Preserving and empowering local languages amidst the Covid-19 pandemic

Lessons from East Kalimantan

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ABSTRACT

This article brings together two ostensibly separate subjects: language empowerment and the Covid-19 pandemic. It argues that knowledge of local languages can help disseminate health-related information on a regional level. This addresses two problems simultaneously: the problems raised by the intelligibility of governmental healthcare protocols and the functions of the use of local languages. The article is a case study presenting a number of interventions in the languages of East Kalimantan and can be seen as an inclusive, grassroots example of health communication. The study was initially a modest attempt to generate on-the-ground examples of health information in the dominant languages of the region of East Kalimantan. These studies demonstrate that the local communities of these languages are very enthusiastic about getting involved in the interventions. They also reveal that communication using IT and social media is thriving.

One of our observations was that information about this pandemic tends to be understood only by highly educated urban people. This happens because it is conveyed by the government in standard Indonesian, which includes many foreign loanwords. The application of local languages is not just using local language vocabulary, it is instead a trigger to revive the collective memory of disaster management based on local culture. In this case, local languages are recognized and considered useful in helping to break the chain of virus transmission to free Indonesia of the Covid-19 outbreak. There were a number of unexpected developments. We found support for the intervention being rolled out on a national level by Special Task Force for Covid-19 under National Disaster Management Agency (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana/BNPB). We also welcomed the online publication by the National Agency for Language Development and

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Cultivation (Badan Bahasa) of the Handbook for managing behavior about health protocols in seventy-seven local languages. The main thrust of this article should therefore be of interest to anyone working to empower local languages and language vitality.

KEYWORDS

Covid-19 pandemic; language vitality; local languages; empowering; collective memory.

1. INTRODUCTION

The pandemic is depressing and exhausting. Nevertheless, we can learn some valuable lessons from it. Difficult situations can sometimes bring out the best in people. We can see that any initiative to help improve the communicative clarity and impact of messages for dealing with Covid-19 by using local regional languages is going to be seen as a positive. One outcome will be that it helps the public understand messages intended to shape positive behaviour and, at the same time, increases the sense of pride in local communities based on using local languages and cultural norms.

This article tries to show that local languages can play an important role in our lives. The sooner people understand the pandemic situation and comply consciously without coercion with the health protocols, the faster the economy will recover. We can accelerate this by translating the health protocols into local regional languages. Translating health protocols into languages other than national languages to improve comprehension is nothing new. For example, we can look at America's efforts to translate health protocols into various immigrant languages. The translations into Spanish reflect the size of the American population of about forty million native-speaking Hispanics.

Efforts to use local languages go farther than facilitating communication, they can also revive collective memory about dealing with disasters. "Collective memories" is the term used here to describe the knowledge within a community, often with only a spoken language and without a writing system, passed down from generation to generation and used to benefit them. People's collective memories play an important role in storing significant knowledge learned from past natural disasters. Some of those messages contain important lessons about how to cope with these calamities should they occur again (Juniator Tulus 2020). Evidence shows that the Indonesian island of Mentawai had experienced a number of tsunamis in 1797, 1833, 2007, and 2010. However, the series of tsunamis were not passed on and preserved in the collective memory, so that when such a disaster recently struck again, many died because they did not know what was happening or what should be done to escape. There are examples of when the collective memory works well. One of these is the Simeuleu Regency in Aceh, which nurtured and left behind a collective memory of the disaster they called *seumong*. Thanks to this, many lives were saved when the disaster came (A.N. Gadeng et al. 2018). Various collective memories of the disaster are stored in their respective local languages. Given the example of this good practice in Aceh, efforts to use local languages have an important value and should be paid attention.

The nub of the problem is that the protection of local languages is often at odds with economic interests. It is not easy to obtain complete, up-to-date information about the situation of this linguistic conundrum in Indonesia. In the last few years, the construction of toll roads, airports, and ports has steamed ahead and these facilities are now in operation and their presence greatly facilitates the movement of goods and people from one place to another. One consequence of this increased population mobility has an indirect effect on the distribution of both language use and language contact.

Although the outcomes of this development are generally advantageous to the economic progress Indonesia, we must also pause to consider how to maintain the survival of all local languages as they are the guardians of the nation's cultural wealth. High population mobility automatically results in language contact. In the process of language contact, the most readily observable feature is borrowing and language accommodation in communities speaking different languages which live side by side or between immigrants and local residents. We agree with Christopher J. Moseley (2007) that linguistics might now be a relatively exact science, but it is still very much a science whose object of study moves and changes more rapidly than its practitioners can keep up with. And yet, the problem of language vitality has been rather underprioritized in practice. There are not many research activities on the vitality of languages (James T. Collins 2019a, 2019b) and, if they do exist, they are generally limited to research reports run by government agencies such as the National Agency for Language Development and Cultivation (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, more frequently referred to as the Badan Bahasa) and the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia/LIPI). All research reports are written in Indonesian. Hence, access to this information is very limited for the international community.

Leaving aside this consideration, as linguists we realize that research on the vitality of language is very much needed as a first step in preserving local languages in order to protect the nation's cultural heritage. However, it is not easy to get funding for language vitality research. In general, the arguments we present are believed to have no economic value, and are considered to consist of perceptions of a sentimental nature, blind to the realities of progress. The upshot is that language vitality research proposals are considered low urgency so they do not get priority. Meanwhile, the process of extinction continues, especially for local languages whose speaker populations are small and whose function has shrunk because of a number of factors (David Crystal 2014; Mari C. Jones 2015). Given that many local languages are threatened with extinction, research on the vitality of language must be more intensive (Lenora A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley 2006; Leanne Hinton et al. 2018). At this point, it is necessary to convey the ongoing efforts regarding language vitality research.

2. ON LOCAL LANGUAGE VITALITY DURING A PANDEMIC

Based on the results of tracking throughout Indonesia by the Badan Bahasa, which falls under the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan), 718 languages have been mapped (Badan Bahasa 2019). Of the 718 languages mapped up to 2019, only ninety-three languages (12.95%) have had their language vitality status detected using the evaluative factors of language vitality maintained by UNESCO (Ganjar Harimansyah 2017; Multamia RMT Lauder 2019). There are still 625 languages whose vitality status still needs to be tested. This shows how little we know about the viability of languages throughout Indonesia. Harimansyah (2019) describes the status of the languages whose vitality was assessed is as follows:

- (a) Eight languages are extinct. These are languages which no longer have speakers, namely Tandia (West Papua); Mawes (Papua); Kaiely, Piru, Moksela, Palumata, Hukumina, and Hoti (Maluku);
- (b) Five languages have a critical status. These are languages whose speakers are over forty years of age and very few in number, namely Saponi (Papua); Ibo and Letinese (Maluku); Meher (Southeast Maluku); and Retta (East Nusa Tenggara);
- (c) Twenty-four languages are endangered. These are languages whose speakers are twenty years and over and are few in number, compounded by the fact that the older generation does not speak to children or among themselves in these languages, namely Mander, Namla, Usku, Maklew, Bku, Dubu, Irarutu, and Podena (Papua); Arguni and Kalabra (West Papua); Hulung, Sawai, and Samasuru (Maluku); Minahasa Tonsawang, Sangihe Talaud, and Ponosokan (North Sulawesi); Konjo and Lematang (South Sulawesi); Tunjung (East Kalimantan); Nedebang and Adang (East Nusa Tenggara); the Tungkalsatu dialect of Bajau (Jambi); the Minangkabau dialect of Sakai (Riau); and Bebasan, a polite register of Banten Javanese (Banten);
- (d) Twelve languages are in decline. These are languages some of whose speakers, both parents and children, no longer use them, namely Tobati (Papua); Hatam (West Papua); Hitu, Saleman, and Yalahtan (Maluku); Suwawa (Gorontalo); Rampi and Lemolang (South Sulawesi); Benggaulu (West Sulawesi); the Minangkabau dialect of Talang Mamak (Riau); Enggano (Bengkulu); the Ogan dialect of Rawas (South Sumatra);
- (e) Twenty-three languages have a vulnerable status: they are in a stable condition but threatened with extinction. These are languages whose speakers, both the elderly and children, still use the language but the number of speakers is small, namely Meoswar, Kuri, Aframa, Gresi, Ormu, Somu, and Senggi (Papua); Mansim Borai (West Papua); Buru, Lisabata, Oirata, and Luhu (Maluku); Mandar (West Sulawesi); Pamona and Wolio (Central Sulawesi); Rongga (East Nusa Tenggara); Buginese (West Nusa Tenggara); Kerinci (Jambi); and Betawi (DKI Jakarta);
- (f) Twenty-one languages are safe: they are still used by all people, both

parents and children of that ethnicity, namely Sentani, Korowai, Biak, Awban, Dajub, and Serui Laut (Papua); Buginese (South Sulawesi and Central Sulawesi); Makassar (South Sulawesi); Muna (Southeast Sulawesi); Sumbawa, Sasak, the West Nusa Tenggara dialect of Bajau, Bima Mbojo, and Samawa (West Nusa Tenggara); Acehnese (Aceh); Malay (North Sumatra, Riau, Jambi, South Sumatra, Bangka Belitung Islands, and Riau Islands); Minangkabau (Aceh, North Sumatra, West Sumatra, Riau, Jambi, and Bengkulu); Javanese (Central Java and East Java); Madurese (East Java); Sundanese (West Java); and Balinese (Bali).

Overall, of the ninety-three languages studied between 2011 and 2019 only twenty-one are safe. Meanwhile, the other seventy-three languages have gradually become vulnerable, deteriorated, threatened with extinction, and even extinct. Here we can see the importance of research on the vitality of language. Information about vitality is very important in order to take appropriate action to preserve and empower these languages (M. Lauder and A. Lauder 2020). As previously stated, it is not easy to convince various parties to help support efforts to capture the vitality status of languages throughout Indonesia because linguists have not provided solid evidence that local languages have an important function and value in life.

2.1 INDONESIA'S APPROACH TO COVID-19

On the one hand, we are still trying to assemble comprehensive field data about the vitality status of local languages throughout Indonesia; on the other hand, we are constrained by data collection in the field because of the outbreak of a disease which makes it impossible to go into the field and come face to face with the respondents. This period is a difficult time for all humanity. Currently, the Covid-19 outbreak is sweeping the world, including Indonesia. Based on the latest information of 6 January, 2021, 87,744,341 have been infected with Covid-19 and 1,894,650 have died from it worldwide (www.worldometers.info).

The Covid-19 pandemic was officially announced to have reached Indonesia on March 2, 2020. However, it actually began on February 14, 2020, when a Japanese national visited Indonesia to attend a dance party in a restaurant in the Kemang area of South Jakarta an area popular with expatriates. One of the Indonesian dance teachers who attended the event began to develop a cough on February 16, 2020. Then, on February 28, 2020, she received news that the Japanese person she had danced with had tested positive for Covid-19. The dance teacher (aged 31) and her mother (aged 64) immediately took a test and it turned out that both were positive for Covid-19. They were immediately treated at the Hospital for Infectious Diseases. On March 1, 2020, there was a sharp rise of 1,677 people who tested positive for Covid-19, of whom 157 died. In response to the surging number of cases of Covid-19, the President of Indonesia ordered the implementation of large-scale social restrictions (Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar/PSBB). Commencing

March 2020, all economic and social activity had to close with the exception of markets, hospitals, and banks provided that they complied with health protocols. This instruction amounts to a lockdown, albeit not a total one. These large-scale social restrictions required that all schools from kindergarten to university were temporarily closed until the end of the year. A month later, on April 2, 2020, additional instructions were issued, namely a temporary ban on foreigners entering or transiting in Indonesia, a further attempt to suppress the spread of Covid-19 (Tantiya Nimas Nuraini 2020).

Indonesia has been trying to deal with Covid-19 in an integrated manner by forming a Special Task Force for Covid-19 under the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) since March 13, 2020. It was launched in Presidential Decree Number 7 of 2020 concerning the task force for the acceleration of handling the coronavirus, which is directly answerable to the President of Indonesia. The Special Task Force for Covid-19 is trying to issue various guidelines and announcements as quickly as possible so that the public adheres to health protocols and the number of transmissions can be controlled. Even though the Special Task Force for Covid-19 has been working non-stop, the number of infected people is still increasing. On the 2 January, 2021, based on data from the BNPB website (covid19.go.id), 788,402 people have been infected with Covid-19 throughout Indonesia, 652,518 have recovered, and 23,296 have died. During this pandemic, Indonesia has lost 504 doctors and nurses to Covid-19 while they were treating patients. The government is also facing a situation caused by the failure of the community to comply with the health protocols.

The government's Special Task Force for Covid-19 is composed of two main teams of experts, namely The Health Expert Team and the Economic Expert Team. Unfortunately, these two teams clash in their ideas about how to deal with Covid-19. The Health Experts Team prefers a lockdown so that the break in the chain of transmission can be put into effect immediately; while the Economic Expert Team considers a lockdown causes economic chaos involving many bankrupt businesses and increased unemployment. Under these conditions, it was belatedly realized that the process of breaking the chain of transmission of Covid-19 would depend on efforts to introduce changes in human behaviour. To bridge the gap between the two teams, a third team, the Socio-Cultural Expert Team, was formed, tasked with providing suggestions or strategies which will not burden the economy but can reduce transmissions. This Socio-Cultural Team consists of experts in anthropology, sociology, public welfare, communication, linguistics, archaeology, and psychology. It has suggested that the government's communications strategy should be improved and implemented in a socio-culturally informed manner in order to accelerate behavioural change in the midst of the "new normal".

