

## Bonggi language vitality and local interest in language-related efforts: A participatory sociolinguistic study

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In Sabah, as in the rest of Malaysia, many indigenous languages are threatened by language shift to (Sabah) Malay. The present study examines to what extent Bonggi, an Austronesian language spoken on Banggi Island (Sabah State), is affected by these developments.

One research objective was to investigate Bonggi language vitality, and explore local (church) interest in and priorities for Bonggi language-related efforts. To minimize the influence of outside researchers, the methodological approach was based on a participatory approach to language development planning. A second objective was to examine the usefulness and appropriateness of the chosen approach.

Regarding the first research objective, the findings suggest that Bonggi language vitality is still vigorous in more remote parts of the island, while language vitality is weaker in the areas closer to the main town of the island. At the same time bilingualism in (Sabah) Malay appears to be pervasive throughout the Bonggi speech community. The findings also indicate that interest in Bonggi language work is rather limited. A few Bonggi church communities, however, expressed interest in creating Bonggi songs. Concerning the second research objective, the review of the methodology shows that the chosen approach is not appropriate in the context of research-driven sociolinguistic studies.

**1. Introduction**<sup>1</sup> In Malaysia, “language shift is increasingly taking place” (Kärchner-Ober et al. 2011:183). That is, many speech communities of minority languages are shifting away “from using and appreciating their respective mother tongues” and from transmitting them to their children because of “their learning environment and their perception of the importance of the majority languages” (David 2008:85).

In light of these developments across the country, the question presents itself to what extent the minority languages of Sabah are affected by language shift and endangerment, and to what degree the indigenous speech communities are interested in the development of their respective heritage languages.

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The present study investigates these questions for Bonggi, a minority language spoken on Banggi Island, located north of the northern tip of Borneo, Sabah State, Malaysia. One major research objective was to examine Bonggi language vitality, and explore local (church) interest in and priorities for Bonggi language-related efforts. To investigate the latter issue with as little influence from outside researchers as possible, a community-driven, participatory research approach was chosen. The methodology was based on Hanawalt et al.'s (2015) approach to language development planning: 'A guide for planning the future of our language,' abbreviated 'Guide.' The present study was an attempt to use the Guide in a new way for language survey research purposes, a way in which it was never envisioned to be used by its authors, however. Moreover, for the specific purposes of the Bonggi study, the Guide approach was modified in four major ways. The second major research objective was therefore to evaluate the usefulness and appropriateness of the methodological approach chosen for the Bonggi study.

The research project was carried out in several stages between the beginning of June and the end of August 2015 by various researchers of SIL Malaysia and local Bonggi community members. After presenting, in §2, pertinent background information on the Bonggi area, §3 briefly discusses the research questions, followed in §4 by a description of the applied methodology. The research results are presented in §5, followed by a summary and recommendations in §6. The report closes with a set of appendices and a list of references.

**2. Background information of Bonggi** This section presents pertinent background information on Bonggi. The linguistic situation is described in §2.1, the geographical setting in §2.2, the history in §2.3, the demographic situation in §2.4, the infrastructure in §2.5, the socioeconomic setting in §2.6, the education setting in §2.7, the religious situation in §2.8, the cultural and ethnolinguistic setting in §2.9, sociolinguistic factors in §2.10, and previous Bonggi research and language development efforts in §2.11.

## **2.1 Linguistic situation**

**2.1.1 Bonggi** Bonggi is a Malayo-Polynesian language within the Austronesian language family. The ISO code for Bonggi is [bdg]; the EGIDS level is 6b ('Threatened') (Lewis et al. 2016). Within Malayo-Polynesian, Blust (2010:62) classifies Bonggi as a Northeast Sabah language within the North Borneo branch. Lobel (2013:37), by contrast, groups Bonggi together with Molbog [pwm] in a separate subgroup called Molbog-Bonggi, whose classification within Malayo-Polynesian has yet to be determined (for more details on Molbog see §2.1.2). According to Lobel (p.c. 2016), Molbog-Bonggi could either belong to the Southwest Sabah group or be coordinate with the Southwest Sabah group under the higher North Borneo subgroup. Alternatively, Bonggi could also belong to the Palawan group within the Philippine subfam-

ily, or be a primary branch of either the Greater Central Philippine subgroup or the Philippine subfamily.

