Abstract

In this paper, I address contemporary development of Panyabungan Siladang Language (or PSL for short) which is naturally spoken by its aboriginal speakers living dominantly in two villages, Sipapaga (or Sipagapaga) and Aek Banir, in Panyabungan Kota District (PKD) which is administratively under Mandailing Natal Regency (MNR), North Sumatera Province (NSP), Indonesia. Data were collected through interviews involving several local natives during my field work. My main contribution focuses only on describing some common limitations in the levels of grammatical component parts such as sentence, clause, group, word, and morpheme respectively. Some researches show that PSL’s speakers either have limitations in expressing their various forms of component parts, for example, some active sentences do not have their passive counterparts or vice versa, or these people neither possess the word ingin ‘want to’ but, instead, they employ hatiku ‘my heart’ nor they have such expression as membantuku ‘help me’ but membantu kepada ku ‘*help to me’. These limitations do not, in fact, become barriers for them to use their language. People in MNR in general speak Mandailing Language (ML) which is totally different with PSL. ML is grouped into Batak Language while PSL is closer to Malay. Siladang is actually a small part in MNR both in amount of speakers and in their territory. Interestingly, PSL’s native speakers can communicate both in PSL and in ML; they are multilinguals. Unfortunately, the majority of ML’s speakers do not understand PSL at all. In many conditions PSL’s articulators really need ML since the latter is applied in daily communication in MNR, especially when they are out of their aboriginal territory. Therefore, these aborigines are considered a small-scale community with only around 2 thousand speakers and today about one third of them employs PSL and the rest, dominantly young generation, become bad articulators who are more familiar with ML.

Key words: PSL, native speakers, expressions, limitations.

INTRODUCTION

Geographically, North Sumatra is divided into four regions, such as Nias, Southeast Sumatra, Tapanuli, and East Sumatra Regions. Mandailing Natal (or Madina for short) is one of the regencies in Southeast Region. This region covers four regencies i.e. Madina, South Tapanuli, Padang Lawas, and North Padang Lawas and one city i.e Padang Sidempuan. Madina, with twenty-one districts, has formally determined Panyabungan as its capital and based on population census in 2010 there are 403,894 people living here. Before 1992 Mandailing was a district under South Tapanuli Regency. Based on Adat Law Mandailing (not Madina) was partitioned into two: Groot Mandiling ‘Mandailing Godang’ and Klein Mandailing ‘Mandailing Julu’. Before our independence all kings in Mandailing Godang belonged to Nasution clan; meanwhile, Mandailing Julu was controlled by Lubis clan. From historical perspectives Mandailing can be traced down from Negara Kretagama book which was written by Father Prapanca who noted that in 1287 of Saka year (or in 1365) Majapahit soldiers mentioned a region which they called Mandahiling. Prapanca’s notes can be seen at the 13th verses of his book. The verses completely said:
As Madina’s capital Panyabungan has five districts and one of them is Panyabungan Kota where Sipapaga and Aek Banir villages are administratively under its control. The two villages and the people living there are then well-known as Siladang (some people, not from Siladang territory, give various names i.e. “Suku Lubu”, Mandailing Siladang”, “Suku Batak Siladang”, and “Alak Siladang”). In this respect I use the term “Panyabungan Siladang” referring to “people living in the two villages”. Then, what about Siladang language? Some articles in internet use the term “Bahasa Lubu” and “Bahasa Siladang”. However, some native people whom I interviewed during my field trip argue that their language is traditionally named as “Savoda Kite” meaning “our language”. However, some young generations do not know such the name and they are more familiar with the term Siladang. For this occasion I choose Bahasa Siladang (or “Panyabungan Siladang Language (PSL) in English version) to refer to “the language which is used by Panyabungan Siladang”. Geographically, Panyabungan Siladang live at Mount Sihite (Tor Sihite) valleys and Siladang territory is around 17 km from Panyabungan city.

The Sipapaga and Aek Banir villages, based on population census in 2008, are inhabited by 2,030 people; 1,000 of them (or around 528 family heads (or KKs)) live in Aek Banir and 1,030 people (or around 376 KKs) stay in Sipapaga (or some people also call it Sipagapaga). In 1975 population census, the total number of Siladang was only reaching 1,113 people; around 264 (or 55 KKs) of them lived at Sipaga-paga village and about 849 people (or 171 KKs) stay in Aek Banir village. Today, road infrastructure to reach to the two villages is better than some years ago. Some local people have built their houses permanently. These become indications that Siladang territory faces physical developments. The latest information from one informant whom I contacted via phone is that road facilities are considered satisfied.

