THE ROLE OF GOOGLE TRANSLATE FOR INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract

Teaching English as a foreign language is a difficult and challenging job to do since the ability of learners in receiving the lesson may differ from one to another. A teacher is required to be creative and innovative in designing the syllabus and activity to be conducted in class. One of the ways to teach English is by using Google Translate. As everyone knows that google translate is a tool provided by Google Inc that enables the user to get the meaning of the source language into the target language. Therefore the aims of the study are, (1) to know the advantages and disadvantages in using Google Translate for Indonesian EFL learners, (2) to know what English proficiency skill can be develop by using Google Translate. The respondent of this study are student in the second semester of English Department, Udayana University. This study uses the descriptive qualitative method in describing the finding and a set of questionnaire will be given to the respondent to know their opinion about using Google Translate during their learning process. An observation method is also conducted to know the improvement of the English proficiency made by the learners. The findings shows that, there are both advantages and disadvantages in using Google Translate for Englishlanguage learning, the advantages are learners are able to enrich their vocabulary because it provide the synonym, learners will know how to pronoun a word correctly and the disadvantages is learners may find the wrong meaning of a word.And lastly, the findings show that by using Google Translate a learner can develop their vocabulary, speaking skill, and also their grammar.

Keywords: *multilingual context, triadic interplay, mutual complementary recourse*

1. INTRODUCTION

Nationwide, Indonesian is a multilingual country, the very given fact encompass-ing (a) hundreds of vernaculars or local languages, (b) the Indonesian itself being the national-official language used in the domains of government, business and education, and a compulsory school subject, and (c) the English language, the principally chosen foreign and international language as well as the language of science, technology, and diplomacy. By 1945 Constitution, the institutionalization of Indonesian as the national language has long been confirmed, well-established, final and binding.

With respect to (a), (b) and (c) above, Indonesia clearly demonstrates distinctive national language policies, a deliberate complementary sociolinguistic division of labour that prevents the languages from competing in the same social domains (Bertrand, in Ball 2010:108). Dealing with (a), vernaculars or local languages refer to languages spoken by some or most of the population, but not the official or national language; a home or community language, one or more additional local languages, and perhaps a local trade language ((Richards 2010: 627; Ball 2010:180). Amounting to over 700 local languages[1], ten out of the most widely spoken include Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, Minangkabau, (Musi) Palembang Malay, Manado Malay (Minahasan), Bugis, Banjarese, Acehnese, Balinese[2]. A good number of them are recommended to be taught in formal schools as local contents (see Indonesian 2013 Curriculum, widely nicknamed as *Kurtilas*). This Indonesian multilingual diversity indeed constitute invaluable ethno cultural wealth, being worth maintaining and preserving through formal education across levels.

In the light of Indonesia's multilingual policies, a question worth raising in the current and prospective ICT era is how strong and solid nation(al character) building is, in part, promoted by way of

maintenance, preservation, and development of vernaculars or local languages by the help of Indonesian and English?

The article is addressed to the issue of interplaying Vernaculars, Indonesian, and English (VIE, for short). The very notion of interplay is basically a matter of approaching an object of linguistic inquiry within the frame of VIE. In the initial stage, this was meant to explore and figure out how short-listed websites of Javanese expose a great variety of issues of this given vernacular (the choice being the writer's native language). Hence, the focus is narrowed down to Javanese-Indonesian-English (JIE).

2. REVIEW OF THEORIES OR MODEL

The theoretical basis is simply a triadic amalgam of metalinguistic notion of each of the JIE. As it is commonly understood, the notion of metalanguage is the use of a language to talk about language; a language to study another language or the object language (Cruse 2006: 106; Richards and Schmidt 2010: 361-362). The selected websites were those of Javanese (the circle in the center); and the searching was confined to three search keys denoting one and the same topic, language, namely: *basa jawa*, *bahasa jawa*, and *javanese language*. The flow of inquiry is shown by the three unidirectional arrows, all focusing on the center (the theme or subject-matter). For a wider perspective, the model is extended by adding three bidirectional arrows, relating one another, all the three metalanguages (JIE).

