

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION IN INDONESIA

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25

Abstract

The United Nations recognizes the importance of regional languages in maintaining cultural diversity, including the regional languages of Indonesia. However, these languages are endangered, and efforts are needed to save them through regional language revitalization policies. This policy still faces legal issues. This paper examines the policy of revitalizing regional languages and fulfilling the legal needs of regional languages. The study results show that the condition of regional languages has led to extinction globally and nationally, and revitalization policies are currently focused on education and need a strong legal framework. The revitalization policy still needs to fulfill the legal need for local languages. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the regulatory framework with oversight of regional language laws, budget support, and regional language revitalization policies. Commission X DPR RI is important in revitalizing regional languages by making the Regional Language Bill a Priority Bill, allocating regional language budgets, and overseeing the regional language revitalization policy. Additionally, coordination and synergy among all stakeholders are needed to protect regional languages.

Introduction

Regional languages are important in maintaining cultural diversity and multiculturalism worldwide (Rijal, 2021). The United Nations (UN) recognized February 21 as International Mother Language Day and established the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL) for 2022–2032 (United Nations, 2002 & 2019). This multilingual recognition is an effort to maintain unity in cultural diversity,

which includes regional languages as Indonesia's wealth. Indonesia has 718 languages, with 326 in Papua alone (Kemdikbudristek, 2020: 19 and 2022: 10).

On the other hand, data from The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) shows that 40 percent of the approximately 6,700 languages spoken in 2016 are threatened with extinction (UNESCO, 2021: 12). Based on ethnologic data from 2016, Indonesia



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has 707 still-alive languages and 12 extinct languages (Sartini, 2023). Meanwhile, in 2018–2019, there were 36 safe languages, 19 stable but endangered languages, three languages experiencing setbacks, ten endangered languages, five critical languages, and 11 extinct languages (Kemdikbudristek, 2020, pp. 27–34). This condition is exacerbated by the fact that 29 languages are threatened with extinction, and 43 languages will experience a decline in 2021 (Kemdikbudristek, 2022: 10). Data from these various institutions show that regional languages face a serious threat of extinction. This is understandable because the use of regional languages is dominated by the pre-boomer generation born in 1945 and earlier, which accounts for 87.13 percent (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023: 22–23).

The government has established a regional language revitalization policy to protect and save regional languages. The commemoration of International Mother Language Day can be a momentum to reflect on how to apply regional languages in education, society, and government and strengthen the regulatory framework. This aligns with Ganjar Kurnia, who emphasized that this commemoration should consider using mother tongues in a social context and become a collective reflection to preserve regional languages (Maulana, 2023). This paper examines the regional language revitalization policies and how efforts are made to fulfill the legal needs of regional languages.

Local Language Revitalization Policy and Regulatory Framework

Regional language revitalization has been carried out during several government periods, focusing on increasing the use of regional languages in areas where local culture is still strong and regional languages are used to introduce local government. This policy was implemented through the Intensification Program for Fostering Regional Languages during the New Order era, regional governments' use of regional languages during the reform period, and the Program for the National Movement for Strengthening Indonesian and Regional Languages and Literature during the leadership of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

The revitalization of regional languages is a policy of the Indonesian government aimed at saving the existence of endangered regional languages in Indonesia (Yudhistira, 2023). The Head of the Language Agency has stated that revitalizing regional languages is a strategic stage after mapping, measuring vitality, and language conservation (Kemdikbudristek, 2023). This policy started with the initiation of the Language Agency in 2021 (Yudhistira, 2023), which aimed to revitalize several regional languages in three provinces, with five regional languages in 2021, 13 provinces with 30 regional languages in 2022, and 22 provinces with 59 regional languages in 2023, with young people as the main target. The policy uses three models: Model A for safe language with a school-based approach; Model B for vulnerable languages with school and community center-

based approaches; and Model C for languages that are in decline/endangered/critical with a community-, family-based, or community center-based approach (Kemdikbudristek, 2022: 8). Furthermore, the 17th Episode Freedom Learning Program was also held in 2022, and the 2023 National Mother Language Shoot Festival (FTBIN) will have the theme “Revitalization of Regional Languages in the Context of International Mother Language Day 2023” with the sub-theme “Multilingual Education – The Need to Change Education.

