

The Sentence Repetition Test as a tool to measure community-wide bilingualism in standard Indonesian

Sociolinguistics

Hermanto Lim and Matthew Peebles

SIL International Indonesia

hermann_gunawan@sil.org

Abstract

The Sentence Repetition Test (SRT) is a language proficiency test developed to quantitatively measure the community-wide proficiency level in a second language. Consisting of fifteen sentences ranging in topics and difficulty, the tool is proven effective for measuring the bilingualism proficiency at the lower and intermediate levels. This paper will briefly discuss the development of the Indonesian SRT, its administration and application in the Rejang community of Bengkulu, Indonesia. The development process involves the calibration of the SRT to other more reliable tests like the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) or the Second Language Oral Proficiency Evaluation (SLOPE) and the selection of test sentences based on a Difficulty Level (DL) and Discrimination Index (DI). The SRT is administered using a stratified and systematic sampling methodology and standard administration procedures. The paper will discuss how the results are analyzed and interpreted and will also relate the SRT results to factors that affect the community's bilingual proficiency, such as poor access to education, infrequent contact with speakers of other languages or contact in which only very basic Indonesian is used, and high ethnic homogeneity within the community.

References:

- Blust, Robert. 1984. On the history of the Rejang vowels and diphthongs. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (BTLV)* 140:422-450.
- Hanawalt, Charlie. 2008. *The development of the Indonesian Sentence Repetition Test*. Jakarta: SIL International. Unpublished draft.
- McGinn, Richard. 1999. The position of the Rejang language of Sumatra in relation to Malay and the 'Ablaut' languages of Northwest Borneo. In Elizabeth Zeitoun and Paul Jen-kuei Li (eds), *Selected Papers from the Eighth International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics*, 205-226. Taipei: Academia Sinica Institute of Linguistics.
- Radloff, Carla F. 1991. *Sentence Repetition Testing for studies of community bilingualism*. Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics and University of Texas at Arlington.