Panyabungan Siladang live on agricultures or become free-lance workers in agriculture. A small number work as teachers. The main characteristic of their houses is the use of woods. Some commodities which are produced by them are rubber, choco, brown sugar, and brooms. Some old people here believe that Sampuraga legend actually happened in Siladang area. PSL is, therefore, naturally spoken by its marginalised native speakers. They are marginalised since developments in all aspects of life are almost not touching Panyabungan Siladang. I still remember when for the first time I came here in 2003. Both villages had only two primary schools, two mosques, and one football field in Sipapaga; unluckily, they had no junior and high schools, no antenatal clinics, and no doctors. People in Madina, in general, use Mandailing Language (ML) which is totally different with PSL. ML is grouped into Batak Language while PSL, I believe, is closer to Malay. Panyabungan Siladang is actually a small part in Madina both in amount number of speakers and in their territory. However, PSL’s natives can communicate both in PSL and in
ML; they are multilinguals. Unfortunately, the majority of ML’s speakers do not understand PSL at all. In many conditions PSL’s articulators really need ML since the latter is applied in daily conversation in MND, especially when they are out of their aboriginal territory. These aborigines are considered a small-scale community since the number of fluent speakers is, as I predicted, around one-third of the population and the rest, dominantly young generation, become bad articulators who are more familiar with ML. Some researches show that PSL’s native speakers either have limitations in expressing their various forms of sentences, for example, some active sentences do not have their passive counterparts or vice versa, or these people neither possess the word ingin ‘want to’ but, instead, they employ hatiku ‘my heart’ nor they have such expression as membantuku ‘help me’ but membantu kepada ku ‘*help to me’. These limitations do not, in fact, become barriers for them to use their language.

A GLANCE AT INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE

Lewis Thomas (see O’Grady et.al. (1989:1)) said in his The Lives of a Cell: “the gift of language is the single human trait that marks us all genetically, setting us apart from the rest of life”. I do not know exactly whether the PSL’s native speakers have ever heard this; I am sure they will feel sad if they know then that, based on Thomas’ view, they really depend on their own language since language is the main part of their identity or trait and this identity can differ them genetically from other people. If PSL disappears from their small neighborhood, of course, they lose their genetical identity. They must also understand that losing identity can be seen from the losing of language. Therefore, language becomes the only human identity in this case. O’Grady et. al. (ibid) then argue that “language is many things”. This statement means that language carries several aspects such as a system of communication, a medium for thought, a vehicle for literary expression, a social institution, a matter for political controversy, and a factor in nation building. I agree in many respects about these aspects. Losing one or two of them will be an indication that any language is in danger. When PSL’ natives forget their language so the six aspects above are gone. By bringing this language into seminar, like today, I hope that I can, at least, save one or all of the aspects as argued by O’Grady at.al.

PSL is considered indigenous. In relation to preserving intangible cultural heritage in Indonesia Czermak, Delanghe, and Weng, three foreign linguists who were appointed by and worked for UNESCO Jakarta, carried out a pilot project on oral tradition and language preservation. Specifically the project was done to seek the oral traditions and indigenous languages of ethnic minority groups in Kalimantan, especially in Central Kalimantan. They argued that they had designed the project that could help to preserve and safeguard as well as develop endangered languages in this island. They then reported that Indonesia, with over 700 spoken languages, has a rich and diverse linguistic and multi-cultural heritage. This heritage is then devided into three aspects, they are culture, Indigenous Knowledge (IK), and indigenous
languages. Each of them has a close bond, for example, culture and IK are transmitted through language since language is the most vehicle for communicating and preserving intangible heritage and IK. “Language not only carry the historical experience of a people group, they also codify, preserve and express distinctive bodies of knowledge” (Kingsada, 2003, p. 43 in Czermak, Delanghe, and Weng). The three linguists gave stress that the safeguarding and preserving of indigenous languages is an important factor in the process of safeguarding cultures, especially among minority peoples whose cultural heritage is at greatest risk. They quoted Reyhner (1996, internet) as saying “Our languages contain a significant part of the world’s knowledge and wisdom. When a language is lost, much of the knowledge that language represents is also gone. Our words, our ways of saying things are different ways of being, thinking, seeing, and acting”. All this becomes the reason why I choose Panyabungan Siladang Language (PSL) for this seminar, not only because this language is indigenous but also is it at greatest risk because the number of native speakers are decreasing from time to time. When this language is extinct from their native speakers, the culture and the IK that the people have will only become a memory. I agree in many respects on the three linguists’ conclusion. They concluded that the preservation of indigenous languages should be closely linked with language development. This conclusion makes me happy and gives me fresh power again to continue my research project on indigenous languages in North Sumatra in general and PSL in particular. I have been involved in several researches on indigenous languages, for instance, Karo, North Sumatra’s western coast Malay, Muara Sipongi’s minority language and PSL. All these researches were carried out on my own or in cooperation with my students who attended the Linguistic Research Methodology lecture.