2.2 LINGUISTIC OBSTACLES

The authors of this article noted early in the pandemic that many people struggled to understand the information the government was putting out. Linguistically, the obstacles immediately detected were the various guidelines, posters, flyers, or announcements issued by the government in standard Indonesian. It was observed that information about this pandemic tends to be understood only by highly educated urban people. The reason is that the information conveyed by the government uses standard Indonesian, which includes many foreign loanwords. We have noticed an upsurge in foreign vocabulary which has not even been absorbed into Indonesian, such as *merchandise*, *output*, *flyer*, *role model*, *best practice*, and *pentahelix*. Here are examples of some loanwords contained in Covid-19 manuals:

<i>adopsi</i> [adɔpsi] - adoption	<i>aplikasi</i> [aplikasi] - application
<i>apresiasi</i> [apresiʔasi] - appreciation	<i>diseminasi</i> [diseminasi] - dissemination
<i>efektif</i> [ɛfɛktif] - effective	<i>evaluasi</i> [ɛfaluʔasi] - evaluation
<i>fasilitas</i> [fasilitas] - facility	<i>indikator</i> [indikatoʔ] - indicator
<i>individu</i> [indifidu] - individu	<i>informal</i> [infɔʔmal] - informal
<i>inovasi</i> [inofasi] - innovation	<i>insentif</i> [insentif] - incentive
<i>komorbid</i> [kɔmɔʔbit] - comorbid	<i>komunitas</i> [kɔmunitas] - community
<i>konten</i> [kɔnten] - content	<i>keativitas</i> [kreʔatifitas] - creativity
<i>mitigasi</i> [mitigasi] - mitigation	<i>multidisiplin</i> [multidisiplin] - multidiscipline
<i>protokol</i> [prɔtɔkɔl] - protocol	<i>relevan</i> [relɛfan] - relevant
<i>sosialisasi</i> [sosiʔalisasi] - socialization	<i>suplemen</i> [suplɛmɛn] - supplement
<i>survey</i> [surfei] - survey	<i>virus</i> [fiʔus] - virus

The BNPB is a government agency which specializes in dealing with various kinds of disasters, including tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, landslides, forest fires, outbreaks of bird flu, and dengue fever. Now it has the additional task of handling Covid-19. As a government agency, all its documents are written in standard Indonesian. As linguists have never been involved in handling disaster problems, it never occurred to the government agencies that language could be an obstacle. In general, when a disaster strikes, the main objective is to save the lives of local residents. There is no perceived need to change the behaviour of the affected population. Local residents need only to be rescued immediately and be given temporary accommodation until normal conditions return. Therefore, so far, the BNPB has never been diagnosed as having a communications strategy problem. Its manner of handling the Covid-19 pandemic was the same as the way it handled other disasters. The Agency believed that it had produced the best possible guidelines and recommendations using standard and scientific Indonesian, forgetting that the language used many foreign loanwords which tend to be understood only by people who live in big cities and are highly educated.

To make matters even more complicated, the former Minister of Health unilaterally changed the terminology related to the pandemic without co-ordinating with either the Special Task Force for Covid-19 or the Badan Bahasa. This sudden change made matters even more confusing for the public. The default terms which were introduced to the community and used since the beginning of the pandemic are:

OTG (<i>Orang Tanpa Gejala</i>)	people without symptoms
ODP (<i>Orang Dalam Pengawasan</i>)	people under supervision
PDP (<i>Pasien Dalam Pengawasan</i>)	patient under supervision

Then, they were suddenly replaced by the former Minister of Health to become:

<i>Kontak Erat</i> [kɔntak ɛrat]	close contact
<i>Kasus Suspek</i> [kasus suspek]	suspect case
<i>Kasus Probable</i> [kasus probabəl]	probable case

Technical and scientific terms are a category of words separate from general, everyday words. The Badan Bahasa monitors these words as part of the enrichment and standardization of the Indonesian language. Badan Bahasa is the only government body that can create policy on this topic. Based on the General Guidelines for the Formation of Terms (*Pedoman Umum Pembentukan Istilah*), the procedure for proposing new terms must always be discussed jointly by the Badan Bahasa Terminology Team and experts in all fields of science and technology. The Minister of Health was neither authorized nor qualified to make up his own terms without following this procedure. In response, E. Aminudin Aziz (2020), in his capacity as head of the Badan Bahasa, complained on *MediaIndonesia.com* that the message used in an official communication would be easier to follow if delivered in the language its the recipients, rather than the language in which its messengers would like to appear well versed in. Unfortunately, public officials are not commonly aware of the work of linguists in the Badan Bahasa or other institutions specialized in language. The terms which they use, such as *new normal*, *lockdown*, *pandemic*, *physical distancing*, *social distancing*, and *rapid test*, are foreign to the general public.

This was not the only criticism levelled. Another objection was raised by the Research Team in Samarinda, East Kalimantan, which reported on the basis of observations and discussions with local communities that people did not fully understand the information conveyed by the government. During a summit entitled “Challenges of Professors in the Era of the Covid-19 Pandemic and Beyond”, held in Surabaya, November 2020, various professors shared their experiences in the difficulty of communicating about Covid-19 with their families in the village, the biggest stumbling-block being the many foreign terms in Indonesian which latter did not understand (M. Lauder 2020).

One anthropologist from Airlangga University shared her observations on traditional markets in Surabaya, East Java Province, especially among devout traders from Madura, who argued that wearing a mask does not affect when the time has come for someone to die. They simply did not comprehend the existence of the pandemic being communicated by the government. Furthermore, from personal observation and chatting close to home with waste-collectors, grass-cutters, air-conditioning service workers, security guards, vegetable sellers, and delivery services, none of them understood what was going on and consequently felt uncomfortable. Finally, a psychologist presented his observations of the Tebet traditional market in Jakarta. It turned out that there was very little change in behaviour; people only wore masks and face shields if the researchers were present. Buyers who came to the market were more orderly in using masks and or faceshields than traders. The reason was that traders feel hot, stuck all day in a location without air conditioning and also found it difficult to carry out transactions or bargain with buyers because the faceshield covers their ears (Dicky Pelupessy 2020).

2.3 OTHER OBSTACLES

Education is crucial to literacy and is linked to social status. Unsurprisingly, based on data from the National Socio-Economic Survey (Survei Sosial Ekonomi Nasional), in March 2020, households with a higher economic status also have a higher level of education.¹ Therefore, the use of standard Indonesian, which has borrowed much vocabulary from foreign languages, is not easy to understand for people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Obviously, it is difficult to demand that the people comply with health protocols without understanding what is happening and realizing that a pandemic is raging. Therefore, the presumption that the community does not comply with health protocols is not entirely accurate. Their comprehension problem could equally well be because they do not fully understand the information conveyed by the government. Indeed, we believe that we are facing a communications barrier. On the one hand, the government feels that it has done its utmost by issuing warnings and suggestions about how to deal with the pandemic; on the other, the public does not fully understand what the government is saying. They feel that the government policy, especially with the implementation of the large-scale social restrictions, has limited their freedom. Its policies, be they well or badly understood, are considered to have made their lives more difficult.

