

An Overview of Indigenous Language Programs in Australian and New Zealand

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Abstract—There is a consensus that the status and the unique values of indigenous languages make them imperative to be learnt, taught, utilized and protected from their state of endangerment. Moreover, indigenous language in Australia and New Zealand is a crucial issue that may influence language planning and policy in both countries. In relation to this, despite their close proximity, there are apparent differences of indigenous language conditions that may affect the language programs. To portray the Indigenous Language Programs in Australia and New Zealand, a library research and/or comprehensive literature review of existing research on indigenous languages in both countries was undertaken in this paper. Dealing with this, the present paper discusses the indigenous language in Australia and New Zealand including the positive effects of the language programs. This study shows that the language maintenance program managed by New Zealand government called ‘language nest’ has succeeded in rescuing Maori from serious endangered. Meanwhile, successful language revitalization activity can also be found in Australia. Under the control of indigenous community, Muurrbay Language Center has a record of success. In addition, all of the language revitalization activities elaborated above may increase the number of people who learn the indigenous languages in New Zealand and Australia.

Keywords—*indigenous language; language planning; language policy*

I. INTRODUCTION

It is clear to say that language is an essential component of culture. When a language is lost, a part of culture is lost as well [1]. Hence, culture and language are inseparable. In relation to this, nowadays, it is noted that of the 7,000 languages spoken in the world nowadays, approximately 50% of them are in danger of extinction and likely to disappear in this century [2]. In relation to this, there is a consensus that some languages vanish in instant ways while others lost gradually in bilingual cultures.

To take an example, in America, when Europeans arrived, it is stated that about 1500 languages and dialects were spoken, today; approximately only 750 have survived while others are at risk of extinction (Sanchez cited in Barfield and Uzaski) [3]. Another example, Willford highlights the result of a research supported by National Geographic Society [2]. The research revealed that there were five regions where languages were lost most rapidly; namely, North America’s upper Pacific Coastal

zone, eastern Siberia, northern Australia, central South America and Oklahoma and the southwestern United States.

Given this, since each indigenous language is a part of identity and/or culture, we need to bear in our mind the role of these languages. Dealing with this, it can be said that by identifying a person’s vernacular language, it enables us to investigate his/her identity. Besides, it is fair to say that indigenous language can strengthen Indigenous culture and identity which lead to the improvement of Standard Australian English competency and socio-economic factors including improved measurements of wellbeing.

In relation to this, some studies tried to portray the differences of the language programs in Australia and New Zealand. A research conducted by Wigglesworth and Keegan aimed at delineating teaching and learning context as well as assessment practice in New Zealand and Australia [4]. Based on the study, for future direction of the assessment aspects of the language programs in Australia, it is suggested that the program should pay attention to all aspects of the learners’ language. Moreover, it is also recommended for the stakeholders of the language program in New Zealand to develop assessment tools so that the proficiency of Maori language students can be measured appropriately in order to make sure the language survival in the future.

Within the context of New Zealand English, another study carried out by Reese et al aimed at assessing the status of the reo Maori as the indigenous language in New Zealand in the context of New Zealand English [5]. The study shows that due to the fact that more than 99% of Maori speakers were bilingual, Maori language acquisition were occurred in the context of the acquisition of New Zealand English.

Having the explanation above, this paper provides the overview of the Indigenous Language Programs in Australia and New Zealand. It is based on the library research with the goal is portraying indigenous languages in both countries and highlighting examples of indigenous language programs in both countries.

II. METHOD

To overview the Indigenous Language Programs in Australian and New Zealand, a comprehensive literature search of existing research on vernacular or indigenous languages in both countries was undertaken in this paper. In conducting the

study, the author searched related research and typed related key words “*Indigenous language in New Zealand*”, “*Indigenous language in Australia*,” “*Language policy in Australia*,” “*Maori language*,” “*Maori language revitalization*,” “*Aboriginal languages maintenance*” and “*Language policy in New Zealand*”. Afterwards, the author conducted the review. It covers research conducted from 2001 to 2018. Besides, other sources including conference proceeding, reports, book, and book chapter related to the topic published in the latest ten years was searched and reviewed. 30 articles were collected and utilized as the sources in conducting this study.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Indigenous Language in Australia

Since the 1970s, indigenous languages have been included in Australian curriculum through bilingual programs, Indigenous language and culture education (Hoogenraad cited in Disbray) [6]. In line with this, it is noted that more than 16.000 Indigenous pupils and 13.000 non-Indigenous pupils located in 260 Australian formal educational institutions including language centres and schools are involved in an Indigenous language programme [7]. This aforementioned situation due to the reason that nowadays, some indigenous languages that have survived are still spoken by a small number of people as their first language (Department of Education and Children’s Service of South Australia, 2008 as cited in Klenowski) [8].