In her article entitled “Revitalization of Indigenous Culture in Child Care Centre” Kulhankova (2011:465) has done a research in Aboriginal community in Brisbane (Australia). Her article was published in The Qualitative Report journal. She argues that revitalization of indigenous culture takes place in different areas and always reflects its actors -- be they indigenous intellectuals, men, or women. I think it a good argument which we should pay attention. Unluckily she does not elaborate what she really means by “different areas” but I guess that “different areas” relate to “aspects of life”, for instance, improving local economy, education, health, security, and jobs. In relation to indigenous PSL, Panyabungan Siladang must be better in having such “different areas” above and stimulate all their elements of society, for instance, their intellectuals, men, and women. By involving them in taking care of PSL this native language will be more alive and be functional again in this community. So this is not wrong when Kulhankova call them actors. Those actors can be pillars for Siladang language development.

When talking about cultural revitalization Kulhankona (ibid: 475) has noted some expressions that are commonly used by Aboriginal women in relation to cultural topics for instance: “reconstructing,” “rediscovering,” “reclaiming,” “rebuilding.” “reinforcing,” “rejuvenating,” “regenerating,” or “visiting”
and “taking back control”. Until the end of her article she did not elaborate the cultural topics above; meanwhile, such topics are really interesting to discuss. What makes me surprised is when she took part in a women’s conferences organized by Australian’s Kummara. The most common results of the conferences include: maintaining creativity, strength, and resilience; respecting elders’ knowledge; living in harmony with nature; environmental and family nurturing; cultural healing and reconnecting; leadership in the family and in the community; living in the present but reflecting on and healing from the past; sharing with everybody; honour; belief in a better future; having a happy lifestyle; and respecting themselves. Since she focuses her research in healing, she then describes a lot about it.

One of the concepts in common results that interests me a lot is “respecting elders’ knowledge.” I interpret that the knowledge of indigenous language becomes part of elders’ knowledge. So Kummara is correct in this case that they respect their elders who, whatever the reason is, are the descendants of the past. This concept can be applied to PSL. The number of elders decreases quickly each year and this brings negative impact to the development of PSL. When the old generations who understand their indigenous language die, a lot of knowledge of the language is also gone. This situation is critical and needs to be paid attention by the local community, non-government organization, or local government in Siladang. For PSL respecting elders’ knowledge can be especially addressed to mothers and female elders. This last method has ever been used by Weerasak Juladalai et.al. in Thailand. Juladalai et.al. (internet) in their research report entitled “Knowledge Management on Local Wisdom of Tai-so Community Weaving Culture in Phone Sawan District, Nakhon Phanom Province” argue that mothers play important role on Tai-so’s weaving traditional wisdom transfer. They transfer to daughters, nieces and nieces-in-law respectively.

Prasert et.al refer three aspects—modernization, migration and integration—that make many cultures and traditions of local indigenous tribes distinct. For PSL two of them i.e. modernization and integration seems to happen. Siladang natives are not aware of their language since this language is considered old (not modern) and their integration with people speaking Mandailing has added the problem. One thing that remains significant is that Panyabungan Siladang is not a type of people who like migration. This will become a factor, actually, to preserve PSL. Only a small groups go out, for example to Medan and other cities, from their territory.

When talking about “Traditional Native Healing: An Integral Part of Community and Cultural Revitalization” Ranford (1998:63) argues that, after over the span of hundreds of years colonizing agents attempted to drive traditional native knowledge into the periphery of nature culture throughout Canada, today, many native people are reaching back into their cultural pasts and recapturing traditional knowledge. My big hope is that Panyabungan Siladang, as argued by Ranford, take care of PSL. They have to think
that it is descended from generation to generation and until now, no written texts can be found about their old generation or about PSL in the past.

This paper also talks about ethnicity. In her master thesis which focuses on the revitalization of culture and indigenous ethnic identity for Vepsian People in Karelia (Russian Federation) Evgenia Romanova (2007:8) has discussed on the importance of ethnicity preservation. She argues three levels of perspectives about ethnicity: **First, for building of national/federal identity.** She says that the nation-state is reforming itself through new discourses and practices of multicultural plural ethnic nationhood. She believes the concept of nation-state brings two effects: i) it brings ethnic identity more strongly into national political sphere. As a result of this the federal government intentionally tries to promote a distinctive Vepsian identity and to support the ethnic elite’s claims, and ii) this indigenous identity contests the homogenizing power of federal policy forces, and the Veps people become inevitably the bearers of multiply identity. **Second, for ethnic identity building.** Here she suggests this ongoing process of identity creation (including forming a cultural organization by communities to mediate between them and the state, to obtain funding for development projects, and to provide a positive alternative vision for a modern Vepsian identity) is strongly influenced by the state, and by non-govermental development agencies who offer money for groups practicing ethno-development. **Third, for individual identity belonging.** What she needs to say here is that for individual Veps, creating a “Vepsian” identity is a series of situational choices. For instance, she stresses, many Vepsian parents decide not to teach their urban children to speak Vepsian to avoid the situation when “the language does not feed you”, then – watch with both pride or sorrow as they become Russian-speaking “Russians” (as a Russian citizen and Russian-identity bearer).

