



Revitalization of the Kaili Language Among Primary and Middle School Students in Palu City Indonesia

Syamsuddin Syamsuddin^a, Mohamad Riski Budiman^b

^{a,b}Universitas Alkhairaat Palu, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

The Kaili language, spoken by the majority in Central Sulawesi, is in a critical condition, with a declining number of speakers, especially among students. Consequently, revitalization efforts are needed, particularly at the elementary and middle school levels in Palu City. This study aims to explore the process of revitalizing the Kaili language among these students. A qualitative research method was employed, with data collected through visits to several elementary and junior high schools in Palu City. Interviews with school principals were conducted and recorded using a cellphone. The findings indicate that the revitalization of the Kaili language among students in Palu City has not yet achieved optimal results. However, initiatives by the schools, the Central Sulawesi Language Center, and the Palu City government are gradually fostering students' willingness and interest in learning the Kaili language.

KEYWORDS

Revitalization;
Regional language;
Kaili language;
Student Circles.

ABSTRAK

Bahasa Kaili sebagai bahasa daerah yang mayoritas digunakan masyarakat di Sulawesi Tengah, kondisinya kini memprihatinkan. Jumlah penutur bahasa Kaili terus mengalami penurunan, terutama di kalangan pelajar. Untuk itu perlu upaya revitalisasi bahasa Kaili di kalangan pelajar khususnya tingkat SD dan SMP di Kota Palu. Adapun tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui proses revitalisasi bahasa Kaili di kalangan pelajar SD dan SMP Kota Palu. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan cara mengunjungi sejumlah sekolah SD dan SMP yang ada di kota palu lalu melakukan wawancara dengan kepala sekolah dengan menggunakan metode rekam menggunakan ponsel. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa revitalisasi bahasa kaili tingkat pelajar SD dan SMP di Kota Palu belum berjalan maksimal. Namun upaya – upaya revitalisasi bahasa kaili yang dilakukan oleh pihak sekolah, Balai Bahasa Sulawesi Tengah dan pemerintah Kota Palu perlahan mampu menumbuhkan pembiasaan dan kemauan para siswa dan siswi untuk belajar berbahasa Kaili.

KATAKUNCI

Pemertahanan;
Bahasa Daerah;
Bahasa Kaili;
Kalangan Pelajar.

Contact

Syamsudin Syamsudin

syam.50TV@gmail.com

Universitas Universitas Alkhairaat Palu, Indonesia

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1. Introduction

Regional languages serve as mother tongues or first languages that children and adolescents should master before acquiring foreign languages (Nishanthi, 2020). These mother tongues should be used in everyday life, both at home and within the school environment, especially for junior high school students. This stage of development is marked by rapid growth, making it an ideal period to teach regional languages before introducing foreign languages (Nimas & Awaliyah, 2022). It is crucial to introduce junior high school students to their regional languages for several reasons, including the fact that regional languages are ancestral inheritances that must be preserved (Bujangga, 2021).

Each regional language in Indonesia possesses its own uniqueness, such as the Kaili language, spoken by the indigenous people of Central Sulawesi (Sasmita et al., 2022). According to official data from the Indonesian Language Web and language maps, Central Sulawesi Province is home to 21 regional languages, including Kaili, which is spoken by the Kaili ethnic group across various dialects, such as *Rai*, *Da'a*, *Unde*, *Tara*, *Doi*, *Edo*, *Tajio*, *Ende*, *Kori*, and *Lauje* (Radawanti et al., 2021).

The rapid advancement of science and technology in modern times has contributed to the phenomenon of language variation Adli & Guy (2022), which is a key factor in the decline of the Kaili language. Currently, the use of Kaili is diminishing due to the increasing prevalence of foreign languages. These foreign languages, which emerge and develop in society, reflect linguistic variations influenced by the social and cultural context of the region (Andeska et al., 2023). If this trend continues, the Kaili language is at risk of extinction.

Educators and parents play a crucial role in encouraging children to use regional languages (Sartini, 2014). In response, the Palu City government, through the Palu City Education and Culture Office, began preparing a Kaili language curriculum in March 2023, with plans for implementation in all elementary and junior high schools across Palu. This curriculum aims to integrate Kaili cultural values into language learning, ensuring that the Kaili language remains a vital part of the community's heritage and does not fade from daily life.

Central Sulawesi is one of the provinces in Indonesia included in the "Merdeka Belajar" Episode 17 Regional Language Revitalization Program, initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. The Sulawesi Language Center serves as an extension of the Ministry, responsible for implementing this program at the elementary and junior high school levels in Central Sulawesi. Currently, the program focuses on two areas: Palu City and Donggala District.