Remarkably, indigenous languages in Australia are disappearing at faster rate than any other countries in the world [9]. Similarly, Tsunoda, also affirms that “the speed which with Australian Aboriginal languages have disappeared is truly astonishing” [10]. In Queensland, for example, some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in present day Queensland are not acquiring a regional language as their first language ‘automatically’ through natural interaction with their family [11]. In respond to this, it is necessary to control the indigenous language maintenance in this country.

Essentially, the national policy of languages (NPL) in Australia recognizes the importance of Australian native languages to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the cultural heritage of Australia as a whole [12]. Besides, according to the research conducted by McConvell, P. et al. it was revealed that indigenous people especially in South Australia wanted to see young people learning and speaking indigenous languages so that the progressive loss of indigenous languages can be stopped [13]. Dealing with this, in Australian context, there are six key principles as a framework in developing policy and practice in Indigenous language programmes [7], as follows:

- It is crucial to learn Aboriginal languages and support the reclamation and maintenance.
- Aboriginal languages can only be taught in formal and non-formal schools with the agreement of the custodians of the languages.

- Learning certain indigenous language is considered complimentary complementary activity.
- Schools and indigenous language communities play crucial role in maintaining, revitalizing, or rebuilding Indigenous languages.
- The collaborative approach designed by Indigenous communities, indigenous Language Centres, linguistics, schools and teachers are necessary.

Afterwards, Purdie et al. elaborates the types of indigenous language programs, as follows [7]:

TABLE I. TYPES OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

No	Types of indigenous language programs	Descriptions
1	First language maintenance	Since pupils are first language speaker of particular indigenous language, this type of program tries to extend and develop their language skills and may include the development of specialist skills such as interpreting and translating.
2	Second language learning	In this program, it is assumed that learners have little or no assumed knowledge of the target language.
3	Language revival Revitalization Renewal Reclamation	It is a general term that covers three types: In revitalization program, the language is still used by a small group of older speakers within the community. Revitalization program is intended to extend the utilization of the language into the younger generations of speakers. Pupils in this type of program are considered have passive knowledge of the language. The language is no longer actively used in the full form, the language is still investigated actively by indigenous people. In addition, linguistic heritage still exists within certain community that can be useful in order to develop a language program. In terms of language reclamation, transmission of the spoken language is found, but there is enough evidence from historical documentation and archival material for language reconstruction and learning.
4	Language awareness	This program focuses on teaching Indigenous languages and on discussing socio-historical issues. Besides, Communicative fluency or competence is not the teaching goal of this type of language program.

Actually, various terms have been used to describe such activities, such as language maintenance, language revival, language preservation, language reclamation and others [14]. The term for general subject is “language revitalization.”

B. First Language Maintenance in Australia

In terms of first language maintenance, because Australia is one of the destinations for various immigrant groups, language maintenance can be seen as a crucial issue in this country. Logically, those groups brought their own languages to the

continent. Consequently, through social and political processes, it is probably safe to say that one or more language(s) become dominant of the others. In Australian context, as we know, English is a dominant language. It was brought to this country as the language of the colonizing power that is Great Britain, during the 19th century. Since then, Australia has been known as an English speaking country. Moreover, English has always been the dominant language in this society. This phenomenon has triggered other languages of native Australians to minority status.

In relation to this, according to the data of 1996 census, 14,6% of the Australian population speaks a language other than English at home [15]. However, it is noted that native speakers of languages in Australia other than English has dwindled in recent times [15]. In respond to this, first language maintenance program is crucial. One of the reasons is all indigenous language speakers are aware of the catastrophe that has befallen their languages over the last century [13].

Dealing with this, in South Australia, for instance, in 1988, Pitjantjatjara was the only aboriginal language that received funding for five programs [16]. In terms of eligibility, it is stated that first language maintenance program is intended for students who used Aboriginal languages in their homes. Besides, this also may lead some school to identify pupils on the basis of language use or identify students related to the idea of close relationship with the language.