What I have quoted and stated above shows that language is really important. This is not wrong when almost a hundred years ago Bloomfield (1996: 3, reprint) had argued that “language plays a great part in our life. Perhaps because of its familiarity, we rarely observe it,...” and he strongly stressed that “the effects of language are remarkable” (ibid). Although language is remarkable but I feel difficult to make the PSL’s natives to be aware of their own language. There are some reasons why they have such ideas but the idea that strikes me a lot from several of these natives is that this native language is not prestigious. What they mean is really simple; they argue that they are small in the number of speakers and the territory and no policy is available from the local government to preserve the Siladang people and their language. They also argue that understanding PSL does not give any guarantee for them to live in better financial conditions. One thing that these people receive is that they can express ideas in their language. This is in relevant with what Bloor and Bloor (1995:3) have ever said: “when people use language to express meanings, they do so in specific situations, and the form of the language that they use is influenced by the complex elements of those situations”. The more people in Sipapaga and Aek Banir villages express their
thoughts in PSL the more rapidly does this language develop. However, these efforts are not easy to achieve. All elements in the society are needed to have the same opinions concerning the preservation of PSL.

What Bloor and Bloor argue in the statement above is interesting and makes me stimulated to do a research on some common barriers that PSL’s speakers face when they speak multilinguals both in Bahasa Indonesia in formal situations and PSL in specific and daily situations. The two linguists (ibid) said that “situation also effects the expression of meaning...” but this ideas is in some respects rejected. The limitations of expressions of meaning in PSL occur in structural levels. What I mean is that structurally PSL is different with Bahasa Indonesia although the word order is considered the same between the two languages; they have the SVO. Some expressions in Bahasa Indonesia (BI) do not have their equivalence in PSL since this last language has indeed any limitations in the structural levels or in the vocabularies. So this paper tries to discuss a slight diefferences in expression between BI and PSL. But in general, the two languages do not have serious problems; the only problem is that PSL is in the danger of extinct, especially the knowledge of PSL.

Haegeman and Gueron (1999:14) give stress on the importance of “knowledge of language” (vocabulary, structure, foundation, basics) since each language in the world should constitute such knowledge which is used as the devices to protect itself from disappearance. When the PSL’s knowledge of language, for instance, is lost and this will bring impact on many things and one of them is that the PSL’s native speakers will also lose intuitions about their language. Intuitions are really needed since by intuitions the speakers are able to judge the sentences are acceptable or unacceptable.

Chomsky (1971:11) has voiced to the world that “linguists must be concerned with the problem of determining the fundamental underlying properties of successful grammars”. He then proposed “linguistic level” consisting of phonemics, morphology, and phrase structure. The three become “a set of descriptive devices that are made available for the construction of grammars”. Unfortunately, until now, there are not holictic researches carried out by linguists in NS concerning PSL’s linguistic level and I found only one or two books that portray Siladang’s Morphology and intonation. In short, PSL should become attention by NS’s linguists and should be preserved no matter how. This is in relevance with what Fasold and Connor-Linton have ever said. Fasold and Connor-Linton (2006:1) wrote that “the human capacity for self-awareness and abstract thought is facilitated by language, if not dependent upon it”. If PSL is forgotten then what I am afraid is that the native speakers of PSL will not have anymore their human capacity. This capacity is required as an instrument by them to utter their awareness and to transmit their ideas.

This paper is primarily based on Halliday’s theory of rank (or component parts). Halliday in Bloor and Bloor (1995:5-7) argues that a rank includes five components, for example, a sentence, a clause, a
group, a word, and morphemes. In Hallidayan perspectives a sentence consists of one or more clauses; a clause consists of one or more groups; a group consists of one or more words; a word consists of one or more morphems. Original examples from Halliday can be seen in the followings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Recent research is shedding new light on how acupuncture might work though we still have no definite answers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clause</td>
<td>Recent research is shedding new light on how acupuncture might work (though) we still have no definite answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Recent research is shedding new light no definite answers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Word     | answers
|          | still                                                                                                    |
| Morpheme | answer
|          | shed[d]                                                                                                  |
|          | -s
|          | -ing                                                                                                     |

This theory is used because, I feel, it is easy to apply in PSL; moreover, this theory is hoped being able to collect many expressions related to three things: PSL’ existence in its speakers, what really happens with PSL, and the way Payabungan Siladang think of their language. When discussing about functional grammar, Bloor and Bloor argue that the basic unit is often said to be the clause. What this means is that in the language itself the clause has a special place in expressing meaning because it is at this rank that we can begin to talk about how things exist, how things happen and how people feel in the world around us. It is also at the rank of clause that we usually use language to interact with others.