The language is spoken in the northwestern, eastern and western parts of Banggi Island, which is located north of the northern tip of Borneo (Sabah state, Malaysia; see also §2.2). There seems to be some minor phonetic variation between the way Bonggi is spoken in the northwestern, the eastern and the western parts of the island, according to M. Boutin (Drinkall p.c., in Kluge 2015a). More specifically, Bonggi people living in the eastern part of the island report that the Bonggi people from the western part of the island speak slightly differently. Boutin (1994:5) illustrates these differences with the variation in the use of [ei] and [oi] in a small set of words, presented in Table 1. Overall, however, these variations seem to be minimal and do not interfere with intelligibility; that is, there is complete intelligibility across the island.

**Table 1.** Variation within Bonggi across Banggi Island (Boutin 1994:5)

Orthographic	Western part (Limbuak Darat)	Northwestern part	Eastern part (Palak Darat)	Gloss
/soid/	[ <sup>h</sup> so <sup>h</sup> d <sup>h</sup> ]	[ <sup>h</sup> se <sup>h</sup> d <sup>h</sup> ]	[ <sup>h</sup> so <sup>h</sup> g <sup>h</sup> ]	‘inside’
/toin/	[ <sup>h</sup> to <sup>h</sup> dn]	[ <sup>h</sup> te <sup>h</sup> dn]	[ <sup>h</sup> to <sup>h</sup> dn]	‘jungle’
/sin.doin/	[ <sup>h</sup> sin <sup>h</sup> do <sup>h</sup> dn]	[ <sup>h</sup> sin <sup>h</sup> de <sup>h</sup> dn]	[ <sup>h</sup> sin <sup>h</sup> do <sup>h</sup> dn]	‘fingernail’
/oid/	[ <sup>h</sup> o <sup>h</sup> d <sup>h</sup> ]	[ <sup>h</sup> o <sup>h</sup> d <sup>h</sup> ]	[ <sup>h</sup> o <sup>h</sup> g <sup>h</sup> ]	‘boat’

A few Bonggi-speaking communities are also found on Balambangan Island, located about 10 kilometers west of Banggi Island. Contact between both islands is limited, however, with many Bonggi from Banggi Island never having been to Balambangan Island. There could be dialectal differences between the Bonggi varieties spoken on Banggi Island and those found on Balambangan Island, according to Drinkall (p.c., in Kluge 2015a).<sup>2</sup>

**2.1.2 Neighboring languages** Besides the Bonggi people, five other language groups live on the island, all of which originate from the Philippines:

- Molbog [pwm]: Zorc and Thiessen (1995:360) classify Molbog as a Palawan language (Greater Central Philippine branch within Austronesian). Lobel (2013:37), by contrast, groups Molbog together with Bonggi in a separate subgroup called Molbog-Bonggi; as mentioned in §2.1.1, the classification of this group within Malayo-Polynesian has yet to be determined. An alternative name for Molbog is Balabak (Lewis et al. 2016).
- Tausug [tsg], a South Bisayan language (Greater Central Philippine branch within Austronesian) (Zorc 1977:32–285); two of the alternative names for Tausug are Sulu and Suluk (Lewis et al. 2016).

<sup>2</sup>B. Drinkall, an SIL Malaysia linguist, has visited Banggi Island a number of times. During his visits he got to know the pastor from the SIB church in Limbuak Darat who became the main local coordinator for the present research project (see §5.4).

- Mapun [sjm], a Sama-Bajau language (Greater Barito branch within Austronesian); one of the alternative names for Mapun is Kagayan (Pallesen 1985:47).<sup>3</sup>
- Ubian, a dialect of Southern Sama [ssb], which is a Sama-Bajau language (Greater Barito within Austronesian) (Pallesen 1985:3).
- West Coast Bajau [bdr], a Sama-Bajau language (Greater Barito branch within Austronesian) (Pallesen 1985:3).

While Molbog, Tausug, Mapun, and Ubian are still spoken in the Philippines, West Coast Bajau is only spoken in Sabah. On Banggi Island, most of these five people groups live in their own villages, separate from the Bonggi people; a few, however, are also found in Bonggi villages (see §5.1).