Based on observations by researchers, several elementary and junior high schools have incorporated Kaili language modules into their curriculum. This reflects the schools'

commitment to preserving the Kaili language, a step supported by the Central Sulawesi Provincial Language Center through the regional language revitalization program, particularly among students in Palu City. Unlike previous research, which focused solely on preserving the Rai and Ledo dialects of the Kaili language Arief et al. (2024); Gazali et al. (2023); Sari et al. (2020), this study is broader in scope. It does not restrict the research to specific dialects in Palu City and includes both elementary and middle school students as research subjects.

2. Method

This research employs qualitative methods, which involve collecting, analyzing, and presenting data in the form of words or sentences, without the use of numerical data. Data collection was conducted using recording techniques, meticulously documenting the statements of informants or sources relevant to the research. The data analysis followed several stages: (a) data reduction, (b) data presentation, and (c) conclusion and verification. The findings are presented in detailed reports that describe students' proficiency in the Kaili language and the efforts made by schools in Palu City to preserve the language. The analysis process focuses on two aspects: (1) the Kaili language proficiency of students in Palu City and (2) the identification of schools in Palu City that implement Kaili language instruction. Once the data is classified, it is organized, filtered, and irrelevant information is discarded. At the conclusion stage, the efforts of school administrators and related parties in Palu City to revitalize the Kaili language are assessed.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on research conducted at elementary and junior high schools in Palu City, several schools were found to be actively working to preserve the Kaili language. Additionally, efforts to revitalize the Kaili language have been undertaken by the Palu City Education and Culture Office, in collaboration with the Central Sulawesi Provincial Language Center. Four schools—State Elementary School 3 Palu, Primary School Unggulan Putra Kaili Pertama Bangsa, State Junior High School 11 Palu, and State Junior High School 8 Palu—are consistently implementing the Kaili language revitalization program. These schools collaborate closely with the Central Sulawesi Language Center in their efforts.

3.1. Efforts by Local Schools to Preserve the Kaili Language

Kaili Permata Bangsa Elementary School

Kaili Permata Bangsa Primary School for Boys is located in Tondo Village, Mantikulore District, Palu City. This school remains committed to preserving Kaili language instruction since its founding in 2014. The school aims to familiarize students with the

Kaili language, ensuring they understand and apply it in daily life. To support Kaili language learning, the school independently prepares its own modules and learning materials. These modules primarily cover basic content, such as teaching numbers and various adjectives. The principal of Kaili Permata Bangsa Primary School, stated:

“There is no comprehensive reference or quality guidebook for learning. We create our own modules, but they are still at a basic level. For upper grades, we follow a more developed approach. Lower grades are first taught the basics, and we build on that foundation.”

(Irfan, 2023)

An example of a Kaili language learning module created independently by Kaili Permata Bangsa Primary School.



Figure 1. Kaili Language Learning Module

In the process of learning the Kaili language, students at Putra Kaili Permata Bangsa Superior Primary School are required to use Kaili for interaction, both among themselves and between students and teachers. This includes discussions, asking and answering questions, and introducing themselves. The principal of Putra Kaili Permata Bangsa Superior Primary School, stated:

“During Kaili language lessons, all students are required to use the Kaili language when interacting with one another, communicating with teachers, and introducing themselves.”

(Irfan, 2023)

The school provides learning materials that are still basic, such as numbers, verbs, days of the week, and various nouns in the Kaili language.



Figure 2. Kaili Language Learning Materials

The image above shows the content of the Kaili language learning module provided to students at Putra Kaili Permata Bangsa Superior Primary School. To enhance the Kaili language learning process, the teaching staff created learning cards that display a Kaili noun alongside its Indonesian translation. These cards are placed in a Kaili Language Dictionary Box to support vocabulary learning.



Figure 3. Kaili Language Learning Media

Learning media created by the teaching staff to enhance Kaili language learning at Putra Kaili Permata Bangsa Superior Primary School. The cards and boxes serve as educational tools designed to capture students' attention and improve their

understanding and retention of the material. In addition to classroom instruction, the revitalization of the Kaili language is further reinforced through arts and cultural self-development activities. Students are introduced to the customs and culture of the Kaili community, including learning the movements of various traditional Kaili dances and the meanings of several regional songs (Radawanti et al., 2021). Additionally, students with a talent for literary arts are trained to write, recite poetry, and tell stories in the Kaili language. These students are then entered into various competitions as a form of recognition for their enthusiasm and dedication to learning the Kaili language.