C. A Case of Language Revival in Australia: The Revitalization of Gumbaynggirr

To begin, it is necessary to note a research on indigenous language maintenance in Australia for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies conducted by Schmidt as cited in Walsh [17]. Through her study, it showed that 20% indigenous language situation in Australia were considered healthy, 70% weak or dying and 160 extinct. One of the examples of indigenous languages in the highly settled part in Australia (New South Wales, Victoria, the southern part of Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia) is Gumbaynggirr. This was a language in New South Wales. However, there was no one speaking this language as a first language in the late of 1970s. It was about fifty years since it was utilized as a medium for communication among a small group of people [17].

Within the case of Gumbaynggirr language, fortunately, in 1980s, the elder of the Gumbaynggirr community decided to organize an action in order to bring their language back. The community was guided by Steven Morelli. He is a member of Catholic order of Christian brothers. They built the Muurrbay Language Center which facilitates language learning and the development of language learning materials as major steps in language revitalization. There were some results of the activities provided in the language center, which were; 159-pages dictionary of Gumbaynggirr, a range of language learning materials has been developed and provided in the language center, and language learning activities in some levels which were sponsored by the Muurrbay Center.

In addition, the Muurrbay center is basically a place for aboriginal people. Indigenous people from local communities

such as Bellingen, Urunga and Coffs Harbour were keen to join the activities administered by the people in the language center. Besides, the language center also welcomes to help and mentor the linguistic aspirations of other groups. To sum up, Muurrbay Language Center has a record of success under the control of indigenous community.

D. The positive effect of the language program in Australia

In terms of foreign language maintenance program, especially in South Australia, Scarino points out significant contribution of the program; namely, it gives space in the school curriculum for some of diverse languages and cultures of the learners [16]. Particularly, it is crucial for the students since the presence of their language in school curriculum shows the school's respect for their identities.

E. Maori in New Zealand

It is clear that Maori has official status in New Zealand and is utilized largely. Actually, in the last 200 years, the history of Maori Language has been one of ups and downs. In connection with this, prior to the 1840s, Maori language was linguistically secured. However, the arrival of European to New Zealand put the Maori language into a path towards language demise [18]. Previously, the language was utilized in social, religious, commercial and political interaction extensively. In addition, initially, Maori was still the main language that was used to communicate between new comers and native people. However, the arrival of English settlers began to change the status of Maori Language. In 1867, native schools decreed that English was to be the only language utilized in teaching of Maori students [19]. Consequently, Maori became pressured to learn English.

Furthermore, it is noted that since the government decreed in 1867 that English was the only language that should be utilized in the native schools, thus, te reo Maori continue to grow in Maori home and in local communities until the second world war Reese et al, [5]. However, due to the rapid growth of the non-Maori populations, it begins the domination of English language. Hence, efforts to encourage Maori language maintenance need to be carried out. It is because Maori language is a part of the New Zealand culture that expresses values, belief and world views. In connection with this, the Maori language commission organized the Maori language program by allocating targeted funding to the program in communities throughout New Zealand [20].

Fortunately, the New Zealand curriculum accepted and considered the importance of Maori in New Zealand society. Hence, all pupils may learn knowledge and culture of Maori. To make it clear, the following is one of the principles which sets out the foundation policy for learning and assessment in New Zealand schools. The New Zealand curriculum accepts the significance of the Treaty of Waitangi. The school curriculum recognizes and values the unique position of Maori in New Zealand society. All pupils will get the opportunity to learn through te reo (Maori language) and nga tikanga Maori (Maori customary principles and customs). The school curriculum acknowledges the importance to all New

Zealanders of both Maori and Pakeha traditions, histories, and values. (Ministry of Education cited in Edmonds, et al.) [18].

F. A Case in New Zealand: Maori Language Revitalization

Decline and revival of Maori language is a major issue in modern New Zealand history. It is in line with the fact that the Maori language was in danger since the last quarter of the twentieth century [21]. To cope with this, language revitalization deserves some attention since it can be considered crucial. Language revitalization aims at reversing the process of language decline [22]. In connection with this, it is probably fair to say that this program is applied in order to promote and strengthen Maori language.

Language revitalization is a term that commonly utilized to activities undertaken by communities in order to retain and develop a particular language that is threatened [23]. Similar terms that have been applied for these activities include language regeneration, language renewal and language stabilization. It is clear to say that these terms have been used interchangeably.