The muddled communication strategy discussed above has elicited mixed responses in the community. People who are pro-government see the number

¹ This can be seen from the data on the highest level of education completed by the population aged 15 years and over: 3.56% have never been to school; 11.27% did not complete primary school; 24.80% graduated from primary school; 21.78% graduated from junior high school; 29.10% graduated from high school; and 9.49% graduated from college. In addition, the highest level of education was attained by residents who live in urban areas exhibiting 35.44% high school graduates, while residents who live in rural areas featured 30.97% primary school graduates (Badan Pusat Statistik 2020: 90-92).

of infected and the rising death rates, so they try to comply with government recommendations even though they do not fully understand them. However, there are also people who are anti-government. They see this whole affair as a hoax or conspiracy imposed to complicate their lives. Unquestionably, the lockdown policy has made people's lives very difficult, aggravated by the high cost of rapid tests and swab tests in hospitals. Even though there is a free rapid test and swab test offered by the government, it is necessary to register and queue up. Many people who have grown very apprehensive have been manipulated by politically motivated detractors who distort facts and portray the government as being incapable of managing the country. This group is taking advantage of the situation to cause disruption in preparation for the 2024 Presidential election.

Another problem is denialism: the conviction that there is no pandemic in Indonesia. Different countries face denialism in varying degrees. This is not a linguistic problem but an economic and political one. Nevertheless, a functional communication strategy can minimize this and offer a counterbalance to the many hoaxes scattered across social media.

In addition to these social tensions, the Special Task Force have also been having to deal with the floods and landslides which mar every rainy season, leaving internally displaced people and new clusters of transmission in their wake. This is exacerbated by the emergence of several other diseases during the rainy season such as dengue fever, typhus, diarrhoea, and skin diseases which play a role in lowering the body's immune system.

3. AN INTERVENTION TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Considering the realities on the ground outlined in the previous section, it is necessary to make a rapid improvement in communications with the public. For this, a number of steps need to be implemented throughout Indonesia. Our contribution is to propose a communication strategy approach by empowering the use of local languages. The location chosen for our trial intervention was East Kalimantan, which is Indonesia's second largest province after Papua. It is far from the national capital and the population is only around three million, compared to the city of Jakarta with around 10.7 million. East Kalimantan, especially the city of Samarinda, is a multi-ethnic area. In addition to its ethno-linguistic diversity, East Kalimantan Province (see Map 1) was chosen because it is a province outside Java, which has been suffering from a high number of transmissions. Of the 3,721,389 residents, 12,480 tested positive for Covid-19 and 453 people died.²

The language situation in East Kalimantan Province is fairly diverse. A language-mapping project carried out by the Badan Bahasa (2019) revealed sixteen local languages: Aoheng (Penihing), Bahau Diaq Lay, Bahau Ujoh Bilang, Bajau Pondong, Basap, Benuaq, Buginese, Dusun, Javanese, Kenyah, Malay, Pasir, Punan Long Lamcin, Punan Merah, Segaa, and Tunjung. The

² This province-level data is taken from the BNPB website, based on the Ministry of Health database, which is updated every day with information from all hospitals throughout Indonesia.

Badan Bahasa's Language Mapping Project was carried out in 2,560 villages across Indonesia. In East Kalimantan, the data was collected by thirty local language teachers in 1994. The research sample was from 120 villages (14.26%) of a total of 841 villages throughout East Kalimantan. The questionnaire for each village consisted of 1,191 questions. To obtain a preliminary result, the data were processed for dialectometry on the phonological and lexical levels with as many as 400 lexemes (33.58%). The analysis of the phrase and sentence levels has not yet been done (M. Lauder 2018). Hence the result should not be considered final. Its age is another matter. The sixteen local languages found about twenty-six years ago might not reflect the current situation. In particular, unknown changes can have occurred because only 14.26 percent of the villages in East Kalimantan were visited. There might also have been some undetected languages or population migrations since the data was collected in 1994.

Key to map: East Kalimantan Province consists of seven regencies (Paser, Kutai Barat, Kutai Kartanegara, Kutai Timur, Berau, Penajam Paser Utara, and Mahakam Ulu) and three cities (Balikpapan, Samarinda, and Bontang).

Map 1. Province of East Kalimantan. (Source: <https://kalimprov.go.id/>).

A close study of language variation might help explain differences between the names of the languages in East Kalimantan as published by the Badan Bahasa compared to the set of languages we use for this case study, as shown below. This confusion arises when the language name is either supported by linguistic analysis or it reflects the sentiments of the community. These are cases in which the name preferred by the community suggests a difference in language, whereas in reality the difference is negligible, on the level of dialect. The preferred name is a matter of identity. This is a quite common occurrence. In linguistic terms, the national languages spoken in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei Darusalam are derived from Malay. This is reflected in the high intelligibility between speakers in the three countries. However, Indonesians are not happy if you say that their language is Malay. Their sense of identity shapes the name of the variation they speak. Two more examples are also relevant. Firstly, in the Banyuwangi area, East Java, the local people refer to their language as Osing. Osing has its own grammar books and dictionaries. However, based on a dialectometry analysis, the difference between Osing and Javanese is just under 20 percent. Linguistically it is the Banyuwangi dialect of Javanese, not the Osing language (Satwiko Budiono and Multamia RMT Lauder 2017). Secondly, a study in Cirebon, West Java, found that the local population called their language Cerbon. However, analysis showed that 432 of the 558 language maps were highly similar variants of Javanese. Linguistically, we should call it the Cirebon dialect of Javanese. Nevertheless, the community maintains that the language they are using is not Javanese or a kind of Javanese (Supriatnoko 2015). It is a question a matter of feeling, of perception. The linguists use science to assert that there is no Osing or Cerbon, but to do so will offend these communities. These facts lie behind the decision we took on the position of names.

We decided to follow the name preferred by the community because it opens up trust between researcher and local speaker. It should be remembered that this is a social exercise and our main goal in this case study is the use of persuasion to convey health protocol materials and offer suggestions for behavioural change. The languages which were selected for the intervention are Banjarese, Berau, Buginese, Dayak Bahau, Dayak Kenyah, Javanese, Kutai Muaramuntai, Kutai Sabintulung, and Makasar. If these interventions in multi-lingual East Kalimantan prove successful, the situation will be easier for homogeneous communities.

3.1 METHODS AND ANALYSIS

A. Lauder (2017) has argued a promising strategy for language revitalization in Indonesia could focus on the youth and ICT. We therefore decided to use Facebook during this pandemic, replacing our original plan of placing photos, cartoons, or posters in markets, churches, mosques, bus stations, and various other public spaces. These materials in local languages – of which we see more below – were distributed through social media, alongside questionnaires about their impact.

The material was posted on the Busam (abbreviation of *Bubuhan Samarinda*) group on Facebook; the word *bubuhan* in Banjarese means ‘group of people’. This group was formed as a virtual gathering place for people in Samarinda and its surroundings. Busam has 880,300 members and has been officially registered with the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights since 2015. There is also another Facebook group with a similar name, *Bubuhan Samarinda*, with 777,400 members. The sense of togetherness and closeness which builds up on these Facebook platforms has resulted in annual events in the form of large gatherings, usually held in the ballrooms of starred hotels. These meetings have been held every year since 2014. Only in 2020 were no gatherings held because of the pandemic.