The following is an example of Kaili language poetry studied by students at Putra Kaili Permata Bangsa Primary School:

PESAVIA	VEHICLE
Hitu hi domo nirasaiaku	I no longer feel this way
Nalenge nolipa nggavao	Tired of walking long distances
Nikenimu yaku until nakava	You take me until I arrive
Ri said to Ponia	At my destination
Ane komiu ledon naria	If you're not there
Eva ledon kusani manguli	It's as if I cannot speak
Masesampu I think	The anxiety I feel
What komiu ledon naria	Because you are absent
Motar, thank you ntoto yaku	I am very grateful
Your ante tompopovia	To the one who created you
Thank you muni yaku	I also thank you
Ante your cover	For your assistance
Niala dako ri sleep book	Taken from Bobo's book
Nibatuni Djafararief	Written by Djafararief

"We are also making efforts to revitalize the Kaili language through self-development activities in arts and culture. We offer opportunities for students who are interested in the arts to learn the Kaili language through poetry writing and recitation, as well as storytelling in the Kaili language. Recently, we participated in a competition held by the Central Sulawesi Language Center, where we won in the single comedy category."

(Irfan, 2023)



Figure 4. Mother Tongue Festival

One of the students from Putra Kaili Permata Bangsa Primary School participated in the Mother Tongue Festival for elementary and middle school students in Central Sulawesi, organized by the Central Sulawesi Language Center. The student successfully won the single comedy category, performing in the Kaili language. The following is the single comedy material performed by Fathir, a student from Putra Kaili Permata Bangsa Primary School, during the Mother Tongue Festival:

First Bit

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi
wabarakatu

Yaku hi Fathir, yaku sei ngana panggopuna dako hi tatalu talintoaka, ledο nagayana majadi ngana panggopuna mai, ane maria eyo napenti, yaku itu aga nibagika vaju warisa pade mai, umuru ku ante toaka ku nabeda sasio sapulu mpae, pade mai nipokona vaju bula real Madrid, pas nibagikakaku majadi cokola Nasaba daki. coba vei nibayangka miu, dako hi vula majadi cokola, madota berimbamo nijadikakumo vaju pramuka. Majadi ngana panggopuna itu ledο ntotoa naase, itu vaju warisa da mai, berimba mo pame ane warisa nu tana, toaka ku niratana Tanana yaku narata nasehana, “ana toakamumo ruru siko damo nompopea tana nu pemda.

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi
wabarakatuh

My name is Fathir, I am the youngest of three siblings. It's tough being the third child because on special occasions, I only get hand-me-down clothes. My oldest brother is 19 years older than me, and when I got his Real Madrid jersey, it had gone from white to brown due to all his hiking. Imagine a white shirt turning brown! In the end, it became my scout uniform. Being the youngest isn't much fun, and all I get are hand-me-downs. If it were land being passed down, my brother would get the land, and I'd be left with the advice, “Just wait for the local government to hand over some land.”

The Second Bit

Oh iya, yaku hi nosikola hi SD Uggulan putra kaili permata bangsa, sikola nabelo dako hi nabelo, tamana nagali, pamandangana nadoli, roa-roaku nabelo ane maria dotana. guru-guruku nabelo naheba muni. ibu guru nitendekumo komiu hitu, maria hitu satunjobu. Tapi kehebana berimba guru mai, yaku hi ledο nipahamiku matematika, pea nakuya ? matematika hai mata palajara noreke pade yaku hi ntonana nabelo ledο mpokonoku noreke, bahka ane maria roakau ledο naria polpenana, nibagikaku kasi alima njobuna sangu.

I study at Putra Kaili Permata Bangsa Primary School, which is regarded as one of the best schools. The campus is clean, the view is beautiful, my friends are friendly, and the teachers are excellent. My teacher even praised me, but regardless of how great the teacher is, I still struggle with mathematics. Why? Because mathematics involves numbers, and I am someone who doesn't enjoy counting. If my friend doesn't have a pen, I'll give them five thousand rupiah instead."

The Third Bit

Yaku hi muni kidal mamala rapenta, pea-pea nipoviaku nompake pale njidi, nontulisi njidi, nobasu njidi, nangande nggana. Tapi Yaku hi najojo nipongekaka roa-roaku nompake pale njidi, pangulina vei "pea iko sei, montulisi pale njidi roaku mai manguli pale nubigo. Hama mangepe mai, nasumpu raraku nianuka vai, nabilis ntoto yaku. Heee, niulikakaku heivi komiu ee, ane mamala pas nalahir mai mamala merapi... medodoka pale nggana seivi yaku, baikakamo kadaku majadi pale seivi, mompovia bilisi. Nauntu yaku hi ntonana nasabara.