**DISCUSSION**

**Data 1: Limitations of Expressions in Sentences**

Data 1 does not contain many examples of expressions in using sentences during my field research in Siladang. I have some difficulties in constructing questionnaires which are related to this topic. What I mean is that my difficulties do not refer to my weakness in making questionnaires. However, I have some difficulties finding a lot of informants who really understand the concept of sentences. My experience shows that some informants do not understand my questionnaires so they interpret my sentences based on
their traditional intuitions or knowledge from generation to generation. In addition, my short stay becomes one of the factors that makes me weak in collecting a lot of data. Consider two examples shown in (1) and (2).

1. **BI**: Kalau kamu mau pergi, kamu bawa uang di kantong
   ‘If you want to go, you bring money in (your) pocket’.

   **PSL**: Pala oko nak molongkoh, beve pitis da caku
   ‘If you want to go, bring money in pocket’.

2. **BI**: Setelah makan roti, aku minum kopi
   ‘Having eaten bread, I drank coffee’.

   **PSL**: Pala siyap makan roti, oku minumi kopi
   ‘Having eaten bread, I drank coffee’.

Data 1 refers to sentences showing the use of *pala* which has two meanings such as ‘if’ and ‘after’. The conjunction *if* here does not appear in an if-clause so it does not require a condition, meaning that *pala* is closer to ‘when’ which is an interrogative adverb (see sentence 1). The speakers of PSL, what I mean here is all of my informants, have the same orientation in interpreting “kalau” or “setelah” in Bahasa Indonesia into the same and single word *pala* in their native language. Normally, PSL needs a subject when *pala* appears in a *pala*-clause; however, the second clause should not have a subject. In Bahasa Indonesia, we can use two variations of saying (1) either “Kalau kamu mau pergi, kamu bawa uang di kantong” or “Kalau kamu mau pergi, bawa uang di kantong”. In (2) above, the word *pala* appears in subjectless clause and is followed by the verbs *siyap* ‘finish’ and *makan* ‘eat’. *Siyap makan* refers to a perfect tense. Normally in English, a clause in (present/past) perfect should be accompanied by a clause in simple past. This does not happen in PSL. *Oku minumi kopi* does not show any indication that this clause is in such a tense and so is the clause in (1). The last clause also tells us that PSL does not have the simple past tense or present/past perfect tense. Only by using *siyap* they mean that they have already done something. This simplicity becomes part of PSL’s richness.

**Data 2: Limitations of Expressions in Clauses**

Data 2 becomes the sources of linguistic knowledge which I think is really significant during my research in Siladang. This language shows its different models in the structure of clauses. The clauses are composed in simple ways by its speakers but in its simplicity PSL is in fact showing its uniqueness. One of the causes which makes me aware of this language comes from the richness of expressions in clauses. Please read carefully some examples of expressions of Siladang’s clauses.
1. **BI:** Lembu lebih besar dari kambing
   ‘Cows are bigger than goats’

   **PSL:** lombu godong deke? le? kambeng
   cow big comp from goat
   ‘Cows are bigger than goats’

2. **BI:** pergi sendiri lebih enak dari pada (pergi) berdua
   ‘going out alone is more relaxed than (going) in couple’

   **PSL:** bai? deke? mongkoh suvong-ku le? mongkoh ba-due-due
   good comp go person/self-my than go PREF-two
   ‘going out alone is nicer than going out in two’

The clauses both in (1) and (2) in Data 2 are written in comparative degree which is marked by the use of the degree markers deke? and le? ‘than’. Deke? is equivalent to -er or more in English or to lebih in Bahasa Indonesia. The differences among them are that the comparative marker deke? and lebih can be used both for mono- and di-syllables while the –er is attached at the end of mono-syllabic adjectives and the more for adjectives of more than one syllables. I will show you some reasons why PSL’s natives use adjectives first. Some informants argue that actually in everyday life their language structure is well accepted by nonnative speakers of Bahasa Indonesia. For instance, when using this official language for informal situation people tend to say besar dikit meaning ‘bigger’ and besar kali ‘very big’. These models happen in PSL so that the use of adjectives preceding their markers are common and from these data I argue that Bahasa Indonesia’s structure is mainly, perhaps, influenced by English.