These groups are the largest community organizations in Samarinda and its surroundings. All family units in East Kalimantan are encouraged to become members. Various matters can be discussed in the group, using Indonesian, Banjarese, or other local languages, but Banjarese predominates. The use of Indonesian tends to be considered too formal and insufficiently colloquial for chatting. The matters discussed relate to people’s daily lives, from local government policies, the quality of public services, news of crimes, job vacancies, the latest news in Samarinda and East Kalimantan – such as fires and floods – personalized and small-scale shopping, jokes, and even personal chats, such as suggestions for names of newborns. These groups have a secondary function as watchdogs, even pressure groups, when local government policies are perceived to be harming the community.

The local-language material presented to the public was inspired by a poster designed in Jakarta taking President Joko Widodo as a model, but adapted to the conditions in East Kalimantan (see Illustration 1). A questionnaire was used to detect the extent to which this material had an impact on behavioural change. Five respondents for each language were selected. In order to be assured of a representative overview of the situation, we chose adult respondents of all ages and genders. Given that all educational activities in Indonesia have had to be carried out online since March 2020 and all students have returned to their respective home towns, we took advantage of this situation to give questionnaires to students in the Faculty of the Cultural Sciences, Universitas Mulawarman, in order to obtain information from respondents in their respective districts.

The interventions we devised was in nine languages: Banjarese, Berau, Buginese, Dayak Bahau, Dayak Kenyah, Javanese, Kutai Muaramuntai, Kutai Sabintulung, and Makassar. The first intervention is a poster using a photo of a language speaker wearing a mask and the traditional dress of the community concerned, the second intervention, a cartoon, encourages the public to break the chain of Covid-19 transmission, and the third intervention provides information on the health protocols which must be obeyed when pursuing activities outside the home. These intervention materials were initially designed in Indonesian jointly by researchers at the Universitas Indonesia and Universitas Mulawarman. The material was then translated

into the nine selected local languages by native speakers and approved by the respective traditional elders. We now present more detailed descriptions of the three interventions.

Pilih Lockdown atau pilih Masker?	Choose a lockdown or choose a mask?
Pilih PSBB atau Masker?	Choose large-scale social restrictions (PSBB) or a mask?
Kita pilih pakai masker!	We choose to wear a mask!
Presiden Joko Widodo	President Joko Widodo

Illustration 1. Poster designed using the picture of Presiden Djoko Widodo. (Source: Apotek Online K-24).

3.2 INTERVENTIONS

3.2.1 *First intervention*

The first intervention consists of nine posters with photos of speakers of Banjarese, Berau, Buginese, Dayak Bahau, Dayak Kenyah, Javanese, Kutai Muaramuntai, Kutai Sabintulung, and Makassar. The example posters (see Illustrations 2 and 3) shown below are in the Dayak Bahau and Kutai Sabintulung languages. These were chosen because they both indigenous to East Kalimantan. They both show people wearing masks and traditional costume. Our design, combining a face mask and traditional clothing was intended to stimulate pride in identity. This first intervention was based on the aforementioned photo of President Joko Widodo wearing a face mask (see Illustration 1). The visual design was made by students of Universitas Mulawarman, to whom we owe a debt of pride and gratitude.

Illustrations 2 and 3. Posters in Dayak Bahau and Kutai Sabintulung. (Courtesy of Lingkar Studi Budaya Kaltim, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya Universitas Mulawarman).

In Table 1 we have the Indonesian source text of the posters as in illustrations 2 and 3, followed by the translations into local languages.

Indonesian <i>Maskermu adalah tameng perangmu Pasukan Korona mengintaimu dari berbagai arah Jangan lepaskan maskermu selama di luar rumah #KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona #PerangBelumUsai</i>	Translation Your mask is your war shield The Covid-19 troops are are stalking you from every direction Don't take off your mask while outdoors #KaltimIsStrongEnoughToDealWith- TheCoronavirus #TheWarIsNotOver
Banjarese <i>Masker pian itu tameng perang pian Pasukan korona meintai pian dari arah mana haja Kada usah dipacul masker pian waktu pian di luar rumah #KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona #PerangBalumanTuntungLagi</i>	Berau <i>Maskermu tameng/perisai parrangmu Pasukan kuruna (corona) manyanggul dikau andai sagala panjuru Jangan lappaskan maskermu mun kau di luar ruma #KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona #ParrangBallumAbis</i>

Buginese <i>Maskerta yerona pallawa ko mammasuku Kegaki lao tuli najagai matteruki pasukanna korona aja' nengka Talippasengngi maskerta rekko messu'ki pole bolae #KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona #Depa'RipajaMammusu</i>	Dayak Bahau <i>Masker adalah tameeng perangkaq Pasukan korona mengintaq men berbagai arah Dang lepaskan masker kaq selama haq ulaang amin. #KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona #PerangBaqpohNgaq</i>
Dayak Kenyah <i>Un ne masker kue adalah kelempit kue ta'I pebatai Pasukan korona mengintai ihue sen sempi- sempi Wat mesau masker kue ceng kajan ho aving lamin #KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona #AunLevePebataiZiLepa</i>	Javanese <i>Maskermu kuwi tameng perang Wadya bala korona ngindik saka arah ngendi wae Aja copot maskermu nalika tumindak/laku/ lelungan ana ing njaba omah #KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona #PerangDurungRampung</i>
Kutai Muaramuntai <i>Maskermu ielah tameng perangmu Bubuhan korona ngintai kau deri segala arah Jangan lepas maskermu selawasan dalam rumah #KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona #PerangBelumPupus</i>	Kutai Sabintulung <i>Masker kau enya tameng perang kau Bubuhan korona ngintai kau tulak segala arah Jangan lepi masker kau selawas di jaba rumah #KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona #PerangBelumPupus</i>
Makassar <i>Pa'rangka'nu parrinring bundu'nu Napinawangki pakbunduk korona battu ri sikuntu sulapa' Teaki lappasangi/sungkei pa'rangkatta ri pantarang balla #KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona #TenaPanalekBakbunduka</i>	

Table 1. The Indonesian source text of Illustration 2 and 3.

3.2.2 Second intervention

The second intervention consists of nine local-language posters showing a cartoon, urging residents to fight to end the Covid-19 outbreak. The example poster (Illustration 4) shown below is in Banjarese, the language originally spoken by settlers from South Kalimantan and which became the lingua franca for various ethnic groups in East Kalimantan. Banjarese is also preferred on Facebook.

Illustration 4. Poster in Banjarese. (Courtesy of Lingkar Studi Budaya Kaltim, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya Universitas Mulawarman).

In Table 2 we have the Indonesian source text of the poster as in Illustration 4, followed by the translations into local languages.