I am also left-handed, as you can see. Whatever I do, I use my left hand—writing with my left, writing with my left, but eating with my right. However, my friends often tease me for using my left hand, saying, "Why are you writing with your left hand? It looks odd." This teasing used to annoy me. If I had the choice at birth, I would have asked for my right hand to be dominant, and if that wasn't possible, maybe even my feet. But thankfully, I'm a patient person.

The challenges faced by Putra Kaili Permata Bangsa Primary School in implementing Kaili language learning include; 1) The school lacks an official Kaili language learning guide. The independently developed learning module is still basic, resulting in similar material being taught across all grades from one to six. 2) There is insufficient parental support at home to reinforce Kaili language use, which affects the continuity of the lessons learned at school.

State Elementary School 3 Palu

The revitalization of the Kaili regional language is also being implemented by State Elementary School 3 Palu, located on Jalan Dr. Moh Hatta, Central Besusu, East Palu. The school has independently prepared its own learning module, as it has yet to receive

an official module guide from the Palu City Education and Culture Office. This was confirmed in an interview with one of the educators at 3.2. State Elementary School 3 Palu. The Kaili language instructor at State Elementary School 3 Palu, stated:

“We are still creating our own learning modules because our department has not provided any official guidance on this.”

(Aslita, 2023)



Figure 5. Kaili Language Learning Module at State Elementary School 3 Palu Festival

The image above shows a Kaili language learning module developed independently by State Elementary School 3 Palu. Kaili language instruction at SDN 3 Palu is offered to students from grades 1 to 6. The material is still introductory, focusing on recognizing and pronouncing body parts through songs, as well as identifying the names of objects and family members in the Kaili language.

The following are examples of Kaili language learning materials at Putra Kaili Permata Bangsa Superior Primary School:

1. Learning the names of body parts.



Figure 6. Kaili Language Learning Materials Through Songs


The image above displays learning materials designed to help students recognize various body parts. To engage students more effectively, educators occasionally teach the names of body parts using folk songs in the Kaili language. The following is the translation of the Kaili song depicted in the image:

Head, shoulders, knees, and toes, knees, and toes
 Head, shoulders, knees, and toes, knees, and toes
 Ears, eyes, nose, cheeks
 Head, shoulders, knees, and toes, knees, and toes

3.1 Menuliskan dan mengucapkan nama anggota tubuh bagian luar dalam Bahasa daerah Kaili.

Bahasa Kaili	Bahasa Indonesia
1. Balengga	Kepala
2. Bulua	Rambut
3. Onge	Hidung
4. Bivi	Bibir
5. Kalimpi	Pipi
6. Kire	Dahi
7. Lenje	Wajah
8. Vinga	Bahu
9. Talinga	Telinga
10. Tambolo	Leher

Nama anggota tubuh bagian luar



11. Bambara	:	Dada	24. Keke	:	Kesak
12. Bengo	:	Belakang	25. Palo	:	Pantat
13. Kope	:	Pinggang	25. Aje	:	Dagu
14. Taputu	:	Lutut	26. Kotumpu	:	Ibu jari
15. Kada	:	Kaki	27. Konjili	:	Jari kelingking
16. Tavanggada	:	Betis	28. Tava ntalinga	:	Daun telinga
17. Bukucali	:	Mata kaki	29. Mata	:	Mata
18. Tai	:	Perut	30. Padu	:	Tumit
19. Timpu	:	Paha	31. Rarampale	:	Telapak tangan
20. Puse	:	Pusat			
21. Kanduku	:	Kuku			
22. Koyampale	:	Jari			
23. Siku	:	Siku			

Figure 7. Kaili Language Learning Materials for Recognizing Body Parts

2. Recognizing the Names of Objects in Kaili Language

Bahasa Kaili		Bahasa Indonesia
Kadera	:	Kursi
Panggau	:	Cukuran kelapa
Ranja	:	Ranjang
Sindu	:	Sendok
Talua	:	Kebun
Talusi	:	Tungku
Tambale	:	Teras
kavali	:	Kuali / Teflon
Kura	:	Belanga / Panci
poindo	:	Lampu
Uta	:	Sayur