3. **BI:** bapak-ku memberi-ku sebuah buku
   ‘my father gives me a book’

   **PSL:** bopok-ku ma-mavi dong ku sabuoh buku
   father-my PREF-give for me a book
   ‘my father gives me a book’

4. **BI:** saya memberi-nya sebuah buku
   I give him/her a book
   ‘I give him/her a book’

   **PSL:** oku ma-mavi de ne sotu buku
   I PREF-give for him/her one book
   ‘I give him/her a book’

Data in (3) and (4) focuses on the clauses which have verb argument mamavi ‘to give’. This verb in PSL can be followed by three prepositions dong, de, and da. The use of dong is very specific, meaning that this preposition might be only applied in combination with first person singular object. Preposition de can be used for first person plural, second person singular and plural, and third person singular objects. Meanwhile,
da is specifically applied with third person plural as indicated by an example in clause (5) which I reconstruct by myself.

5a. PSL: oku ma-mavi  da  ivong tigge baba?
  I  PREF-give for them  three belt
  ‘I give them three belts’.

Some informants argue that the use of the three prepositions above is to make PSL language become polite. What they mean is that in some conditions, for example in impolite situations, such prepositions can be deleted as I give an example in (5b).

5b. PSL: oku ma-mavi iyene sotu buku
  I  PREF-give him/her one book
  ‘I give him/her a book’.

6a. BI: Saya menginginkan mangga
  ‘I want manggoes’

6b. PSL: Nak dong-ku mangga
  willingness for-me manggoes
  ‘My willingness is manggoes’ = ‘I want (some) manggoes’.

7a. BI: Saya ingin menjadi guru
  ‘I want (to be a) teacher’.

7b. PSL: Pe vokangku menjedi guru
  willingness heart-intrusive-my become teacher
  ‘I want (to) become (a) teacher’.

Siladang native speakers use their intuitions brilliantly when they are requested to translate the word “ingin’ in Bahasa Indonesia into their native language. They told me two possible answers for such word: nak as in (6b) and the combination of pe + voka in (7b). However, unluckily, no one of them could tell me the difference between the two. I argue that the word nak is used for any willingness which requires concrete objects like mango for example and please see (7c) for my reasonable support and additional clause. Meanwhile, the combination of pe + voka is used for any willingness that relates to profession but the clause as shown in (7d) does not talk about profession, except one thing that should be paid attention is that “going home” is also considered abstract activity.

7c. PSL: Oku nak makan
  ‘I want to eat’

7d. PSL: Pe vokangku pulong
  ‘My willingness is (to) go (home)’ = ‘I want (to) go (home)’

8a. BI: Dia tidak pergi
  ‘he/she does not go’

8b. PSL: Te yene molongkoh
  not he/she go
  ‘He/she does not go’
Data in (8b) purely, I argue, belongs to PSL. This unique clause is preceded by negative word te and is followed by the subject yene ‘he/she’. Some informants said that when such construction is changed in which the subject precedes the negative word, the clause becomes ungrammatical as written in (8c).

8c. PSL: *yene te molongkoh

9a. BI: Apa yang engkau temukan? ‘what did you find’.

9b. PSL: Ehe na masuo jan dem?
   What REL meet with you
   ‘*What meets you?’ (What did you find?)

People in Siladang can interpret the clause in (9a) as shown in (9b). What I need to say is that PSL’s speakers have an incapability to place dem ‘you’ as the subject of the clause. They argue with their linguistic intuitions that the subject in (9b) should be ehe ‘what’. What I feel surprised is that the answer of (9b) begins with the pronoun oku ‘I’ as shown in (9c) below but it does not start from ehe as written in (9d).

9c. Oku masuo jan kambeng
   I meet with goat
   ‘I found goats’

9d. *Ehe masuo jan dongku kambeng

10. BI: Kucing mencakarku ‘A cat scratches me’

   PSL: aku di-vomo? koceng
   I PASS MKR-scratch cat
   ‘I was scratched by (a) cat’

The clause in (10) are written in active clause in Bahasa Indonesia and in passive one in PSL. There is only one difference between the two clauses, that is, that the active form does not have its counterpart in PSL. What I mean here is that PSL’s natives can not interpret such a clause in active form in PSL. However, the passive form in PSL can not be brought again into its active one (see (11)). For this purpose, people in Siladang have only one version of saying the clause aku divomo? koceng. When being asked they did not give any answers. The only answer they said is that such passive form refers to a kind of reaction that PSL could do in understanding Bahasa Indonesia.

