



The Importance of Integrating Ecolinguistics Dimensions in Indonesian Language Textbooks in Higher Education

An Ecolinguistics Study

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ABSTRACT

The integration of ecolinguistics within Indonesian courses in higher education needs to be pursued and linguistic diversity and biodiversity in certain environments can be the material for academic writing activities as well as efforts to preserve local languages and Indonesian. This study aimed to determine the importance of integrating ecolinguistic dimensions in Indonesian textbooks in higher education. This research used a mixed method in which the data were collected through literature study, questionnaires, and interviews. The data obtained from the literature study were needed to develop Indonesian textbooks in higher education. Therefore, the interview data of the lecturer concerned argued that it was necessary to integrate the dimensions of ecolinguistics aspects to build environmental sensitivity among students. While the results of the questionnaire stated that the development of Indonesian textbooks integrated with the dimensions of ecolinguistics needs to be done to minimize the fading of cultural and linguistic functions. In conclusion, integrating ecolinguistic dimensions in Indonesian textbooks in higher education is very important to be undertaken.

Keywords: *Biodiversity, Indonesian language textbook development, Integration of ecolinguistics, Language diversity.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian as the national language serves as a means of communication. Indonesian language skills must be possessed by Indonesian people to express their ideas and thoughts both orally and in writing. This needs to be highlighted because someone who has low language skills will find it difficult to communicate well (Mulyati, 2020). Therefore, Indonesian language learning needs to be given at all levels of education.

Language learning in higher education is currently a compulsory curriculum course and there are Indonesian substances that need to be inserted in Indonesian language learning according to the characteristics of the course and study program. Thus, students who study Indonesian are expected to have qualified language skills through Indonesian language learning activities that are focused on academic writing skills.

Reviewing one of the substances on local wisdom and environmental sensitivity determined by DIKTI (Indonesian Directorate General of Higher Education), concluded that this substance is very important to be

included because there is an urgency that is seen among young people related to the fading function of local language and culture which has an impact on the misalignment of human relations with the natural environment and the social environment in the present and future. Thus, it is necessary to have Indonesian language learning integrated with ecolinguistics through the creation of teaching materials to invite the younger generation, especially students, to be more sensitive to environmental conservation and the formation of national character. Basically, the relationship between humans, language and the environment are interrelated, because language reflects the environment, and the environment reflects language (Tangkas, 2013). The relationship between language and its environment was first founded in the 1970s by Einar Haugen in Subiyanto (2013) about paradigm of language ecology. According to Haugen, language ecology is a study of the interaction of language and its environment which described metaphorically, as one of the creations of the language code in the sense that language exists only in the minds of its speakers, language only functions when used to connect between speakers, and connect speakers with their environment,

both social and natural environments. The idea of language ecology was also sparked by another expert through an article entitled “New Ways of Meaning”, Halliday in Hanum (2018) explained that language and environment are two things that influence each other. Language changes, both within the field of lexicon and grammar, cannot be separated from changes in the natural and social (cultural) environment of the community. On the one hand, environmental changes have an impact on language changes, and on the other hand, people’s behaviour towards their environment is influenced by the language they use.

Several studies related to the integration of ecolinguistic dimensions in language learning have been conducted. The first research was conducted by Mbet (2017). He stated that environment-based language learning needs to be pursued so that linguistic diversity and also language diversity that represents biodiversity in a particular environment, can be a source of writing and efforts to preserve local languages, Indonesian language, and foreign language acquisition. The second research is conducted by Tulaessy (2018). Environmental conservation efforts through reading texts in language learning representatively illustrate how rich human knowledge of nature. It is appropriate through formal and non-formal education as the ‘bag’ (base) of the intellectual community to integrate environment-based learning in language learning. Thus, environment-based language learning can help students master language learning but also build the construction of human intelligence to interact with nature (protect) for the benefit of the future life cycle. The two studies have similarities with this study, both of which use an ecolinguistic approach in language learning. The difference between these two studies and this study is that they focus more on Indonesian language learning that is integrated with the dimensions of ecolinguistics.

Referring from the background, this research was conducted with the aim of (1) describing the importance of developing Indonesian language textbooks that were reviewed through literature studies; (2) how the need for integrating ecolinguistic dimensions in Indonesian language textbooks in universities through the results of interviews; (3) how the need for developing Indonesian language textbooks that integrate ecolinguistic dimensions to minimise the fading of language and cultural functions through the results of distributing questionnaires.