Figure 8. Kaili Language Learning Materials for Recognizing Object Names

3. Recognizing the Names of Family Members in Kaili Language

3.6 Menulis dan mengucapkan nama Keluarga dalam bahasa daerah Kaili

Nama Keluarga			
Bahasa Kaili	Bahasa Indonesia	Bahasa Kaili	Bahasa Indonesia
Tuama	Bapak / Papa	Era	Ipar
Tina	Ibu	Matua	Mertua
Mangge	Paman	Makumpu ruantapi	Cicit
Tuaka	Kakak	Sara ruanggani	Sepupu dua kali
Tuei	Adik		
Sampesuvu	Saudara		
Ana	Anak		
Pinoana	Ponakan		
Makumpu	Cucu		
Tupu langgai	Kakek		
Tupu mombine	Nenek		
Sarasanggani	Sepupu satu kali		
Pinotina	Tante		

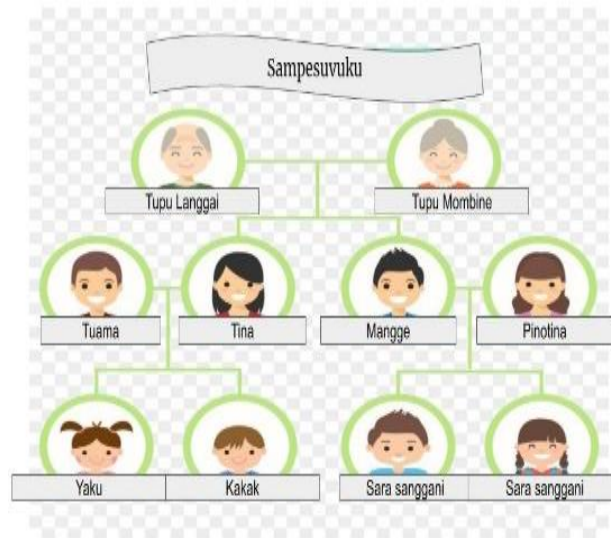


Figure 9. Kaili Language Learning Materials for Recognizing Family Members

The following provides the translation of family member names shown in the image above:

Tupu Langgai	: Grandfather
Tupu Mombine	: Grandmother
Tuama	: Father
Tina	: Mother
Mangge	: Uncle
Pinotina	: Aunt
Brother	: Brother
Sarasanggani	: Cousin

Sangu - sangu nipotoveku Nina / Tina
 (lirik satu satu aku sayang ibu)

Sangu - sangu nipotoveku Nina/ tina

Randua - randua nipotoveku tata / Tuama

Tatalu - tatalu nipotoveku tuaka, tuei

sangu, randua,tatalu nipotoveku pura





Figure 10. Kaili Language Learning Materials for Recognizing Family Members Through Songs

The following is the translation of the Kaili song in the image above:

One - one, I love my mother
One - one, I love my mother
Two - two, I also love my father
Three - three, I love my younger siblings
One, two, three, I love them all

In addition to formal lessons, the revitalization of the Kaili language is also promoted through self-development activities known as “Thursday Literacy.” In this program, students from grades one to six showcase their skills in the local Kaili language through various artistic performances, such as singing, reciting poetry, delivering speeches, and storytelling. Principal of Palu State Elementary School 3, noted:

“Not only through formal lessons, but we also reinforce the Kaili language for our students through self-development in the arts and culture. Here, students showcase their talents by singing, delivering speeches, reciting poetry, and storytelling in the Kaili language.”

(Mariati, 2023)

In addition to classroom learning, the revitalization of the Kaili language is also promoted through self-development activities known as “Thursday Literacy.” In this program, students from grades one through six demonstrate their proficiency in the local Kaili language through artistic performances such as singing, poetry recitation, speech delivery, and storytelling. The Principal of Palu 3 State Elementary School, stated:

“Beyond formal lessons, we also enhance students' Kaili language skills through self-development in arts and culture. Here, both male and female students showcase their artistic talents, such as singing, delivering speeches, reciting poetry, and telling stories in the Kaili language.”

(Mariati, 2023)



Figure 11. Thursday Literacy Arts Performance at SDN 3 Palu

The image above captures a Thursday Literacy event at SDN 3 Palu, where students, dressed in traditional attire, showcased their skills in arts and culture, including the use of the Kaili language through poetry reading, singing, and speech delivery. Palu's State Elementary School 3 acknowledged that the efforts to revitalize the Kaili language are a deliberate initiative to preserve and revive the use of the Kaili language among children. Since children are the next generation responsible for keeping the regional language alive and evolving Hanemann & Scarpino (2016), it is essential to equip them with both knowledge and proficiency in the Kaili language from an early age.