The regional language revitalization policy is based on Article 32, paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which states that the state respects and maintains regional languages as national cultural assets. Other regulatory frameworks include Law No. 24 of 2009 on the Flag, Language, National Emblem, and National Anthem (UU No. 24 of 2009); PP No. 57 of 2014 on the Development of Fostering and Protecting Language and Literature and Increasing the Function of the Indonesian Language (PP No. 57 of 2014); and Presidential Decree No. 63 of 2019 on the Use of Bahasa Indonesia as the Basis for Using Bahasa Indonesia and Regional Languages. Although it has a constitutional basis, a stronger, clearer, and more measurable regional language revitalization policy arrangement with a more comprehensive constitutional basis is still needed. This is due to the state’s responsibility and human rights for regional languages in Indonesia and several articles related to regional languages besides Article 32, paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.

Regional Language Legal Requirements

Regional languages are important in national culture and identity and must be protected, promoted, preserved, and developed. The constitutional basis for regional languages is contained in Article 32 paragraph (2), Article 18A paragraph (1), Article 18B paragraph (2), and Article 28I paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. This constitutional basis explicitly stipulates that regional languages are cultural assets (Article 32 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia). Furthermore, regional languages are linked to the relationship between government authority and attention to regional diversity (Article 18A paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia), the recognition and respect for customary law community units and their traditional rights (Article 18B paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia), respect for the cultural identity and rights of traditional communities (Article 28I paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia), and state responsibility for the protection, promotion, enforcement, and fulfillment of human rights (Article 28I paragraph (4) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia). Some of these norms demonstrate that the state is responsible for protecting and preserving regional languages as part of the nation’s cultural wealth and ensuring the constitutional rights and human rights of people to use regional languages. Therefore, regional languages require regulations that are

consistent with philosophical legal requirements to carry out the function of protecting the state.

The government has fulfilled its state responsibility for regional languages through regional language revitalization policies. This policy is based on several laws, such as Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, Law No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education, Law No. 24 of 2009, and Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Government. However, the legal framework for revitalizing regional languages is still scattered across several laws and regulations and places more emphasis on the use and development of regional languages in education. The use of regional languages as a public right and within government circles has yet to have a strong legal framework. Therefore, there is a legal need for comprehensive and integrated regulation of regional languages as law.

Indonesia also needs a comprehensive legal framework for regional languages because of its status as an international community and a member of the United Nations. This is based on UN General Assembly Resolution No. A/RES/56/262 on Multilingualism and No. A/RES/74/135 on Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which calls for the preservation, promotion, and protection of all languages, especially indigenous languages facing extinction, including linguistic minorities, through ongoing efforts to preserve, promote, and revitalize these languages (United Nations, 2002 & 2019). Based on the two UN Resolutions, a comprehensive strengthening of the legal framework is necessary to protect and sustainably preserve regional lan-

guages as a traditional community right because regional languages face the threat of extinction globally and nationally and are supported by data from several institutions and organizations. This is a social need for regional language law.

Some of these legal requirements show the importance of fulfilling human rights and the state's responsibility for regional languages. For this reason, it is necessary to strengthen the regional language regulatory framework in the form of a more specific, comprehensive, and integral regulation as a legal basis in accordance with the constitutional basis, namely regional language laws.

On that basis, Commission X DPR RI plays an important role in revitalizing regional languages through its legislative, budgetary, and oversight functions. The DPR RI needs to propose the Regional Language Bill in the 2020–2024 National Legislation Program to become a priority bill, even though it originates from a proposal from the DPD RI. It should also fight for budget allocations for regional languages and oversee government policies regarding regional language revitalization, including absorbing community aspirations and working to resolve problems to increase the effectiveness of regional language revitalization. In addition, the DPR RI needs to involve all stakeholders related to regional languages in carrying out the state's responsibility for regional languages. The support from the DPR RI is expected to provide legal certainty for regional languages as national cultural assets and ensure the revitalization of regional languages.

Conclusion

Regional languages need to be protected from extinction through regional language revitalization policies. However, the regulatory framework and its implementation are inadequate, so they do not meet the legal needs of regional languages. Local language laws are essential regarding human rights and the state's responsibility for language. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen regulations in the form of laws to regulate regional languages.

Commission X DPR RI is important in revitalizing regional languages through its legislative, budget, and oversight functions. It can do this by proposing the Regional Language Bill as a Priority Bill in the National Legislation Program and immediately drafting laws, allocating regional language budgets, and overseeing government policies regarding local language revitalization. In addition, coordination and synergy between all stakeholders are also required.

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