2. METHOD

The research method used a mixed method, with three stages of data collection. In the first stage, using the literature study method, information was obtained from recent journals using the keywords environment-based language learning and ecolinguistic studies of integration in language learning. Literature study is a data collection

activity through references to related scientific literature on culture, values, and norms that develop in the social situation under study (Sofiah, Suhartono, & Hidayah, 2020). Data obtained from the journal (Haryadi, Musfiroh, & Endaswara, 2015), learning media related to the environment are needed to increase the effectiveness of learning. Mbet (2020) states that language diversity and cultural diversity are sources of education and learning that must be utilised as much as possible in the context of language learning.

The second stage is an interview to discuss a particular topic by proceeding in a question-and-answer activity. According to Esterberg in Sugiyono (2015) an interview is an activity of exchanging information or ideas by means of questions and answers that are narrowed down to a conclusion or meaning in a particular topic. The technique used to collect data is a semi-structured interview in which the interview is conducted online via telephone and filling out a question sheet to one of the lecturers of MKWK Indonesian language at Nahdlatul Ulama University in Blitar. In interview activities there are several stages that are carried out to obtain data. The first stage is making guidelines for interview questions, so that the questions given are in accordance with the purpose of the interview. Then the second stage is conducting the interview process and after the interview is complete, ensuring that the results of the interview are in accordance with the information needed by the researcher, then proceed with transcribing the conversation, and concluding the results of the conversation transcript.

The third stage is the results of the questionnaire given to respondents. The questionnaire contains 4 statement items based on a five-choice Likert scale (scale 5). The scale is structured in the form of a statement and is followed by a choice of responses that indicate the level of the statement (Nempung, Setiyaningsih, & Syamsiah, 2015).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the research and discussion in this study discuss the development of Indonesian language textbooks in universities that exist today and the integration of ecolinguistic dimensions that are important to be included in Indonesian language textbooks in universities.

3.1. *The Urgency of Indonesian Language Textbook Development*

Indonesian is one of the most important learning materials in higher education. The purpose of learning Indonesian is to help students use Indonesian correctly and correctly, as well as to appreciate Indonesian in accordance with the situation, language objectives and the level of experience of students. Indonesian language

learning includes the activities of selecting, determining, and developing methods to achieve the desired educational results (Hamzah, 2008).

In fact, the objectives of Indonesian language learning are: (1) Students can use Indonesian language properly and correctly, and can communicate effectively and efficiently both orally and in writing in accordance with established ethics. (2) Students can understand Indonesian correctly and creatively and use it for various purposes. (3) Students can use Indonesian to improve their intellectual, emotional, and social maturity. (4) Students can understand and use their work to broaden their horizons, personalities, knowledge, and language skills. 5) Students can explore deeply about Indonesia and appreciate Indonesia to be proud of Indonesia as a cultural and intellectual treasure (Solehun, 2017).

In the literature study, researchers analysed the literature on the development of Indonesian language textbooks among students. Given the position of Indonesian language based on the results of the literature review is the right teaching material to shape people's lives, strengthen identity, increase love for the Indonesian nation and play at home. In achieving the expected ability optimally, students must have a good learning experience during the lecture process. One way to deliver lectures properly is to provide relevant materials. Teaching materials can be made in various forms according to the needs and characteristics of the teaching materials and lecture materials to be presented. Reference materials for the development of teaching materials are available from various sources. One of them is analysis or research results (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2008).

3.2. The Urgency of Neighbourhood-Based Local Wisdom Inclusion

The Indonesian language course aims to develop students' ability to express understanding, a sense of nationality, and love for the country, as well as for other purposes in various fields of science which are focused on academic speaking and writing skills. Thus, students who have taken Indonesian language courses are expected to have the ability to speak and write well and correctly. In addition, through this course, students are expected to have knowledge and a positive attitude towards Indonesian as the national language and state language.

Based on the results of the interviews, it was found that the lecturers have not linked the learning with the students' surrounding environment so that they still have difficulties in developing textbooks that will be used in the learning process. Based on the results of the interviews above, lecturers need textbooks that are suitable for student learning and integrate aspects of ecolinguistics that are associated with the surrounding environment. The results of the interviews conducted

have been able to answer what is needed by researchers in developing Indonesian language textbook products. The coursebook designed is adjusted to the characteristics expected in Higher Education. The results of these interviews that have been conducted with one of the lecturers, it can be seen that the lecturer has used supporting books in lecture activities with his students. Even so, the books used by the lecturer are quite varied. The books used have not been specifically based on character education integrated with aspects of ecolinguistics. So, based on the results of the interview, it can be used as one of the studies that develop Indonesian language course textbooks integrated with the dimensions of ecolinguistics to instil positive character for students towards the surrounding environment.