**2.2 Geographical setting** Banggi Island is situated at the northernmost point of Malaysia, about 12 kilometers north of the northern tip of Borneo. The island is a part of Kudat district in Sabah. From its northeastern coast to its southwestern coast, the island extends about 32 kilometers. Its width from west to east is about 22 kilometers. The island is mostly covered by forest. Its highest elevation is Bonggi Peak at 529 meters. (See Figure 1.)

On Banggi Island, most of the Bonggi people live in the western, northern, and eastern parts of the island. In addition, as mentioned in §2.1.1, a few hundred Bonggi speakers live in two or three villages on Balambangan Island, which is located west of Banggi Island. In addition, there are many Bonggi speakers living on the mainland in Kudat district.

**2.3 History** The Bonggi people are indigenous to the island and claim that they have always been there (Boutin 1990:101). Unlike other Bornean people groups, they have no history of longhouses, headhunting, or drinking of *tapai* ('rice wine'). As Boutin (1990:110) points out, this anthropological evidence, together with linguistic evidence (see §2.1.1), "suggests a Philippine link and not a Bornean link."

The other five groups living on Banggi Island, that is, the Mapun, Molbog, Tausug, Ubian, and West Coast Bajau, are recent arrivals, having come to Banggi Island within the last 100 years or so. While the Bajau probably migrated to the island from mainland Sabah, the other ethnic groups originate from the Philippines (see Boutin 1990:93; Porodong et al. 2008:2).

In the sixteenth century, the island came under the influence of the Brunei Sultanate, and in the eighteenth century the British colonizers. Overall, however, the influence of the British seems to have been limited, as they administered the island from the town of Kudat on the mainland; the only British outpost on Banggi was a police station in today's Karakit town. Before World War II, the Japanese built a fish canning factory in Karakit which was shut down with the beginning of the war. During the war, the island was occupied by the Japanese. After the war, probably in

<sup>3</sup>Pallesen (1985:3) refers to Mapun as Jama Mapun and to West Coast Bajau as Kota Belud Bajaw.



Figure 1. Map of Banggi Island (based on Boutin 1990:92)<sup>4</sup>

the early 1950s, the first school on the island was established by the British. In 1968, a coconut plantation was started at Limbuk Darat. A second plantation was started at Log Tohog in 1973. It went bankrupt, however. Likewise, a cattle farm that was also started in 1973 went bankrupt. This cattle farm was converted into another plantation which, in 1987, also shut down. In the 1990s, various agencies and departments of the State and Federal governments initiated development projects on Banggi Island. Until 2007, however, none of them had a significant impact on the overall development status of the island (Porodong et al. 2008:3–7).

<sup>4</sup>The Bonggi villages are indicated with stars. The five research locations are marked with oval circles (see also Table 6 in §4.4). One of the research locations is Selangan which Boutin (1990:92) does not mention; the exact location of this village could not be established. In addition to the Bonggi villages in Figure 1, Boutin (1990:92) also mentions Sibumbong Darat as a Bonggi village. Today, however, there are no longer any Bonggi living there (Boutin, p.c. 2016). Hence, Figure 1 does not mark Sibumbong Darat as a Bonggi village.

## 2.4 Demographic situation

**2.4.1 Population** As for the number of Bonggi people living on Banggi Island, no current and precise census data are available.

In 1990, Boutin (1990:93) estimated the Bonggi population at about 1,400, and the total population for the island at about 6,000.

In their 2008 socioeconomic study of Banggi Island, Porodong et al. (2008:27) report different population estimates for the entire island of between 12,000 and 16,000. These estimates are based on Pejabat Daerah Kecil Banggi (2006:174, in Porodong et al. 2008:27<sup>5</sup>). On their website, Pejabat Daerah Kecil Banggi (2010b) states, however, that in 2003 the population of Banggi Island was 20,000. This estimate is taken directly from WikiMapia, which unfortunately, does not provide any information as to its source for the 2003 population total.<sup>6</sup>

In May 2015, Porodong (p.c., in Kluge 2015b) approximates the population of Banggi Island at 18,000 to 20,000. As for the Bonggi population, he estimates that they make up 15–20% of the island's population, which amounts to 2,700 to 4,000 individuals.<sup>7</sup>

**2.4.2 Villages** On Banggi Island there were a total of 56 villages in 2006 (Porodong et al. 2008:24). As for the ethnicity of the inhabitants of these villages, no official census data are available. Boutin (1990:92), however, identifies 15 Bonggi villages on his map of Banggi Island (Figure 1 in §2.2), which are listed in Table 2. Of the 15 villages, six are located in the northern, rather remote parts of the island, while the remaining 10 villages are situated in the southern parts.