The enthusiasm of students at Palu's Public Elementary School 3 in participating in Kaili language learning and related activities is regarded as exceptionally high. According to Mariati, the principal of Palu's Public Elementary School 3, the majority of students come from outside Central Sulawesi and are not native to the Kaili tribe. Nevertheless, their enthusiasm for learning the Kaili language appears to be on par with that of the students who are native Kaili speakers. The Principal of Palu's Public Elementary School 3, explained:

"Most of these students are not from the Kaili community, which presents a challenge for us. However, we have observed that even non-Kaili students are highly enthusiastic about learning the Kaili language, especially with the inclusion of Thursday Literacy activities."

(Mariati, 2023)

The challenges faced by Palu 3 Public Elementary School in implementing Kaili language instruction include: 1) The school has not yet received an official Kaili language curriculum guide from the Palu City Education and Culture Office, resulting in the learning materials being relatively basic. 2) A significant portion of the students are not native Kaili speakers, which requires additional time for teachers to provide Kaili language instruction. This is compounded by the lack of parental support at home, where children are not accustomed to speaking the Kaili language, making it more difficult for them to reinforce what is taught at school.

State Junior High School 11 Palu

State Junior High School 11 Palu is located on the outskirts of the city, where the use of the Kaili language remains prevalent. The school is situated on Jalan Keramik, Duyu Village, Tatanga District. Nearly 85 percent of the students are native Kaili speakers, as they reside in the surrounding area. Despite this, the school is committed to continuing efforts to revitalize the local Kaili language, driven by concerns over the declining number of Kaili speakers and the risk of the language becoming endangered.

According to information gathered by researchers, prior to the implementation of Kaili language revitalization efforts, students at this school reported feeling embarrassed to use the Kaili language, as it was perceived to be outdated. The teacher at State Junior High School 11 Palu, noted:

“Before the initiative to revitalize the Kaili language, students here were still hesitant to use it, as they felt it was old-fashioned, even though almost all of them are native Kaili speakers.”

(Arizani, 2023)

In response to this attitude, the school adopted the term “high era” as a guiding principle for its Kaili language revitalization efforts. Unlike some other schools, State Junior High School 11 Palu implements a “Kaili Language Day,” which is observed once a week, on Fridays. On this day, both students and teachers are required to communicate in the Kaili language during all school activities, including teaching and learning sessions. This initiative aims to promote the continued use and preservation of the Kaili language within the school community. The teacher at State Junior High School 11 11 Palu, stated:

“While there is no formal Kaili language instruction at this school, we are revitalizing the Kaili regional language by designating one day each week—Friday—as a day for using the Kaili language.”

(Arizani, 2023)

Efforts to revitalize the Kaili language are considered to have shown positive results. Students who were previously hesitant to use the Kaili language are gradually becoming accustomed to communicating in it. Although the process is not yet fully developed, the initial embarrassment associated with speaking the Kaili language among students is beginning to fade. In fact, many students have started to use the Kaili language outside of the designated language day. The teacher at State Junior High School 11 11 Palu noted:

“Thankfully, after several months of implementation, this initiative is starting to bear fruit. Those who were once reluctant and embarrassed to use the Kaili language are now becoming more accustomed to it. The teachers and I are encouraging them to speak Kaili regularly, though it is not yet fully integrated.”

(Arizani, 2023)

Additionally, the school has taken further steps to engage students in learning the Kaili language by establishing an arts performance platform. This stage provides an opportunity for students with talents in literary arts, such as poetry writing, speech-making, singing, and storytelling in the Kaili language, to showcase their abilities. Some of these talented students have already participated in various competitions organized

by the Central Sulawesi Language Center, serving as a way to assess and further develop their proficiency in the Kaili language. The teacher at SMPN 11 Palu, explained:

"We have implemented additional initiatives for students who show talent in the literary arts by organizing classes and performance stages to showcase their abilities. However, these are supplementary; our main goal is to encourage them to consistently use the Kaili language through their talents. As part of the evaluation process, we also participate in competitions typically organized by the Central Sulawesi Language Center."

(Arizani, 2023)

SMPN 11 Palu remains committed to revitalizing the Kaili language through its one-day program aimed at the sustainable use of the language. This initiative is designed to foster a renewed sense of love and pride among students in using the Kaili regional language.