Figure 1
Triadic Model of Exploring Javanese
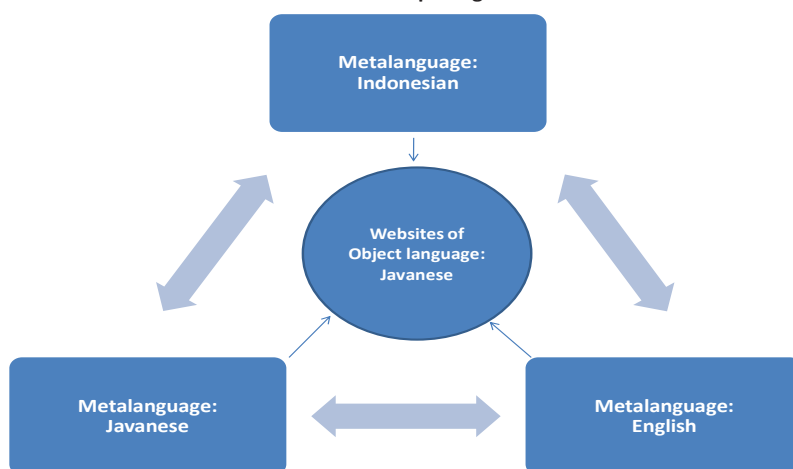
3. RESEARCH METHOD

To figure out how Javanese language on the screen is like, the survey method and observation were adopted, and they simply ran as follows. Using Google search engine, the first search key *basa jawa* was entered and the screen shot displaying the search results was observed. The same step was taken, by entering the second search key *bahasa jawa*, and so was for the third search key, *javanese language*. Instances of topics or contents found for presentation and discussion were selected from those ranging specifically from the first ten to twenty displayed results (they were assumed to be the most likely ones to access). Simple cross tabulations and grouping were presented along with relevant discussion and comments.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The overview of search results using the three key phrases (*basa jawa, bahasa jawa,* and *javanese language*)are presented as follows:

Table 1
Search results in seconds

Search engine	Results (search key phrases, speed, and websites found)		
	basa jawa	*bahasa jawa*	*javanese language*
Google	0.32 seconds	0.63 seconds	0.32 seconds
	233.000.000	219.000.000	115.000.000

From the table above, at least two points are worth discussing. First, it is evident that, by the help of Internet/ICT, in a manner of milli-or-nano-seconds, Javanese is open and freely accessible for everyone. Second, millions of site choices are available instantly on the screen. This is, indeed, phenomenal, as the available and accessible number of sites overwhelmingly far outnumbers that of the speakers of the language (75.000.000[3]-80.000.000, Crystal 1997, in Subroto et al. 2007). Javanese has, indeed, been no longer confined to the Javanese themselves, but to a much wider global community. Such a phenomenon is in part due to the full support and potentials of the use of ICT and by virtue of English language. Online sources for learning Javanese in mobile and diverse multilingual settings outside its cradles (Central-East Java, Yogya-karta-Surakarta) are practically limitless. To access them is just a matter of mouse clicks or scrolls.

In terms of contents or subject-matters, the search results displayed below show a good number of choices:

Table 2
Subject-Matters
(from the first 10-20 displayed sites)

List of topics or subject-matters by each search key		
basa jawa	*bahasa jawa*	*javanese language*
- *golonganing basa*	- *tipe bahasa*	- *IPA, pronunciation*
- *pepak basa jawa*	- *kamus Ind. ↔ Jawa*	- *alphabets*
- *kawruh basa-tembung*	- *kamus monolingual*	- *useful words, phrases*
- *android apps*	- *kata-kata mutiara*	- *genealogy of language*
- *terjemahan*	- *terjemahan*	- *typology*
- *sastra*	- *sebaran pengguna*	- *profile overview*
- *nguri-uri basa*	- *nama dan artinya*	- *sharing forums*
- *perilaku dan pitutur*	- *android apps*	- *materials development*
- *kamus jawa online*	- *koleksi peribahasa*	- *dictionary, lexicologos*
- *kitab suci*	- *humor, lelucon*	- *ethnologue*
- *humor*	- *ekspresi cinta*	- *cultural identity*
- *blog*	etc.	- *courses offered*
- *pawarta*		- *ancient scripts*
etc.		etc.

What does such a comparative list mean in the multilingual context of language learning in Indonesia? The triadic interplay of three metalanguages (JIE) for searching topics or subject-matters in the object language provides insights in terms of at least five issues to address further in practice, namely choices of topics or subject-matters, linguistic worldview and perspective, language uniqueness-commonalities, attitude building, and language and technology.