**Table 2.** Bonggi villages on Banggi Island (based on Boutin 1990:92)<sup>8</sup>

Bonggi villages	
Batu Layar Darat	Mamang
Kalangkaman	Palak Darat
Kapitan	Pasig Modom
Kapitangan	Pengkalan Darat
Kuda-Kuda	Sabur
Limbuak Darat	Selangan
Lok Agong	Tambising
Lumanis Darat	

A more recent inventory of Bonggi villages is provided by Porodong et al. in their Table 2.5.1 and map of Banggi Island (2008:14) (a copy of the map is found in Figure

<sup>5</sup>Porodong et al. (2008:27) provides the following title for the Pejabat Daerah Kecil Banggi 2006 contribution: 'Profil Pejabat Daerah Kecil Banggi 2006,' no further details are available.

<sup>6</sup>The WikiMapia page on Banggi Island is available at <http://wikimapia.org/3868823/ms/Pulau-Banggi> (accessed 18 May 2016).

<sup>7</sup>Boutin (p.c. 2016) maintains that "[e]ven the low end of this estimate is high;" he estimates the Bonggi population at 1,400–2,000 individuals.

<sup>8</sup>See Footnote 4 (p. 552).

3 in Appendix B). Porodong et al.'s inventory includes some but not all of Boutin's (1990) Bonggi villages. Not included are the following four villages: Kapitan, Kuda-Kuda, Lumanis Darat, and Sibumbong. Besides, Porodong et al. (2008) list Palak Laut as a Bonggi village. Boutin (p.c. 2016), by contrast, maintains that Palak Laut is not a Bonggi but a Mapun village.

Bonggi villages typically do not have a center around which the houses cluster. Instead, the Bonggi prefer to spread out and have their houses at some distance from those of their nearest neighbors.

**2.5 Infrastructure** The infrastructure on Banggi Island is still rather rudimentary, with limited access to transport, electricity, mobile phone services, and water supply, according to Drinkall (p.c., in Kluge 2015a). Travel from the mainland is by boat, and the journey from Kudat to the administrative center at Karakit takes 90 minutes by passenger ferry. The network of roads on the island is limited to some villages. Many of the smaller villages are not accessible by car. Public transport ranges from limited to nonexistent.

Banggi Island has one solar plant, which is run by Sabah Electric. In the western part of the island some villages already have electricity, while others already have power lines but no electricity yet, although electricity has been available in Karakit since 1985. The eastern part of the island also has power lines but the villages do not yet have access to electricity. For the eastern villages to be connected will still take some time. Some people have generators which they use when they get the opportunity to buy gasoline at a subsidized price.

A telephone was installed in Karakit in 1984. Even though many of the Bonggi people own cell phones, only a few of them seem to have smart phones. The western part of the island has good access to mobile phone signals, while the reception is spotty in the eastern part. In the northern part of the island, the most northern village does not receive any cellular signal, while another village further south may have access.

As for water, the Bonggi typically have tanks in which they collect rainwater. When these are empty due to lack of rain, they get water from open wells.

**2.6 Socioeconomic setting** The Banggi subdistrict is one of the poorest in Sabah. In 1999, the average income was about 300 MYR per month which is equivalent to about 85 USD (Bonggi subdistrict office 1999, in Porodong et al. 2008:65).

Only a small percentage of the Banggi archipelago can be cultivated, namely 10,000 out of 69,930 hectares (14.3%). This includes Banggi Island as well as the smaller islands such as Balak-Balak, Balambangan, Maliangin, Manawali, and Tigabu.<sup>9</sup> The largest economic resource in the archipelago, with its 420 kilometers of coastline, is fishing (Pejabat Daerah Kecil Banggi 2010a).