State Junior High School 8 Palu

State Junior High School 8 Palu is located in the mountainous region of Tipo Village, Ulujadi District, Palu City. Approximately 90 percent of the students are native Kaili speakers. At this school, efforts to revitalize the Kaili language are made by fostering the habitual use of the Kaili language in interactions between students and teaching staff. This practice is integrated into nearly all school activities, including during lessons, break times, and morning assemblies. The principal of State Junior High School 8 Palu, explained:

"Teachers here, especially those of Kaili descent, frequently encourage the use of the Kaili language during meetings such as morning assemblies, classroom lessons, and breaks. In addition to speaking Kaili, the teachers often incorporate lessons on the history and culture of the Kaili tribe."

(Farida, 2023)

In implementing this strategy, the school frequently uses the term "peata", which in the Kaili language means "to protect" or "to safeguard." However, at the school, "peata" is often used by teachers to encourage students to clean up litter around the school grounds. The word "peata" has been adapted as an acronym for "peinta rumpu ala tawaka ri pombolina", which in Indonesian means "look at the rubbish, pick it up, and dispose of it in the proper place."



Figure 12. Documentation of Community Service at SMPN 8 Palu

The image above depicts the principal of SMPN 8 Palu leading a cleanup of the school grounds alongside students while using the term “peata” to communicate. The principal of State Junior High School 8 Palu, explained:

“In addition to classroom instruction, break times, and morning assemblies, we have also introduced the term “peata”. This term reflects our school's commitment to preserving and revitalizing the Kaili language. Moving forward, we aim to expand beyond “peata” and create other Kaili terms with meaningful interpretations and creative abbreviations, designed to engage students and encourage them to use the Kaili language in the school environment.”

(Farida, 2023)

The revitalization efforts at State Junior High School 8 Palu have produced noticeable results. Since these initiatives began, students have demonstrated the ability to respond to questions and communicate with teachers in the Kaili language. The school's focus in its language revitalization efforts is on the Ledo and Rai dialects, as these are the primary dialects spoken by the majority of students at SMPN 8 Palu. The principal of State Junior High School 8 Palu, remarked:

“This initiative has certainly produced noticeable results. Students who were previously hesitant to speak Kaili are now becoming more accustomed to it and are able to respond and communicate with teachers in the Kaili language. The Kaili language consists of several dialects, but for our revitalization efforts, we focused on the most widely spoken dialects at the school—namely, Kaili Ledo and Kaili Rai, which have the largest number of speakers among our students.

(Farida, 2023)

One of the key challenges the school faces in revitalizing the Kaili language is the lack of parental involvement in encouraging children to use the Kaili language in their daily activities at home. As a result, students often struggle to expand their Kaili vocabulary. The principal further explained:

“The issue is that students are not exposed to the Kaili language in their everyday environments, such as at home or when interacting with friends. Therefore, it is essential that parents take an active role in familiarizing their children with the Kaili language so they can more quickly develop proficiency.”

(Farida, 2023)

3.2. Revitalizing the Kaili Language Among Palu City Students Through Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture Initiative

The Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia launched the “Merdeka Belajar” (Independent Learning) program, Episode 17, focused on the revitalization of regional languages. This initiative was implemented in recognition of the vital role regional languages play as cultural and national assets, reflecting Indonesia's diverse heritage (Andina, 2023). Central Sulawesi is one of the provinces included in this program, and the Sulawesi Language Center has been designated as the implementing body responsible for carrying out the revitalization efforts among students in Palu City (Marhum et al., 2023). The Head of the Central Sulawesi Language Center, explained:

“This revitalization program is part of the “Merdeka Belajar” initiative, Episode 17, led by the Ministry of Education and the Language Agency. It is being implemented in various regions, including Central Sulawesi, although not all provinces are participating in the regional language revitalization effort.”

(Asri, 2023)

The program primarily targets elementary and junior high school students, as this age group is considered ideal for learning new skills and knowledge due to their heightened curiosity. These students are seen as crucial to the future of the Kaili language, helping to preserve and revive its usage as the number of native speakers continues to decline.

“We consider elementary and middle school students as the new generation, as they are adaptable, less influenced by external factors, and highly curious. Therefore, we are providing them with regional language exposure.”

(Asri, 2023)

As part of the “Merdeka Belajar” (Independent Learning) program, Episode 17, the Sulawesi Language Center is implementing a revitalization model for the Kaili language through self-development activities in arts and culture (Mardiah, 2022). These activities include poetry reading, short story writing, traditional singing, storytelling, and speeches, all conducted in Kaili. To assess and support the progress of Kaili language revitalization, the Central Sulawesi Language Center organized a festival featuring artistic

performances in Kaili. This initiative aims to foster students' interest and active participation in learning Kaili.

"We have created a specialization model, offering students six areas of interest, including poetry reading and composition, creative writing, traditional song performance, and more. For instance, traditional songs—those with unknown origins—allow students to adapt and engage with the Kaili language directly through the arts."