<p>Indonesian <i>Ingin wabah Korona ini berakhir?</i> <i>Putus mata rantai penularan Korona</i> <i>Caranya mudah, gunakan masker</i> <i>sebagai tameng</i> <i>#PerangBelumUsai</i> <i>#KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</i></p>	<p>Translation Do you want the Covid-19 outbreak to end? Break the chain of transmission of Covid-19 It's easy, use a mask as a shield <i>#TheWarIsNotFinished</i> <i>#KaltimIsStrongEnoughToDealWith-TheCoronavirus</i></p>
<p>Banjarese <i>Handdak kah sampar korona ni ampih?</i> <i>Pagatakan mata rantai penularan sampar korona</i> <i>Gampang banget caranya, pakai masker tarus gasan panutup</i> <i>#PerangBalumTuntungLagi</i> <i>#KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</i></p>	<p>Berau <i>Andak musibah kuruna ini lanynyap kah?</i> <i>Caranya gampang, pampan sungut dan idung mamakai MASKER, jadikan parisai</i> <i>#ParrangBallumAbis</i> <i>#KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</i></p>
<p>Buginese <i>Melogika ye korona paja?</i> <i>Tapaettui lalenna lete koronae!!!</i> <i>De'na mawatang, tapakei materru bara najagaiki maskerta</i> <i>#De'paripajaMammusu'</i> <i>#KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</i></p>	<p>Dayak Bahau <i>Ngedap wabah korona anih berakhir?</i> <i>Butat mataan inu penularan wabah korona!!!</i> <i>Carano mudah, meteq tuk masker sebagai tameng</i> <i>#PerangBaqpohNgaq</i> <i>#KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</i></p>

<p>Dayak Kenyah <i>Ube penyahit ji berakhir?</i> <i>Metep mata rantai penularan penyahit korona</i> <i>Caranya mudah, futo eun masker sebagai helempit.</i> <i>#AunLevePebataiZiLepa</i> <i>#KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</i></p>	<p>Javanese <i>Pengen pagebluk korona iki rampung?</i> <i>Pedot mata rante panularan pageblug korona!!!</i> <i>Carane gampang, tansah nganggo masker minangka tameng</i> <i>#PerangDurungRampung</i> <i>#KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</i></p>
<p>Kutai Muaramuntai <i>Ndek wabah korona ni cepat pupus?</i> <i>Lepi mata rantai penularan wabah korona!!</i> <i>Caranya gampang, pakai tarus masker cager tameng</i> <i>#PerangBelumPupus</i> <i>#KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</i></p>	<p>Kutai Sabintulung <i>Handak wabah korona eni pupus?</i> <i>Pegat mata rantai penularan korona!!!</i> <i>Caranya gampang, selalu pakai masker untuk tameng</i> <i>#PerangBelumPupus</i> <i>#KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</i></p>
<p>Makassar <i>Erokki ampamari coronayya?</i> <i>Allel tappu rante ampasiaraka coronayya</i> <i>Lomoji-lomoji, tullimaki ammake pa'rangka maskerta kaiyamintu pa'rinrinta</i> <i>#TenaPanale'Babundukka</i> <i>#KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</i></p>	

Table 2. The Indonesian source text of Illustration 4.

3.2.3 Third intervention

The third intervention consists of nine posters containing information about health protocols. These protocols encourage the wearing of a face mask when people have to venture outside the house. The example as in Illustration 5 is in Javanese. The Javanese are not native to East Kalimantan, yet make up a large proportion; one-third of the total population. There are far more Javanese speakers than speakers of all the indigenous languages put together, namely Dayak Bahau, Dayak Kenyah, Kutai Muaramuntai, Kutai Sabintulung, and Berau.

Illustration 5. Poster in Javanese. (Courtesy of Lingkar Studi Budaya Kaltim, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya Universitas Mulawarman).

In Table 3 we have the Indonesian source text of the poster as in Illustration 5, followed by the translations into local languages.

Indonesian	Translation
<i>Terpaksa ke luar rumah?</i>	Do you really have to leave the house?
<i>Patuhi Protokol Kesehatannya:</i>	Adhere to Health Protocols:
<i>Selalu gunakan masker terutama di tempat umum</i>	Always wear a mask, especially in public places
<i>Cuci tangan menggunakan sabun atau hand sanitizer</i>	Wash your hands using soap or hand sanitizer
<i>Hindari terjebak dalam kerumunan</i>	Avoid getting caught in a crowd
<i>Tutup mulut ketika bersin atau batuk</i>	Cover your mouth when sneezing or coughing
<i>Bawa selalu tisu untuk menyentuh benda</i>	Always carry tissue to touch objects
<i>Lakukan transaksi dengan e-cash atau non-tunai</i>	Make transactions with e-cash or non-cash
<i>#PerangBelumUsai</i>	#TheWarIsNotfinished
<i>#KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</i>	#KaltimIsStrongEnoughToDeal WithTheCoronavirus

<p>Banjarese <i>Kaya apa amunnya harus keluar rumah? Umpati papadahan kesehatan Pakai tarus masker apalagi mun di tempat karamaian Basuh tangan wan sabun atawa hand sanitizer Bajauh dari karamaian urang Pangup/tutup muntung bila wahin atau batuk Bawa tarus tissue gasan manjapai barang</i></p> <p><i>Babayar tutukaran dengan e-cash atau kada tunai</i> #PerrangBalumanTuntungLagi #KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</p>	<p>Berau <i>Tarpaksa kaluar rumah? Patuhi peraturan kesehatannya bah Memakai masker, apalagi di karumunan urang banyak Mambasuh tangan mamakai sabun atau hand sanitizer Jauhi karumunan. Pampan sungut amun barassim atau batuk</i></p> <p><i>Mamakai tisu amun manggaman barang-barang Babalanja dangngan e-cash</i></p> <p>#ParrangBallumSalassai #KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona.</p>
<p>Buginese <i>Narekko terpassaki messu pole bolae? Inggernggi protokol adisingenge Tapake terru maskerta utamana rekko maroa e tawu Tabissai limatta sibawa sabung na handsanitizer. Mabelaki narekko maega ladde tawu Ta tutui timutta rekko barassingekki na moreki Tabawa lengngi tissue rekko ta katenni agagae Narekko mangelliki ajana tapake doi langsungge (tapakei e-cash na nontunai) #De'paRipajaMammusu' #KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</i></p>	<p>Dayak Bahau <i>Terpaksa tai hulung amin? Patuhi protokol kesehatanno!!! Selalu tuk masker pertama haq ayan umum Nguyau usu tuk sabun atau hand sanitizer</i></p> <p><i>Hindari terjebak dalam kerumunan Kebang ba ketika sibani atau nikan</i></p> <p><i>Geli selalu tisu untuk menyentuh kut Na transaksi dehen e-cash atau nontunai</i></p> <p>#HaqAminTuran #KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</p>
<p>Dayak Kenyah <i>Terpaksa ta'i ho havang lamin? Baze protokol kesehatannya Futo un masker terutama ho ruhue umum</i></p> <p><i>Muie ujue ngan sabun atau handsanitizer Ngecue ta'i felempun dalem kerumunan Matep pa be sipen atau mihe</i></p> <p><i>Futo kin tissue be le man benda</i></p> <p><i>Lakukan transaksi ngam e-cash atau nontunai</i> #HoDalemLaminLe #KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</p>	<p>Javanese <i>Kapeksa metu omah? Netepi protokol kesehatanne: Tansah nganggo masker ning ngendi papan wae Wisuh nganggo sabun utawa hand sanitizer Nyingkir saka kerumunan/pakumpulan Nutup cangkem nalika wahing utawa wathuk Tansah nggawasa tisu kanggo nyekel barang Mbayar kanthi e-cash utawa nontunai</i></p> <p>#PerangDurungRampung #KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</p>