<sup>9</sup>In this context, land rights are a major issue for the Bonggi (Porodong p.c., in Kluge 2015b). As native inhabitants of the island, they are entitled to own their own land. To have their rights acknowledged they need to apply and submit their land-right applications. Due to their low education levels, however, the Bonggi people tend to not submit such applications. The younger generation is aware of the land-right issues, but they do not know how to address this problem. Hence, the government is under the

Among the different people groups living on the island, the Bonggi are at the bottom economically speaking (Drinkall p.c., in Kluge 2015a). Traditionally, they do subsistence farming. Their primary cash crop is coconuts; in addition, they also sell wild honey, if available. In Limbuak, the Bonggi also do some subsistence fishing by putting traps into the rivers. Fishing on a larger scale, however, seems to be done by the Philippine people groups who tend to live in the coastal areas. More recently, the Bonggi people found job opportunities on their island on a newly started palm oil plantation. Work for this plantation was started about five years ago when large forest areas were cleared. In 2013, the first trees were planted. Work on the plantation seems to be the primary job opportunity on the island, with many Bonggi working there. This includes most of the men from Palak and Limbuak; the number of women working on the plantation is much smaller.

Due to the difficult economic situation on Banggi Island, with its lack of occupational opportunities and limited access to a consistent cash flow, the percentage of emigration is rather high. About 25–30% of the Bonggi live outside the island. This also affects the younger generation. A major ambition for them is to leave the island with the result that most young people live on the mainland. Given their overall low education levels, however, the emigrants do not travel very far. Most of them stay in the Kudat area, for example on the plantations there. (Porodong p.c., in Kluge 2015b; see also Porodong et al. 2008:63.)

## **2.7 Education setting**

**2.7.1 Distribution of schools on Banggi Island** There is one secondary school on Banggi Island, which is two to three kilometers outside of Karakit, the major town on the island, located in the southwestern part of the island. It is here that the ferry from the mainland lands.

In addition, there are eleven primary schools spread across the island in such a way that each village has access to them. Most Bonggi children receive at least a primary education, while only some of them also get a secondary education.

There are no tertiary education possibilities on the island. Given the overall education levels on the island, only a few persons from Banggi could be expected to have received any tertiary education. As for the Bonggi people, Drinkall (p.c., in Kluge 2015a) is not aware of any Bonggi persons who went to university. A few Bonggi, however, have attended seminary to receive theological training after finishing secondary school.

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impression that the Bonggi people have no interest in land ownership. This situation is going to have major consequences for the future, as the government has plans to start more plantations on Banggi Island and eventually wants to cultivate the entire island (there are no private plantations on the island). Until now there have been no concerted efforts to support the Bonggi in applying for land ownership. Hence, there is the real danger that the Bonggi will become refugees in their own land. Boutin (p.c. 2016) adds that the Bonggi's lack of political and economic power is another reason why they do not submit land-right applications.



**Table 3.** Distribution of schools on Banggi Island (Porodong et al. 2008:46)<sup>10</sup>

Zone division	Name of school
Zone 1: Karakit	SMK Banggi SK Karakit SK Batu Layar SK Limbuak SK Log Tohog
Zone 2: Damaran	SK Kapitangan SK Padang
Zone 3: Dogoton	SK Dogoton SK Semanyan Banggi
Zone 4: Palak	SK Laksian SK Sabur SK Palak
Zone 5: Kepulauan	SK Tanjung Manawali SK Balambangan SK Pulau Tigabu

**2.7.2 Literacy in Standard Malay** With respect to literacy rates in Standard Malay, no current census data are available. Porodong et al.'s (2008) socioeconomic study, however, discusses the issue of literacy on Banggi Island. The research team interviewed 1,004 household heads and found 58.8% to be literate (see Table 4). Of the 1,004 surveyed household heads, 233 were Bonggi. Of these, only 82 (35.2%) reported being literate, while 151 household heads (64.8) reported being illiterate (Porodong et al. 2008:51).