3.3. The Urgency of Integrating Ecolinguistic Dimensions in Indonesian Language Textbooks

Based on the data from the questionnaire results that have been distributed, the concern about changes in the linguistic environment is very large. Many students or young people are starting to ignore the function of the language and culture around them (see Table 1).

The results of the first statement questionnaire stated that 80% of respondents chose to strongly agree and 20% of other respondents chose to agree based on the statement "Culture or local wisdom related to language interaction with the environment around us is starting to fade and efforts need to be made to maintain and preserve culture related to language interaction and its environment through the field of education". Then the second statement received answers showing that 40% of respondents answered disagree, 20% of respondents answered don't know, and 40% of respondents answered strongly agree.

The third questionnaire statement, namely, getting answers 40% of respondents chose to agree, and 60% of respondents chose strongly to agree. Furthermore, the results of the fourth statement questionnaire received a response of 100% from the respondents.

Through the results of the distribution of questionnaires, the dimensions of ecolinguistics in Indonesian language textbooks are important to be integrated because there are several reasons that are of concern among young people today. First, the fading function of local language and culture among young people. Second, the symptoms of incompatibility of human relations with the environment, both with the natural environment and the social environment which is also related to the dysfunction of regional languages. Third, the threat to the life of the Nusantara languages, including Indonesian in relation to the spread of foreign languages.

Table 1. Statement of the importance of ecolinguistics-based Indonesian language textbook development

No	Statement	SS	S	TT	TS	STS
1	Culture or local wisdom related to language interaction with the environment around us is starting to fade and efforts need to be made to maintain and preserve culture related to language interaction and its environment through the field of education.	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%
2	As a current student, I pay little attention to local culture or wisdom related to the interaction between language and its environment or the philosophy of naming objects, plants, food, etc. that form new names around me.	40%	0%	20%	40%	0%
3	Indonesian language materials are not only about writing rules, scientific articles, etc. but also must be integrated with environmental-based language learning (ecolinguistics). But it must also be integrated with environment-based language learning (ecolinguistics).	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%
4	The fading of sensitivity among students to local wisdom related to language and environmental interactions in the surrounding environment needs to be considered with learning activities that are integrated with the dimensions of ecolinguistics in Indonesian language textbooks to revive the love of young people, especially students, for local wisdom in the surrounding environment.	40%	0%	20%	40%	0%

In essence, language is a sign and symbol that represents something that is expressed, both oral and written. The main function of language is a means of interaction and communication of society. In addition to this function, language is a sign of the collective identity of a community group, a means of thinking, and expressing feelings. As said by Taylor (2002) the designative function and expressive function of language that is full of meaning clearly illustrates the nature of humans and humanity that is civilized and cultured. It is language that changes humans to become more humane in social life.

Based on this discussion, the meaning of concern and hope to find a solution to this linguistic problem can be overcome through the development of Indonesian language textbooks for universities that integrate the dimensions of ecolinguistics, to minimise the fading of language and cultural functions, which results in disharmony between humans and their environment. The integration of ecolinguistic dimensions in Indonesian language textbooks in higher education must be deeper and broader because it can form the strength of character and resilience of identity as a nation at the national level, and as an ethnic community at the local level, is a bet amid change, competition, and struggle between nations indirectly through Indonesian language learning in higher education. A strong Indonesian character and a solid identity within the framework of the concept of a complete Indonesian human being and nation, including the linguistic dimensions therein, are the conditions of national life that must be upheld in responding to global challenges and competition, especially so that this nation remains intact and firmly rooted in the Indonesian cultural space and homeland.

4. CONCLUSION

The increasing of the character of caring for the environment around students can be done by utilising teaching materials. The development of Indonesian language textbooks needs to be carried out by researchers. Based on the results of the literature study that has been carried out, the condition of Indonesian language textbooks in higher education still needs to be updated by looking back at what aspects need to be overhauled and added to suit the material needs in today's universities that focus on academic writing activities.

Then based on data obtained from interviews with the lecturers concerned, Indonesian language textbooks based on ecolinguistics need to be developed because the lecturers concerned have not inserted learning activities related to the environment and still use reference books from outside, where most reference books from outside have not been integrated with ecolinguistic studies.

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