<p>Kutai Muaramuntai <i>Tepaksa keluar rumah?</i> <i>Turuti protokol kesehatan</i> <i>Pakai masker terus apalagi di keramean</i> <i>Bersehi tangan pakai sabun atau handsanitizer</i> <i>Jauhi ngondok di keramean</i> <i>Tutup sungut pas bersin atau betok</i> <i>Bewak terus tisu cage njewat bende</i> <i>Beyar apa-apa dengan e-cash atau nontunai</i></p> <p>#PerangBelumPupus #KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</p>	<p>Kutai Sabintulung <i>Tepaksa ke jaba rumah?</i> <i>Turuti protokol kesehatannya</i> <i>Selalu makai masker teutama diodah umum</i> <i>Basoh tangan makai sabun atau handsanitizer</i> <i>Hindari tejebak dalam kerumunan</i> <i>Tutup sungut bila bersen atau batok</i> <i>Bawa selalu tissue untuk nyentuh barang</i> <i>Lakukan transaksi dengan e-cash atau non-tunai</i></p> <p>#PerangBelumPupus #KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</p>
<p>Makassar <i>Pinawangi ero'na protokol</i> <i>Kasalewangnganga</i> <i>Tuli ammake pa'rangka ri tampa' tujaiyya</i> <i>Bissai limayya siagang sabung iyareka</i> <i>handsanitizer</i> <i>Liliangi assiassaka ilalanna tujaiyya</i> <i>Tongkoki bawata ri wattunta burassingang</i> <i>iyareka ta'roko</i> <i>Angngerangki tisu iya nanisero</i> <i>barang-baranga</i> <i>Ammakeki e-cash iyareka doe' takontang pun-na nabbayarak</i> <i>#Tenapale' Babunduka</i> <i>#KaltimBerdayaMelawanWabahKorona</i></p>	

Table 3. The Indonesian source text of Illustration 5.

3.3 RESPONSES

We now present some of the responses to these interventions. The use of posters in local languages motivates people. Without being forced, they quickly understand what to do. It is much easier for the community to understand if the foreign term “pandemic” is replaced by such local equivalents as: *sampar* (Banjarese); *penyakit* (Berau); *onroanna lasae* (Buginese); *wabah penyahit* (Dayak Bahau and Dayak Kenyah); *pagebluk* (Javanese); *perempahan* (Kutai Muara Muntai); *perempehan* (Kutai Sabintulung); and *garring pua* (Makassarese). This is important, since the concept of a pandemic and its equivalents in the local languages stands at the core of a number of health protocols, including washing feet and hands before entering the house, sunbathing in the morning, and eating plenty of vegetables and fruit to build up the body's immune system. It is interesting to see how “Covid-19” has been localized as *kuruna* (Berau), *korona* (Banjarese, Javanese, Kutai Muara Muntai, Kutai Sabintulung, Dayak Bahau, Dayak Kenyah, and Buginese), and *corona* (Makassarese); and “your mask” as *masker pian* (Banjarese), *maskermu* (Berau, Javanese, and Kutai

Muara Muntai), *maskerta* (Buginese and Makassarese), *masker kaq* (Dayak Bahau), *masker kau* (Kutai Sabintulung), and *masker kue* (Dayak Kenyah).

When answering the questions listed on the questionnaire or posting reactions on Facebook, community responses were generally positive. Many people said they understood much better and promised to comply with the health protocols. They felt proud that their language and culture was serving to tackle the Covid-19 problem. Even as the first poster aired, they asked when the next poster would appear. Enthusiasm was obviously present in the responses of those who asked permission to disseminate it to various friends and groups in their network, thereby taking up the challenge to play an active role. In the same way as the tsunami awareness campaigns were devised, the use of local languages constitutes an important trigger to revive the collective memory of disaster management on the basis of local sensibilities.

Out of all the responses and comments which came in, around 90.91 percent were positive. Some people, amounting to 9.09 percent, were negative. They considered the trial intervention not particularly useful, because the problem itself, as they saw it, was a business conspiracy to torment people. Pandemic deniers are not unique to Indonesia. As they are relatively small in number, we found that they are best approached personally because they have absorbed a number of disparate news hoaxes.

4. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The interventions discussed in the previous section have been designed to be implemented throughout Indonesia. As team members of the Special Task Force for Covid-19, we have had the opportunity to deliver a presentation at a co-ordination meeting on behavioural change with delegates from thirty-four provinces, consisting of more than 300 participants. The meeting concluded that the trial intervention in East Kalimantan should be implemented throughout Indonesia. The next day, the Special Task Force for Covid-19 brought Badan Bahasa on board. So, the head of the Badan Bahasa instructed the heads of all the language centres in each province to assist in tackling the Covid-19 crisis. As a first step, all language centres in each province helped to translate *Pedoman Perubahan Perilaku Protokol Kesehatan* (the Handbook for Managing Behaviour about Health Protocols; Badan Bahasa 2020); see Illustration 6 for the poster on the launch of the Handbook. The languages selected for this purpose were those considered the most widely used or deemed necessary for cultural reasons. The results of this meeting were released on December 1, 2020, by the Minister of Education and Culture, the head of the Special Task Force for Covid-19 of the National Disaster Management Agency, and the head of the Badan Bahasa. Within three weeks, all language centres throughout Indonesia had made an effort to translate the Handbook, including its 3M protocols,³ into seventy-seven local languages.

³ 3M refers to three basic protocols: *Memakai masker* (Use your facemask), *Menjaga jarak* (Keep social distance), and *Mencuci tangan* (Wash your hands).

Illustration 6. Poster for the launch of the Handbook for Managing Behaviour towards Health Protocols. (Courtesy of Badan Bahasa and BNPB).

The Handbook and its protocols were produced with an accompanying campaign video.⁴ Its translation is expected to produce texts which are easily understood by readers because they have been improved through comprehension testing with local linguists and native speakers. The material is written in very simple, easy-to-read language. It is hoped that this handbook will help prevent the spread of Covid-19. According to the Head of the Badan Bahasa, if it can be demonstrated that people understand texts written in their local language better, the implications are twofold. Firstly, the teaching of Indonesian as a second language has not achieved its goal of making our society literate and able to understand Indonesian texts. Secondly, regional languages still have a very important role in our society (Aziz 2020). The details of the seventy-seven local languages translated in each province are as in Table 4.

