance of the Dayak language from the language ecosystem.

The second factor is the sociocultural pressure on language communities to integrate with dominant groups. In West Kalimantan, apart from the Dayak, the Malays and Chinese form large communities. While Malays and Chinese typically live in coastal, trade-oriented areas, the Dayak mostly inhabit the inland regions, often perceived as underdeveloped. This spatial and developmental distinction reflects cultural dominance and contributes to linguistic shift among the Dayak.

History records that the kingdoms that once existed in West Kalimantan were mostly Malay kingdoms or sultanates, such as the Pontianak Sultanate, Mempawah Sultanate, Sambas Sultanate, and so on. It is very rare to hear about the existence of Dayak kingdoms or the existence of Dayak kings who once ruled Kalimantan, apart from the Kutai kingdom, which is believed to be the oldest kingdom in historical times. If there really were Dayak kingdoms, such as Nan Sarunai, which were "founded by the Dayak Maanyan people, one of the oldest Dayak sub-tribes in central and southern Kalimantan", as reported by Iswara N. Raditya (2018), a reporter at Tirto.id.

However, this kingdom is recorded as a kingdom that was founded in the prehistoric era of Kalimantan, for which very little written evidence can be found about this kingdom. From this, it can be said that the historical period of Kalimantan was dominated by non-Dayak cultures. This is confirmed by the writings of Taufiq Tanasaldy (2012), a researcher in the field of Asian Studies and Indonesian, who said that the history of Dayak politics in West Kalimantan can only be traced as far back as 1945 (Chen, 2020).

In other words, written traces of the political history of the Dayak tribe are very rare to find. This cultural dominance throughout Kalimantan's history is further emphasized by the next sentence by Tanasaldy (2012), who says that during the colonial period, administratively, most Dayak people lived under the Malay sultanates and they occupied areas at a lower level socially and politically.

Dayak cultures, which have been dominated by other, more established cultures, such as Malay, traces of this are also visible in the language. Despite limited linguistic data at that time, Cense & Uhlenbeck (1958), in *Critical survey of studies on the languages of Borneo* (Wang, 2020), revealed that there is a very clear impression of the penetration of the Malay dialect into the Dayak languages, a process that has been going on for centuries with varying intensity.

Cense & Uhlenbeck add that it is difficult to determine to what extent Dayak language-speaking groups, who originally spoke their native language, incorporated Malay elements into their languages. After observing Dayak languages from coastal areas to inland areas, Cense & Uhlenbeck discovered similarities between Dayak languages and various variations of Malay spoken in most areas of Sumatra and the Malacca peninsula.

Because the Dayak languages and Malay are so similar, experts have used this fact as a strong reason to categorize Dayak languages as dialects of the Malay language. So, the pressure factor from a larger and dominant culture greatly contributed to the process of the disappearance of the Dayak languages.

The third factor is that there is coercion for a community of speakers of a language to abandon their language, even their culture. This kind of coercion usually comes from parties who have "authority" who controls ethnic groups in the areas they control, for example the state, more precisely the state government.

Until now, there has never been a law in Indonesia that "forbids" the use of local languages in everyday life. Even in some local content lessons, teachers teach local languages according to the area where the local content subject school is taught. However, this does not mean there is no pressure coming from the Indonesian government. Pressure from the Indonesian government did not extend to banning the use or teaching of local languages.

Government policy contributes to the decline of local languages in two main ways. First, the promotion of Bahasa Indonesia as the national language pressures communities to adopt it as the primary means of communication. Second, there is a lack of serious policy support for preserving local languages, especially those without writing systems like many Dayak languages. Although initial steps have been taken by the Language Agency, these efforts remain limited in scope and coverage.

The fourth factor is the absence of a writing culture in the culture of an ethnic group. This factor is not one of the factors proposed by Anthony C. Woodbury. However, it seems that even this factor contributed to the process of language extinction. A writing system

is a form of language documentation that can preserve the wealth of knowledge contained in a language. Even more amazingly, with the existence of a writing system as a form of documentation for a language, even extinct languages can be "brought back to life."

Anthony C. Woodbury gives the example of an extinct language that was revived by the existence of the language's writing system. Modern Hebrew is the language reported by the written system of the language. Modern Hebrew is a language reported by Anthony C. Woodbury that was successfully revitalized as a mother tongue for a group of language speakers after several centuries of being declared extinct.

This revitalization is carried out by studying the ancient written forms of the language. The absence of a writing system in a language can not only enable the revival of a language that has already become extinct, but can also "prevent" a language from becoming extinct. Because with the existence of a writing system, a language can be studied and developed, even raised in rank, which then has an impact on raising the rank of the group of speakers of that language.

From the content and discussion regarding language extinction above, there are at least three signs of the extinction of Dayak languages, namely pressure from a larger and dominant culture, pressure from policy makers where these languages are spoken, and the absence of a written culture in this endangered language. These emerging signs are a reminder, at least for all of us that our ancestral culture is on the verge of extinction. However, by being aware of the signs of extinction, we will also know what steps can be taken to preserve the Dayak ancestral language and culture.