**Table 4.** Literacy rates in Standard Malay among surveyed household heads on Banggi Island (Porodong et al. 2008:48)

Development Zone	Literate		Illiterate		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Zone 1 Karakit	313	61.4	197	38.6	510	100
Zone 2 Damaran	140	55.3	113	44.7	253	100
Zone 3 Dogoton	39	50.6	38	49.4	77	100
Zone 4 Palak	95	57.9	69	42.1	164	100
Total	587	58.5	417	41.5	1004	100

Among the surveyed ethnic groups, the Bonggi have the lowest literacy rates in Standard Malay, as shown in Table 5. By contrast, 50–84% of the surveyed household heads in the other ethnic groups reported being literate. This result is not unexpected given that the Bonggi are at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder on the island,

<sup>10</sup>Abbreviations: SK = *Sekolah Kebangsaan* ('primary school'; grades 1 to 6), SMK = *Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan* ('secondary school'; grades 7 to 11). Zone *Kepulauan* = Neighboring islands.

as mentioned in §2.5. Porodong et al. (2008:152) conclude that the Bonggi require focused literacy efforts “so that illiteracy will not generate a gap for them to enjoy the development of Banggi Island.”

**Table 5.** Literacy rates in Standard Malay among surveyed households on Banggi Island according to ethnic groups (Porodong et al. 2008:49)

Ethnic group	Literate (%)	Illiterate (%)	Total (%)
Bonggi	35.2	64.8	100
Mapun	65.4	34.6	100
Molbog	72.3	27.7	100
Others	74.1	25.9	100
Rungus	66.7	33.3	100
Tausug	84.1	15.9	100
Tombonuo	50	50	100
Ubian	58.1	41.9	100
West Coast Bajau	69.4	30.6	100
Total	58.5	41.5	100

**2.8 Religious situation** Regarding the religious make-up of the island, no current census data are available.

The majority of the people living on Banggi Island adhere to Islam. The Mapun, Molbog, Tausug, Ubian, and West Coast Bajau communities are traditionally Muslims, and Islam is a pertinent part of their identity. Most villages on the island have a place for prayer, the *surau*. The only official mosque is found in Karakit. (See Porodong et al. 2008; Drinkall p.c., in Kluge 2015a.)

For the Bonggi, by contrast, Islam is not part of their identity. Historically, they are animists. In the 1970s, some of them had been converted to Islam; however, they were nominal rather than practicing Muslims. There are no current census data available regarding religious affiliation. Porodong et al.’s (2008) socioeconomic study, however, discusses this issue. The research team interviewed 1,004 household heads and found 79.4% to be Muslims and 12.7% to be Christians. Of the 1,004 surveyed household heads, 233 were Bonggi. Of these, only 36 (15.5%) reported adhering to Islam, whereas 119 household heads (51.1%) reported being Christians. The remaining 78 household heads (33.5%) reported adhering to animism (Porodong et al. 2008:51). Local pastors on Banggi Island, by contrast, reported that today about one third of the Bonggi are Muslims, while another third are Christians (Drinkall p.c., in Kluge 2015a).

There are four Christian denominations found on Banggi Island (Drinkall p.c., in Kluge 2015a):

- PCS (Protestant Church of Sabah): This denomination is a branch of BCCM (Basel Christian Church of Malaysia). So far, PCS has founded congregations

in two villages in the eastern part of Bonggi Island, namely in Palak Darat and Tambising.

- SDA (Seventh Day Adventist): This denomination has two churches on the island, one in Limbuak Darat and one in Lok Agong.
- SIB (*Sidang Injil Borneo*): This evangelical Pentecostal denomination has founded local congregations in multiple locations spread over the island. The congregations are found in all Bonggi villages where there is no PCS church.
- UPC (United Pentecostal Church): Drinkall has no further information about UPC.

SIB is the only denomination that has Bonggi pastors, while the other denominations only have non-Bonggi pastors.

**2.9 Ethnolinguistic and cultural vitality** In addition to the autonym *Bonggi*, the Bonggi use the name *Dusun* to refer to themselves, in spite of the fact that Bonggi is not linguistically a Dusunic language (Porodong p.c., in Kluge 2015b). Being surrounded by Muslim groups, their identification with *Dusun* allows the Bonggi to be part of a larger non-Muslim Sabahan group. But not only the Bonggi themselves use the term *Dusun*. Outsiders, such as the Kadazan-Dusun Culture Association, also refer to the Bonggi as part of a larger Dusun group. In addition, outsiders may refer to the Bonggi people as *Banggi* or *Banggi Dusun* rather than Bonggi. The term *Banggi*, however, “is somewhat derogatory as *banggi* means ‘corpse’ and is used in the curse, *banggi nu!* which is equivalent to the English phrase ‘drop dead!’” (Boutin 1994:1; see also Porodong et al. 2008:1).

