Measuring the Level of Regional Language Extinction and Regional Language Vitality in Large City Agglomerations in Indonesia

No. Abstract: ABS-ICOLLITE-25147

Prof. Dr. Dadang Sunendar, M.Hum., Prof. Dr. Tri Indri Hardini, M.Pd., Ariessa Racmadhany, M.Pd.
French Language Department, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is currently facing a linguistic dilemma at the heart of its urban growth.

As the second most linguistically diverse country in the world, with 718 recorded regional languages, Indonesia stands at a critical crossroads.

This invaluable linguistic wealth, where each language represents a uniquely structured worldview, is now facing unprecedented existential threats.

Massive urbanization and inevitable modernization have created a new sociolinguistic landscape, especially in urban growth centers.

In major cities, regional languages are not only competing with the dominance of Bahasa Indonesia as the national language, but also with the influence of global languages and the heterogeneous migrant population.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethnolinguistic Vitality

The theory of ethnolinguistic vitality emphasizes that the survival of a language within its speech community is influenced by three main factors: status, demography, and institutional support.
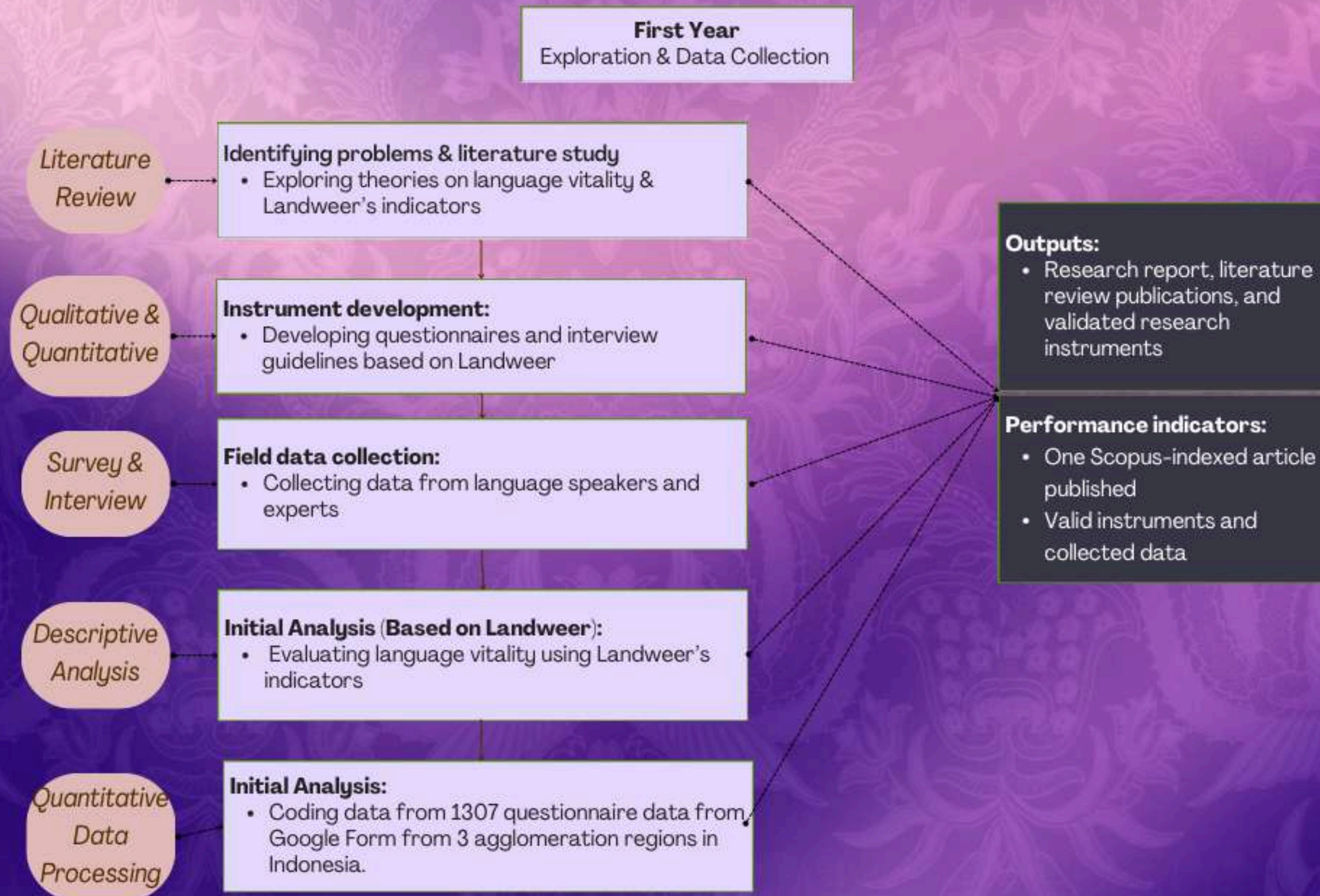
Language Vitality Indicators (Landweer)

- Location/domicile of the speaker group
- Economic interaction
- Intermarriage between language groups
- Community attitudes toward their language
- Domains of language use
- Attitudes toward dominant external languages
- Proficiency in both native and dominant languages
- Influence of external institutions

UNESCO Language Vitality Scale

A global framework used to assess language vitality and endangerment levels based on nine key factors.