One of the programs was immersion program in 1985 which aimed at maintaining the Maori language, providing students with knowledge and confidence in their heritage [24]. The focus of the program was on development of teaching and learning materials of the various subjects in the Maori language. Furthermore, as the program expanded, the culture embedded in the language and the ways of knowing have been increasingly emphasize in the school program. Dealing with the focus of the aforementioned program, it is in line with the statement proposed by Krauss cited in Anaru, that the loss of a language logically includes the loss of the integral and specific cultural knowledge inherent in the language [25]. Therefore, Maori language revitalization program should integrate the cultural content in learning the language. It is as affirmed by that language revitalization activities build a cultural climate where the people's ethnic heritage is appreciated and respected [10].

In addition, The Maori language is well known for its maintenance program called "language nest" (*Kohonga reo*). This program was proposed at a meeting of Maori leaders and educators in 1981 who pointed out that the quickest way to restore the language was to have grand-parents who were still fluent speakers work with pre-school children (King cited in Spolsky) [26]. This method has been adopted by many people in the world.

G. The Positive Effect of the Language Program in New Zealand

The attempt to support Maori language came as initiative from the Maori Language Commission of New Zealand as a year for celebration of the Maori language (Chrisp as cited in Mahrooqi and Asante) [21]. The following are some positive outcomes from the program administered by Maori language commission [18].

- The encouragement of te reo Maori.
- The improvement of the accessibility to te reo Maori domains and resources.
- Increased the acquisition and use of te reo Maori.
- Increased confidence to speak te reo Maori.
- Increased commitment to learn and speak te reo Maori.

Likewise, it is as pointed out by Spolsky that in December 1997, the New Zealand government approved five Maori language policy objectives [26]; namely, to enhance the number of Māori speakers by increasing opportunities to learn the language; to enhance the level of Māori proficiency; to provide opportunities to use Māori; to develop the Māori language for the full range of modern activities; and to encourage positive attitudes so that Māori/English bilingualism "becomes a valued part of New Zealand society."

IV. IMPLICATION FOR LANGUAGE PLANNING IN INDONESIA

Referring to the discussion above, it is stated that children learn indigenous languages in New Zealand and Australia within the context of first language. In the meantime, most of vernacular languages in Indonesia are not learned by students as their first language. In addition, Indonesia is a developing country made up of a massive population of over 200 million people distributed across archipelago of thousands of islands [27]. Therefore, there are many indigenous languages in Indonesia which also referred to as vernaculars or regional languages [28]. However, it is probably fair to say that that in some regional, only Bahasa Indonesia is used while the indigenous languages are used rarely in the daily life. Besides, Bahasa Indonesia dominates over regional languages in daily practices.

In connection with this, some languages in Indonesia have large numbers of speakers and are well used as first language and studied such as Sundanese, Javanese, and Madurese, however, many others ethnic minorities are not documented well [29]. This situation probably appears due to the variety of factors that have been trigger for the disappearance of Indonesia's indigenous languages. One of the factors is the government lackadaisical attitudes towards the preservation of local languages [30]. That is to say that national language (Bahasa Indonesia) and foreign language are given privileges.

To cope with this, by referring to the language programs in Australia and New Zealand elaborated above, it is noted that language maintenance and/or language revival programs can be adapted or applied to indigenous language program and/or course in Indonesia. For example, the program(s) can be in the form of language maintenance particularly for the minority language such as Tomini-tolitoli languages in northern Sulawesi and Ronga in central Flores Himmelman as cited in Arka, by developing language center that focuses on learning the language [29].

V. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to describe the indigenous language programs in Australian and New Zealand in terms of the examples of the types of language programs, the positive effects, and the implication for language planning in Indonesia. Referring to the discussions that have been conducted in the previous section, there are at least three conclusions that can be drawn. First, government activity in order to rescue Maori from serious endangered state through successful language maintenance program called 'language nest.' It is as affirmed by Spolsky that the number of speakers of the language has been increased as a result of the language program with the government support [26]. Apart from that, successful language revitalization activity can also be found in Australia. As mentioned previously, under the control of indigenous community, Muurrbay Language Center has a record of success.

Second, in terms of the positive effects, logically, all of the language revitalization activities elaborated above increase the number of people who learn and/or speak the indigenous languages in New Zealand and Australia (particularly South Australia). Afterwards, with regard to the language planning and/or policy in Indonesia, it is suggested to maintain the regional languages especially minority languages by organizing such programs either under the control of the government and/or indigenous communities.

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