11. PSL: *koceng mongovomo? dong ku

**Data 3: Limitations of Expressions in Groups**

Data 3 covers some various examples of expressions in groups in PSL. From several interviews with some informants I conclude that some speakers of PSL have different expressions when they hear some common expressions in Bahasa Indonesia. Pay attention to the following examples below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bahasa Indonesia</th>
<th>PSL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a. Ketinggian    ‘height’</td>
<td>1b. tinggi bahine   ‘very tall’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a. Singkatan    ‘abbreviation’</td>
<td>2b. buntok bahine  ‘too short’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a. Kepanjangan  ‘long form’</td>
<td>3b. ponjong bahine ‘too long’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a. Kesedihan    ‘sadness’</td>
<td>4b. sedih bahine   ‘too sad’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a. Keburukan    ‘ugliness’</td>
<td>5b. jat bahine     ‘too ugly’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a. Gadis cantik ‘beautiful girl’</td>
<td>6b. pajusi na jeges ‘a girl who is beautiful’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7a. Pria gagah   ‘handsome man’</td>
<td>7b. loki-loki na jeges ‘a man who is handsome’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a. Gunung indah ‘beautiful mountain’</td>
<td>8b. tanjong na jeges ‘mountain which is beautiful’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a. Anak sungai ‘confluent’</td>
<td>9b. ae lomboh      ‘water valley’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some single words in Bahasa Indonesia as shown in (1) – (5) in Data 3 can not be translated as single words in PSL as indicated in examples in (1b) to (5b). Furthermore, what is interesting during my field trip and a series of discussion with some local informants is that native speakers of Siladang interpret words in (1) – (5) above with different perception, compared to perceptions that are normally understood by native speakers of Bahasa Indonesia. Perhaps, because of some limitations of vocabularies or because of their humble thought, PSL’s speakers catch and interpret the meaning of *singkatan* ‘abbreviation’ as given in (2a), for instance, as *buntok bahine* ‘too short’ which is not commonly accepted in formal Bahasa Indonesia.

Meanwhile, some examples as shown in (6a) – (8a) are not single words but they appear in groups. Speakers of Siladang extend their ideas when they have to interpret such phrases in (6a) to (8a). PSL with its limitations can not automatically transfer the ideas written in Bahasa Indonesia into PSL. The result is then leading to the extension of meaning for such phrases into clauses as indicated in (6b) to (8b). For example, the adjective phrase *gadis cantik* ‘(a) beautiful girl’ in (6a) should be made larger into PSL’s clause *pajusi na jeges* ‘(a) girl who is beautiful’. In Siladang the *na* is a relative pronoun which can be used for persons, animals, and things. The use of *na* is a must in PSL when we have a combination of a noun and an adjective. The compound noun *anak sungai* ‘confluent’ in (9a) is interpreted totally different by PSL’s speakers. Their perception about *anak sungai* is that *anak sungai* is considered the same as *ae lomboh* (or *air lembah* in Bahasa Indonesia), meaning that when there is water in the valley so it is called *anak sungai*.

**Data 4: Limitations of Expressions in Words**

In Data 4 I will bring you some single words in Bahasa Indonesia, which are differently translated in PSL. When collecting words during my stay in Siladang, I spent some days with my informants and I was
successful in collecting hundreds of words, from common nouns, proper nouns, collective nouns, and abstract nouns. Consider the following list of examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bahasa Indonesia</th>
<th>PSL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Istri  ‘wife’</td>
<td>anda umoh ‘wife’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sumur  ‘well’</td>
<td>tapi(y)an ‘river side’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ama? pavi  ‘stomach ache’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ama? kapele ‘head ache’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To express istri ‘wife’ the native speakers of Siladang utter anda umoh which is literally translated as “house mother”, meaning “a mother who always stays at home”. So I argue that the term anda umoh is understood by local people here as “a married woman who should care and stay always in the house”. In practice, many married women work in paddy field or taking care for the plantations her husband has. Majority in Siladang do not have wells. This brings impact for them to translate the concept of a “well”. When taking bath they go, for instance, to air pancuran ‘traditional shower’ or to the river side which is then appreciated by them as a well. What is fascinating during my direct experience with PSL’s natives is that when for the first time I heard the word manyaeh or ma panyaki?. They interpret sakit in Bahasa Indonesia as “having diseases”. Although this idea is simple but when we think in detail we will feel that actually when “we are sick” meaning that “we have diseases”. For pains in certain body organs the people here do not use the term manyaeh / ma panyaki? but they use the word ama? which also means “sick”, as shown in (3) above.

4. BI: Untuk  ‘for’  
   PSL: dem  ‘for’ (da anda umoh ‘for wife’)

Siladang has three interpretations for preposition “for”, for examples, dong, de, and da (see my complete note in Data 2 in points (3) and (4).