(Asri, 2023)

To support efforts in revitalizing the Kaili regional language, the Central Sulawesi Language Center has provided training for dozens of teachers in several elementary and junior high schools in Palu. These teachers were instructed in implementing regional language revitalization programs through specialized self-development modules focusing on the arts. Currently, the Independent Learning Program, Episode 17, for revitalizing the Kaili language in Central Sulawesi is focused on two areas: the city of Palu and Donggala District. Targeted schools in Palu include SD Unggulan Putra Kaili, SDN 3 Palu, SMPN 11 Palu, and SMPN 8 Palu.

3.3. The Role of the Palu City Government in Kaili Language Revitalization Efforts

The Palu City Government, specifically the Department of Education and Culture, plays a significant role in efforts to revitalize the Kaili language, contributing to the preservation of regional languages throughout the archipelago. The Palu Department of Education and Culture fully supports the language revitalization initiatives led by the Central Sulawesi Language Center at the student level. In addition to this support, the Palu City Government is finalizing the Kaili language curriculum for elementary and junior high students across all schools within the Palu city area. The Head of the Cultural Sector of the Palu City Education and Culture Department stated:

"Currently, we are developing and finalizing the Kaili regional language curriculum. Several parties are assisting in this process to ensure that historical and other relevant materials about the Kaili language are integrated into the curriculum."

(Rahma, 2023)

The preparation of the Kaili language curriculum began in March 2023. As of now, the curriculum development stage led by the Palu City Education and Culture Department is approximately 80% complete. Multiple socialization efforts in schools and curriculum discussion seminars have been conducted to ensure effective implementation once the Kaili language curriculum is introduced. However, the Head of the Culture Department acknowledges that more time is needed to complete the curriculum, given the thorough study process involved.

“We have taken significant initial steps, and regarding the completion of the Kaili language curriculum, we are continually working to maximize its development. This requires a lengthy process, as it is not simple; all components must be well-defined and documented.”

(Rahma, 2023)

The Kaili language curriculum will be integrated into local content, emphasizing essential cultural values of the Kaili tribe. This content will include carefully organized Kaili language materials and structured teaching strategies to facilitate comprehension and foster students' interest in learning the Kaili language (Andina, 2023). The curriculum will serve as a guide for educators in teaching Kaili, addressing the current lack of standard guidelines, as many schools independently create their own learning modules.

“This Kaili language curriculum will be included as part of the local content, carefully organized with strategies for effectively delivering the material, and prioritizing the values and culture central to the Kaili tribe. It will become a resource for educators to teach Kaili language to students.”

(Rahma, 2023)

The Palu City Government, through the Education and Culture Office, aims to implement the Kaili language curriculum across all elementary and junior high schools in Palu by mid-2024. Although initially introduced under Mayor Drs. Hidayat, M.Si, this policy has faced discontinuity, leading to limited implementation in some schools.

3. Conclusion

Although approaches vary, the common goal of these revitalization efforts at the student level is to preserve the Kaili language and prevent its extinction. The initiatives undertaken by various entities, including schools, the Palu City Government, and the Central Sulawesi Provincial Language Center, have yielded positive outcomes, though they are not yet fully realized. Nonetheless, these efforts have succeeded in fostering a habit and willingness among students to learn and communicate in the Kaili language. Additionally, these initiatives contribute to building a sense of pride in Kaili-speaking students and motivating them to support the preservation of their regional language.

Currently, efforts to revitalize the Kaili language continue to progress, aiming for broader implementation across all schools in Palu. Stakeholders involved in these initiatives remain committed to a sustainable approach to Kaili language revitalization to ensure the survival and resurgence of this endangered language. The revitalization of the Kaili language among students in Palu City emphasizes the cultural values inherent to the Kaili tribe. This approach aims to help students remember and understand the history and culture of Central Sulawesi, ensuring that the Kaili language and its cultural heritage remain integral to the community.

Revitalizing the Kaili language at the student level in Palu City is designed to establish a foundation of awareness and appreciation for their native language, preventing language confusion before students encounter a broader array of foreign languages in subsequent stages of education. This initiative seeks to cultivate a new generation of Kaili language speakers who will carry on the linguistic heritage. To advance the Kaili language revitalization efforts, policies should include the establishment of a Kaili language curriculum, particularly for elementary and junior high schools. In addition, suitable teaching materials are needed to support Kaili language learning, along with the essential involvement of parents in encouraging the use of Kaili both at home and within the community.

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