METHOD

Mixed Methods Research Flowchart (Quantitative - Qualitative)

First Year
Exploration & Data Collection

Literature Review

Identifying problems & literature study
- Exploring theories on language vitality & Landweer's indicators

Qualitative & Quantitative

Instrument development:
- Developing questionnaires and interview guidelines based on Landweer

Survey & Interview

Field data collection:
- Collecting data from language speakers and experts

Descriptive Analysis

Initial Analysis (Based on Landweer):
- Evaluating language vitality using Landweer's indicators

Quantitative Data Processing

Initial Analysis:
- Coding data from 1307 questionnaire data from Google Form from 3 agglomeration regions in Indonesia.

Outputs:
- Research report, literature review publications, and validated research instruments

Performance indicators:
- One Scopus-indexed article published
- Valid instruments and collected data

RESULT OF LANGUAGE VITALITY IN THREE MAJOR AGGLOMERATIONS

- The survey findings showing an aggregate regional language vitality score of **53.84%**, placing it in the "**Declining**" category.
- The score acts as a warning signal, indicating a general weakening of regional language vitality among respondents.
- However, this aggregate number risks masking the regional complexity and variation in language dynamics.
- This trend aligns with data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS), which shows a significant drop in regional language use among younger generations—a clear sign of an ongoing language shift.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE VITALITY IN THREE MAJOR AGGLOMERATIONS

To understand the varying manifestations of regional language "decline", an in-depth analysis was conducted across three major agglomeration areas, based on available respondent data. The distribution of respondents provides an initial context regarding the scale and linguistic complexity in each region.

Table 1: Respondent Distribution by Agglomeration Area

Agglomeration Area	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Total (%)
Greater Jakarta (Jabodetabek)	968	74.0
Greater Bandung	252	19.3
Yogyakarta	67	5.1
Other Areas	18	1.4
Total	1,308	100.0

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE VITALITY IN THREE MAJOR AGGLOMERATIONS

The table before shows that the majority of respondents are from Greater Jakarta (Jabodetabek), implicitly indicating that this region represents the most complex linguistic landscape and serves as the primary focus of the data analysis.

And this table shows the comparative siuation from 3 different agglomeration regions in Indonesia with their threats, special chacarateristics, and revitalization challenges.

COMPARISON OF LANGUAGE VITALITY IN THREE MAJOR AGGLOMERATIONS

Regional Agglomeration	Jabodetabek	Bandung Raya	Yogyakarta
Regional Language			
Vitality Condition	Weakened	Stable but fragmented	Symbolic high, practical decline
Main Threats	• Dominance of Indonesian • (Javanese, Sundanese)	• Limited to informal domains • Not used in official settings	• Decline in vernacular use • Confined in ceremonial functions
Special Characteristics	• Extreme melting pot Betawi language	• Strong functional diglossia (solidarity vs status)	• 'Heritage language', not used in daily life
Revitalization Challenges	• New functional niches & prestige	• Expand use to formal & technological domains	• Bridge prestige & modern relevance

CONCLUSION

- The 53.84% vitality score (categorized as 'Declining') reflects a concerning overall trend, but hides complex regional narratives behind the number.
- Each urban region exhibits a different face of language decline:
  - Jabodetabek: Marginalization of the Betawi language amid intense linguistic competition.
  - Bandung Raya: Functional compartmentalization of Sundanese—strong in informal settings but weakened in modern formal domains.
  - Yogyakarta: A paradox where high cultural prestige of Javanese does not align with its everyday use among youth.
- One-size-fits-all revitalization strategies will fail.
  - Solutions must be contextual, community-based, and multi-pillar.
- The future of Indonesia's regional languages depends on collaborative action involving:
  - Government → policy facilitation
  - Academia → data and analysis
  - Private sector → innovation partners
  - Communities → language owners and core agents
  - Youth → heirs and innovators
- The slogan "Prioritize Indonesian, Preserve Regional Languages, Master Foreign Languages" should not reflect a rigid hierarchy, but rather:
  - A balanced linguistic ecology philosophy, where each language has its own space, function, and value.

REFERENCES

- Ethnologue. (n.d.). Country Digests: Indonesia. Retrieved from https://www.ethnologue.com/country/ID/
- Samiaji, M. H. (2024). Rapor merah: Bahasa daerah di Indonesia akan punah! Retrieved from https://badanbahasa.kemendikdasmen.go.id/artikel-detail/4160/rapor-merah:-bahasa-daerah-di-indonesia-akan-punah
- Sunendar, D. (2025). Politik dan perencanaan bahasa. Retrieved March 31, 2025, from https://repositori.kemdikbud.go.id/9969/1/dokumen_makalah_1540466297.pdf
- UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages. (2003, March). Language vitality and endangerment. UNESCO. Retrieved March 31, 2025, from https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/00120-EN.pdf
- Landweer, M. L. (2016, June). Indicators of ethnolinguistic vitality review and score sheet. GIALens, 10(1), 1–14. Retrieved from https://www.diu.edu/documents/gialens/Vol10-1/Landweer-Ethnolinguistic-Vitality.pdf
- Yulianti, S., & Firdaus, W. (2020). Keterancaman Bahasa Roswar: Analisis daya hidup bahasa. Ranah: Jurnal Kajian Bahasa, 9(2), 358.
- Nursyamsi, N., Fatinah, S., Asri, M., & Tamrin, T. (2021). Daya hidup bahasa Pamona di Kabupaten Poso. Multilingual, 20(2), 181–193.
- Sibua, S., Wahyuni, S., & Kusumaningtyas, A. (2023). Vitalitas Bahasa Ternate di Pulau Hiri. Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan, 2023(2), 600–607. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7584747

THANK YOU!

Follow us @dadang.sunendar @tihardini @ariessarach