5. BI: Lantai  ‘floor’  
   PSL: ponto  ‘floor’ (boh lantai ‘ground floor’)

Ponto is traditionally interpreted as “earthen floors” so when some houses have ponto, meaning that the their floors are directly not separated from the earth. However, the concept of lantai is appreciated by local people as “floors made from woods” and these woods are higher from the earth. These house models are also called “rumah panggung” in Bahasa Indonesia. So floor underneath these woods, or a space under bed, is called boh lantai but not boh ponto.
6. **BI**: Samping ‘side’  
**PSL**: tabeng ‘side’

- tabeng le? pemovong ‘right side’
- tabeng le? kidal ‘left side’

Local society in Siladang has interesting concept of samping “sides”. Data in (6) above shows the combinations of tabeng and the words pemovong ‘right’ and kidal ‘left’. To combine such words we have to use preposition le? ‘from’. This means that it is impossible for tabeng and pemovong/kidal to be combined without le? This becomes the limitation that is naturally experienced by PSL’s natives.

7. **BI**: Pagar ‘fence’  
**PSL**: kondong ‘fence’

- kondong umoh ‘house fence’
- kondong hayam ‘hens house’

Other limitation this language has is that people here can not differentiate Bahasa Indonesia’s words kandang and pagar. They interpret the two as a single word “kondong” as indicated by the examples in (7) above. From their limitations I argue that Siladang traditionally do not have fences for their houses and they use kondong as a shelter for hens, cows, or buffaloes.

8a. **BI**: Nakal ‘naughty’ / malas ‘lazy’  
**PSL**: sagan ‘naughty’ and ‘lazy’

- te sagan ‘not naughty/not lazy’

8b. “Jangan malas dan nakal di sekolah, nak”
‘don’t be lazy and naughty in the school, kid’

What I feel a little bit confused is the word sagan which has two interpretations in PSL, for example, ‘naughty’ and ‘lazy’. When the two words are used separately in different phrases or clauses, the local natives do not have problems in understanding the differences as I show you in example (8a). However, when the words are applied in the same clause, as you can see in example (8b), PSL’ speakers have difficulties, and even having a serious confusion, in interpreting them.

9. **BI**: Saja ‘only’ / ‘just’  
**PSL**: 9a. kusi (bunuh kusi (order) ‘just kill’)  
9b. sajo (unte sajo (choice) ‘only orange’)  
9c. le (padias le iene mongkoh ‘let him/her go’)

What is more interesting from PSL can be found in examples as indicated in (9). Local people interpret the word saja in Bahasa Indonesia in various words as kusi, sajo and le in Siladang. The three words themselves have different usages, for instance, the word kusi is used for “giving order” as written in the example (9a),
the word *sajo* is employed for “a choice or alternative” (see (9b)), and the word *le* is practiced for “giving permission” as shown in example (9c).

**Data 5: Limitations of Expressions in Morphemes**

1. *PSL*: Oku *mamavi* de ne sotu buku

I have ever displayed this clause in Data 2 number 4. What I need to tell you is that the verb *mamavi* is a derived word consisting of prefix *mam-* which is inflectional and the root *bavi* ‘give’. The native speakers of Siladang have a limitation in pronouncing the phoneme /b/ when this phoneme is preceded by a prefix whose last sound is /m/. Therefore, phoneme /b/ is deleted. Another example can be seen in (2)

2. *PSL*: Pala oko nak *molongkoh*, beve pitis da caku

‘If you want (to) go, bring money in (your) pocket’.

The clause in (2) has been shown in Data 1 number 1. What is interesting here is that *molongkoh* is not a root but it is a derived word. The root is *mongkoh* ‘go’ and it is inserted by infix –*ol-* which does not change the meaning of the root. –*ol-* is inflectional.

**CLOSING**

This paper has tried to discuss in details about some potential limitations that are commonly happening in PSL. Panyabungan Siladang modify some sentences, clauses, groups of words, words, and morphemes in Bahasa Indonesia into their native language in order they can find any words that are closely related in meanings in PSL. As a language which is far from preservation PSL is, I believe, perfect in the structure of its grammar. Therefore, I personally invite linguists, especially those who are concerned with Typology of Language, Indigenous Language, etc., to be aware of this nice language. I suggest that a policy should be made by local goverment by, for instance, bringing this language into the classrooms in primary schools in Siladang. Do not let it extinct from our neighbourhood.

*This paper is brought into a discussion in a National Seminar on Language with a theme “Language in the Societal and Cultural Dimensions” (Bahasa dalam Dimensi Kemasyarakatan dan Kebudayaan) held by Research Center for Society and Culture, Indonesian Institute of Sciences (PMB-LIPI) in Jakarta on December 10-11, 2013.*

**References**


http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandailing_Natal_Regency

http://www.madina.go.id/


http://protomalayans.blogspot.com/2012/07/suku-batak-siladang.html

http://gondang.blogspot.com/2013/01/urak-ulul-siladang.html