Efforts to involve more local languages in the Handbook are ongoing. The Papua Language Centre will translate the text into Sentani, Biak, and Hubula, which have quite a number of speakers. Meanwhile, the East Java Language Centre will complete its translation into the Surabaya dialect of Javanese. It has already completed its translation into Madurese. This is significant because, among the 38.8 million inhabitants of East Java, the Madurese form the largest group of migrant settlers. They number 6.5 million people, and even those living in historically Javanese-speaking areas such as Situbondo and Bondowoso tend to be monolingual.

⁴ The contents of the Handbook are freely available online (<https://covid19.go.id/p/protokol/pedoman-perubahan-perilaku-penanganan-covid-19-dalam-77-bahasa-daerah>). Its translations into 77 different languages are useful to linguists.

Provinces	Languages
Aceh	Aceh and Gayo
Bali	Balinese
Bangka Belitung	Kayu Agung
Banten	Banten Sundanese and Bebasan (a polite register of Banten Javanese)
Bengkulu	Serawai, Rejang, Bengkulu Malay, and Lembak
Central Java	Tegal dialect of Javanese
Central Kalimantan	Ngaju, Katingan, and Maanyan
Central Sulawesi	Taa, Mori, Pamona, Kaili Rai, and Buol
East Java	Madurese and the Javanese dialect of East Java
East Kalimantan	Kutai and the Samarinda dialect of Banjarese Malay
East Nusa Tenggara	Ngada, Kupang Malay, Manggarai, Lamaholot, and Dawan
Gorontalo	Suwawa and Gorontalo
Jambi	Jambi Malay and Kerinci
Lampung	O dialect of Lampung and A dialect of Lampung
Maluku	Geser dialect of Seram, Hila dialect of Hitu, and Alune
North Maluku	Tidore, Ternate, and Ternate Malay
North Sulawesi	Tombulu and Tondano-Tolour
North Sumatra	Batak Toba, Pakpak, Karo, Angkola Mandailing, Langkat, Nias, and Pesisir Malay
Papua	Ambai and Papuan Malay
Riau Islands	Riau Kepulauan Malay
Riau Province	Kampar dialect of Riau Malay and Bengkalis dialect of Riau Malay
South Kalimantan	Banjar Malay
South Sulawesi	Toraja, Mandar, Makassar, and Buginese
South Sumatra	Palembang and Komering
Southeast Sulawesi	Muna, Pulo Wakatobi, Tolaki, Wolio, Kulisusu
West Java	Sundanese, Cirebon-Indramayu dialect of Javanese
West Kalimantan	Tamambalo, Ahe Kanayatn and Pontianak Malay
West Sumatra	Mentawai and Minang
Yogyakarta (Special Region)	Krama Javanese (a polite register of Standard Javanese)

Table 5. The seventy-seven local languages.

In general, the Handbook has been translated into languages or dialects with a large number of speakers. However, the language centre in Yogyakarta chose to translate the text into Krama Javanese (a polite register of Standard Javanese) and the Banten language centre into Bebasan (a polite register of

Banten Javanese). Both are registers used less frequently by the younger generation. Even though the vitality of Bebasan is classified as endangered, the regional language centre did not choose the more common Serang dialect of Banten Javanese for the reason that Bebasan was considered politer, it was felt appropriate to promote it in society. Meanwhile, the Yogyakarta Language Centre chose Krama Javanese as a means to provide information on Covid-19 and as teaching material for the younger generation.

5. ANTICIPATED NEXT STEPS

Currently, Indonesia has entered the vaccination stage, commencing with the vaccination of President Joko Widodo on January 13, 2021. Patience is needed to develop a herd immunity, which requires a minimum of 70 percent of the entire population to be vaccinated. To vaccinate 181.5 million Indonesians, a minimum of fifteen months, from January 2021 to April 2022, will be required.⁵ In addition, it is necessary to convey comprehensive information regarding the efficacy and effectiveness of vaccines because there are still many who are not sure about whether the vaccine is safe and *halal*.

Reasons enough exist for the Badan Bahasa to collaborate closely with the Special Task Force for Covid-19. This is to provide a continuous stream of information as simply and clearly as possible in various local languages, enabling all Indonesian people to understand how to break the chain of transmission of Covid-19. Most recently, the 5M protocol has been initiated. This extension of 3M denotes five basic protocols: *Memakai masker* (Use your face mask), *Menjaga jarak* (Keep social distance), *Mencuci tangan* (Wash your hands), *Menjauhi kerumunan* (Keep away from crowds), and *Membatasi mobilitas* (Limit mobility). Albeit with some delay, the 3T protocol has also begun to be enforced: *Tes* (Testing), *Telusur* (Tracing), and *Tindak-lanjut* (Treatment).

6. CONCLUSION

At first glance, the preservation and empowering of local languages would seem unrelated to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, by addressing these issues simultaneously, we have attempted to highlight the strengths of local languages as the medium for communicating healthcare protocols and, because of this, the importance of charting their vitality with more resources than has so far been possible. For the purpose of helping to terminate the transmission of Covid-19, local languages have been primarily selected on the basis of their widespread use and function in society. It is important to recall that Indonesian is a second language for most Indonesians. From a linguist's point of view, this confirms the importance of research on the vitality of all languages in Indonesia.

We reiterate that such research constitutes a first step towards preserving local languages. Joshua A. Fishman (2001) asked if threatened languages can be saved. The answer depends a lot on the community. The results of this intervention trial are expected to help convince various parties that the

⁵ As stated by Indonesia's Ministry of Health at kemkes.go.id.

preservation and empowerment of local languages has an economic and not just a sentimental value. Based on the records of the Badan Bahasa, there are still 625 languages whose vitality has not been determined. This information must be given priority so that language management plans to preserve and empower local languages can be properly designed and organized.

The Covid-19 pandemic is a disaster affecting people around the world and we must find positive ways to respond to it. Efforts to use local languages provide an easier way to promote a broader understanding in a community, so that changes in behaviour change occur more quickly. These intervention trials highlight the benefits of utilizing local languages. People will adhere to health protocols better because, through the use of their local language, they understand much better what is going on. Based on field observations, far more people in East Kalimantan Province now use masks, maintain a safe distance and immediately wash their hands after skin contact.

Finally, our strategy to empower local communities based on local languages and cultures, carried out in East Kalimantan, can be implemented throughout Indonesia. We hope that a linguistic approach continues to be used to deal with the aftermath of disasters, as it stimulates the formation of collective memory rooted in local culture. People's collective memory plays an important role in storing knowledge learned from past natural disasters. We would certainly welcome any efforts to quantify the long-term value of this for a country like Indonesia.

ABBREVIATIONS

BNPB	Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana (National Disaster Management Agency)
LIPI	Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (Indonesian Institute of Sciences)
PSBB	Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar (Large-scale Social Restrictions)

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