In terms of topics or subject-matters, abundant themes or topics are available for language learners to choose and explore further, apart from what is prescribed in the course plan, syllabus, or

curriculum. Allowing learners to explore further themes or topics of their own interests is essentially a matter of encouraging younger generation to be interested in and committed to their own native language or vernacular. In brief, learning a language, particularly a vernacular, is advisably designed to be more explorative than authoritative.
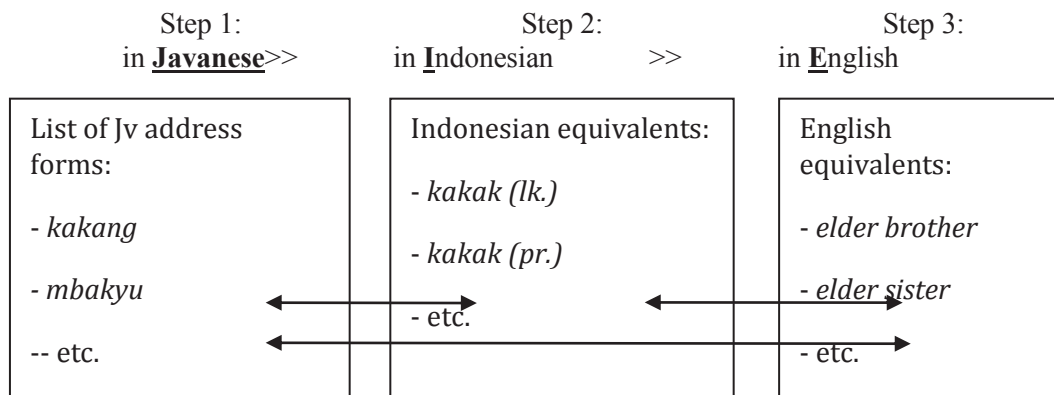
Next, the triadic interplay along with the list of topics or subject-matters provides learners with a model of how their worldviews develop and how the inward-and-outward outlooks of the given or object language are like. Exploring topics in the object language using three different metalanguages is essentially encouraging them to make use of languages as tools or means, to view how reality, or the subject-matter chosen, is manifested or represented in the given language. In short, the making use of three different metalanguages in such a triadic fashion is essentially an exercise of viewing the world, in general, by means of three different perspectives.

The triadic model in practice also facilitates language learners to understand the very given fact that in multilingual context, there are uniqueness and commonalities across languages, viz. the issues of language specifics and language universals. Each language is peculiar or unique, but there are also commonalities among peculiarities and uniqueness across languages. Such an awareness and insight are acquired only if learners have the chance of comparing and/or contrasting and being exposed to different languages. The multilingual reality, with respect to vernaculars and national language in Indonesia, is certainly a fertile ground for such studies to build stronger mutual understanding and respect among fellow Indonesians. Such an attitude will, in turn, support and sustain nation(al) character building. For Indonesians, this means that multilingualism certainly goes hand in hand with nationalism.

All the points above are facilitated and made efficient by the help and use of ICT within the multilingual context as in Indonesia. The triadic interplay of VIE outlined above is an alternative model of how languages within the realm of multilingualism are treated complementarily, implying that ELT business is organized not at the expense of the existing (local/vernacular) languages. On the contrary, recourse to each other language in such a triadic model is considered natural, and will sustain and support language maintenance (deliberately, or incidentally), and also facilitate and enhance the learning of L2/FL.

The triadic approach of interplaying JIE is, of course, applicable for more specific learning of language elements such as vocabulary. Such a recourse is inevitable since learners' background knowledge rests initially and primarily in their native language. Mutual and complementary recourse is therefore considered normal in such a context it needs to be (re)designed in such a constructive way to support and enhance the learning of a foreign language. The framework of such a triadic model is shown in Figure 2. Choices of vocabulary domains or the topic around which words are to be found and clustered may vary across students' L1 or local language background.

Figure 2
Address forms across JIE

Step 1: in **Javanese**>>	Step 2: in **I**ndonesian >>	Step 3: in **E**nglish
List of Jv address forms: - *kakang* - *mbakyu* -- etc.	Indonesian equivalents: - *kakak (lk.)* - *kakak (pr.)* - etc.	English equivalents: - *elder brother* - *elder sister* - etc.

Such a display will help students observe and learn that the very same concept, such as family address forms, vary across languages. Contrasts and resemblances or similarities across languages really matter in the learning process, and such insights will eventually help students undertand and appreciate the uniqueness of each language accordingly.

Further models or variants of such a triadic interplay can be tried and exercised but what really matters is that proportinal and balanced treatment of languages existing in a multilingual context, like what is in Indonesia, needs to be arranged in such a strategic and constructive way in the realm of ELT for the sake of mutually enhancing benefits for local language maintenance, nation(al)-character building, and acquisition of foreign language, notably English.

5. CONCLUSION

Indonesia is granted with multiculturalism and linguistic wealth of multilingualism. In the context of EFL, such an invaluable wealth needs to be managed constructively for mutual, positive and creative benefits of the learning and the languages concerned and in terms of how they are maintained and developed. The triadic approach of interplaying vernaculars, national language, and English is only an alternative of how such an endeavor is idealized and exercised.

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