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Stefan Danerek, *Kamus bahasa Palu'e – Indonesia*

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Book review

Stefan Danerek, *Kamus bahasa Palu'e – Indonesia*. Depok: UI Publishing, 2019, 222 pp, ISBN: 978-979-456-839-2. Price: IDR 75,000 (softcover).



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“A good dictionary is one in which you can find the thing you are looking for preferably in the very first place you look” (Haas 1962: 48)

Language documentation is in some ways a fundamentally interdisciplinary project. In seeking a “comprehensive record of the linguistic practices of a given speech community” (Himmelman 1998: 166), language documentation must enter fields other than linguistics. Alongside its annotated corpus data and descriptive grammar, a dictionary is also one of the possible outcomes of language documentation projects. Himmelman (2006: 17) mentions that, in structural linguistics there is a well-established format for language documentation, consisting primarily of a grammar and a dictionary.

Therefore, documenting a language essentially involves compiling a grammar – by setting of rules for producing utterances – and a dictionary – by making a list of conventional form-meaning pairings used in producing the utterances. *Kamus bahasa Palu'e – Indonesia* published in 2019 by UI Publishing is the kind of a grammar-dictionary format. Stefan Danerek has successfully not only documented but also described the Palu'e language in this dictionary. The Palu'e language is an endangered language spoken on the Palu'e Island, Sikka District, Flores, Indonesia. Palu'e is part of the Austronesian language family, falling in the Malayo-Polynesian sub-group.

Unlike any other conventional dictionary, *Kamus bahasa Palu'e – Indonesia* begins with the background to the language documentation and the oral tradition documentation research done from 2012 to 2017. Therefore, the spoken language corpus data which was collected during the fieldwork to create this dictionary is quite large and representative. It contains a Palu'e core vocabulary wordlist, with definitions in English and Indonesian, to assist English-speaking dictionary users to learn Palu'e language in the future. This

dictionary is the first port of call for people wanting to discover more about the endangered Palu'e language.

In the language documentation field of languages in Indonesia, the bulk of the lexicographical work in endangered language documentation (such as wordlists, dictionaries, or even descriptive grammars) is published by government institutions such as Badan Bahasa or Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia. However, as far as I can discover, this is the first minority language dictionary published by UI Publishing, the publisher company established by Universitas Indonesia. This can be taken as a promising sign that university publishers in Indonesia have begun to take more interest in disseminating language documentation products such as dictionaries of local languages. This is important because the university also has a role to play in raising the issues of minority languages in Indonesia, especially endangered languages.

From the lexicographical point of view, this dictionary has an interesting macrostructure because it is presented as a whole package with a summary of the descriptive grammar of the language. As is widely known, the compilation of grammars and (to a lesser extent) dictionaries is well entrenched in structural linguistics. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that this dictionary is indeed a multi-purpose record of one language, Palu'e. Importantly, we also learn about the ecology of the language itself from the dictionary. This is a real plus point since not many people know about it. Hence this dictionary has had to be presented differently to the other more conventional bilingual dictionaries.

However, there are some technical remarks which should be highlighted. They are related to the microstructure of the dictionary itself. I ran into one example on page 127 at the entry *lele/lele polo*. In the introductory part of this dictionary, it is noted that "/" is used to separate word variants (p. 55). However, this is rather difficult to see as the word variant is sometimes also treated as a sub-entry, such as the example in *lele/lele polo*. Moreover, keeping with the same example, this entry is described simultaneously as a noun and a verb, without any further explanation about the environment in which it could be considered a noun or verb. It would be better if there were one or two examples of sentences to enlighten the reader. The definition and its microstructure are cited below.

lele/lele polo n. v. 1 menggulung benang dengan 'polene'. Tahap terakhir pembuatan benang kapas. 2 menggulung atau melilit benang ke sebuah ranting kayu yang tipis (setelah 'ra'a ta'a') (p. 127)

However, instead drawing attention to minor technical inconsistencies, it is important to highlight that this dictionary as the combination of ethnographical information, sketch grammar, and dictionary of an understudied language is a really important product. It is also worth mentioning that unquestionably this dictionary is also rich in documenting cultural matters, especially relating to textiles and other parts of material culture. Some cultural entries, such as *huru* (p. 100), are semi-encyclopaedic. Even though, the definition sentence in this entry still needs editing, its detailed explanation about the concept of

huru as a cultural practice is very informative. Therefore, we can say that this dictionary not only captures words from Palu'e language, it also embraces Palu'e culture in its entries. The example of the definition from the entry *huru* I cite below closes this small review of the *Palu'e - Indonesia dictionary*.

huru n. v. 1 nama jenis pengobatan, yang diambil dari bahan obat, pada simtom atau penyakit seperti tersebut di bawah. Ada banyak jenis pengobatan yang diistilahkan dengan 'huru' [...]. Hampir semuanya menggunakan kunyahan sirih pinang. Beberapa contoh berikut. Orang khusus mempraktikkan jenis 'huru' masing-masing, dan ilmunya diwariskan secara turun temurun. 2 kutukan dan pelarangan yang melindungi hasil kebun atau pohon dari pencurian dengan tanda yang digantung di pohon atau taruh di tempat. Pengobatannya seperti di atas. 3 simtom penyakit yang tandanya berhubungan dengan tanda 'huru' tersebut. Pengobatannya seperti di atas. 4 ... (p. 100).

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