Of course, language preservation efforts cannot be done alone. There needs to be support from various parties, such as the government as a policy maker and speakers of the language itself. The first step that can be taken is to record the language by mapping the linguistic elements of the language which can later be used to create a writing system for it. Second, raise the level of the language by using it as a formal language alongside the national language, Indonesian. Third, translating texts from other languages into that language and vice versa in order to mutually enrich the cultural values contained therein.

Strategy for Maintaining Local Languages in North Maluku

Until now, there has been awareness of the importance of the Ternate language for the people of Ternate. With this awareness, efforts have been made to maintain and develop the Ternate language or in other words make the Ternate language survive. Whether carried out by the government, observers of Ternate language and culture, academics or youth and community leaders.

Previously, in 2009, the government under the Ternate City Tourism Office held a local literary competition, namely, storytelling and local rhymes. Coincidentally, the author was also one of the judges in this activity. Basically, this activity has very positive value, especially in preserving and developing the Ternate local language and literature. However, unfortunately, almost all participants told stories and rhymes using Malay-Ternate, not Ternate. Because the younger generation in general can no longer understand and use Ternate (Rahman & Umar, 2024).

The Ternate City Government has only shown appreciation as proof of awareness of the role of the Ternate language for society several years ago. Namely by issuing a Decree from the Mayor of Ternate which contains the teaching of the Ternate language in elementary schools throughout the Ternate City government area. Even though this awareness has only just begun, this government policy is very meaningful. Before the establishment of the Ternate language center under the Ternate City Education Office, an institution was formed to prepare matters related to teaching Ternate in schools. This institution is called the Ternate Language Committee.

Apart from the government, there are also figures who provide Ternate language development. For example, Mr. Rusli Andi Aco (deceased) who, although he did not have a language education background, with great effort based on his attention, wrote a Ternate-Indonesian language dictionary (Utara, 2008). This work is the first dictionary of the Ternate language that has ever existed. Although, in terms of content, there are still many shortcomings, the work of this observer of Ternate culture and language deserves the highest appreciation. Because it has provided the basis for preserving and maintaining capital for the Ternate language.

The second dictionary writer wrote this dictionary to add to the completeness of the previous dictionary. This dictionary was written deliberately to include English so that it becomes a three-language dictionary, namely Ternate-Indonesia-English. Then also with the book Ternate Oral Literature, where the literary form is still written in Ternate, so that readers can know certain languages and vocabulary that are rarely or even no longer heard in everyday conversation. The presence of these Ternate dictionaries and literary books will really support the maintenance of the Ternate language, works full of linguistic information.

Apart from that, there have been maintenance and development efforts carried out by academics. There has been research conducted on the Ternate language. Either as a final study assignment or other research. Unfortunately, the research results were not developed into a form of writing that could be consumed by the general public. Meanwhile,

among the youth and community, there are also efforts being made. This effort is through communication and consultation via social media, namely Facebook. This community is named the Let's Learn Ternate Language group.

Here, they always communicate and share knowledge about the Ternate language. All these efforts are certainly not enough to maintain a language. Efforts to maintain and develop must continue to be carried out until ultimately all Ternate people return to their identity as Ternate ethnic people. This means that all members of society use the local language again as a treasure trove of local ancestral heritage which is full of values.

CONCLUSION

There are many local languages in Indonesia that are on the verge of extinction. This phenomenon has attracted the attention of many academics and scientists, especially linguistic experts. Many studies and seminars have been conducted by language observers as an effort to save local languages from becoming extinct. Various efforts have been and are being made to save languages, which is quite reasonable considering that Indonesia is one of the countries that has the most local languages. Even second after Papua New Guinea.

The declining interest and tendency of Indonesian people towards using local languages in communicating and interacting certainly cannot be separated from several factors: first, the influence of the modern lifestyle which is rapidly being spread through various media such as television, the internet, and so on. Second, there is no central or local government policy to require or recommend the use of local languages in schools. Even in the *mulok* (muatan lokal) curriculum in schools, *mulok* local languages only reach the elementary school level. Third, there is a lack of local language media which can be a tool for spreading people's thoughts and ideas. Fourth, there is a wrong assumption that using local languages seems plebeian and 'ndeso'. Fifth, the influence of modern education which prioritizes materialistic aspects rather than seeking local identity and characteristics.

Hundreds of local languages are on the verge of extinction. This condition is caused by many factors, including the increasingly minimal number of speakers of this language. In fact, some local languages only have a few speakers left. Another factor is that the use of the National language is more dominant, causing local languages to be pushed aside and almost no longer used by the younger generation and children. However, in the context of society in West Kalimantan and North Maluku, the use of local languages is still quite intense in daily activities, especially within the family and relatives. However,

the younger generation, especially school children, are vulnerable to abandoning local languages because they tend to use Indonesian more as a language of interaction both at school and in their living environment. If this is not immediately anticipated, it will cause language extinction in the next few decades.

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