Cultural vitality among the Bonggi people seems to be weak. According to Porodong (p.c., in Kluge 2015b), the Bonggi suffer from an inferiority complex. Many Bonggi, especially the younger people, are not proud of their traditions, stating “we don’t have traditions!” In fact, most of their *adat* ‘traditions’ have to do with taboos (Drinkall p.c., in Kluge 2015a).

As mentioned in §12.3, the Bonggi differ from other Borneo groups in that they have no history of longhouses, headhunting, or drinking of *tapai* (‘rice wine’; instead of drinking rice wine, they chew betel nut or smoke). Also, they do not have traditional clothes, other than loin cloths and sarongs. Hence, when they are invited to cultural events, they worry about what they should wear. Other traditional cultural artifacts, such as blow-guns or basket types, they have abandoned (Boutin, p.c. 2016). Moreover, the Bonggi despair about their difficult socio-economic situation, mentioned in §2.6.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time, the Bonggi do not outwardly exhibit strong ambition or drive to better themselves (Porodong p.c., in Kluge 2015b). They are perceived by outsiders as having the tendency to accept their situation as it is, or alternatively, as emigrating to the mainland when faced with problems they cannot solve (see also §2.5). Hence,

<sup>11</sup>Unlike Porodong (p.c., in Kluge 2015b), Boutin (p.c. 2016) maintains that the Bonggi “cultural vitality is actually rather strong” given that for the Bonggi their “language is their unifying cultural feature.”

some may judge the Bonggi to be lazy. This ‘laziness,’ however, rather seems to be a sign of the Bonggi’s ‘know-how-to-get-by’ mentality. This mentality should not be taken as a sign of social depression given that other typical signs of social depression are not found in the Bonggi community. There is, for example, no alcoholism problem in their community.

The perceived lack of ambition to better themselves may well be related to another Bonggi characteristic, namely their traditionally non-hierarchical flat social structure. It was only during the formation of the country of Malaysia that the Bonggi started having a tribal chief (*ketua anak negri*) and village chiefs (*ketua kampung*). However, the actual authority of the tribal chiefs and mayors is limited. For instance, the Bonggi do not refer to them in order to get permissions for their plans and activities. It seems that they primarily rely on these leaders to help settle disputes. Hence, the main working structure for the Bonggi seems to be that provided by the church, even though the church structure is not very authoritarian. In consequence, there is a tendency for non-Bonggi outsiders to make decisions for the Bonggi, given that the pastors are typically non-Bonggi. Overall, however, the Bonggi do not exhibit great openness to outsiders. Instead, they are reported to mistrust outsiders and misinform them. This behavior may well be a sign that the Bonggi have been manipulated in the past. Because of their isolated location in Sabah, the Bonggi do not have direct access to goods and communication. Any goods and communication that reach them have been handled and potentially manipulated by outsiders. Hence, mistrusting and misinforming outsiders may be strategies of dealing with manipulation and mistreatment the Bonggi have experienced at the hands of outsiders (Porodong p.c., in Kluge 2015b).

**2.10 Sociolinguistic factors** This section briefly discusses two sociolinguistic factors, as reported by Drinkall (p.c., in Kluge 2015a) and Porodong (p.c., in Kluge 2015b) during background interviews preceding the actual research on Banggi Island. The topics discussed are bilingualism and language vitality (§2.10.1), and language use patterns in the church context (§2.10.2).

**2.10.1 Bilingualism and language vitality** On Banggi Island, bilingualism in Sabah Malay is pervasive. The language is widely used in daily communications across the different speech communities (Porodong et al. 2008:2). Among the Bonggi communities, bilingualism in Sabah Malay also seems to be universal. This applies especially to the older generation, while the younger generation also seems to be proficient in Standard Malay. Drinkall (p.c., in Kluge 2015a) reports, however, that he knows a handful of old people who do not speak Sabah Malay. Porodong (p.c., in Kluge 2015b), by contrast, states that the old people he met during his 2008 research were all fluent in Sabah Malay, even very old ones. According to Porodong et al. (2008:2), most people on Banggi Island are not only bilingual in Sabah Malay but can converse in more than two languages.

While bilingual in Sabah Malay, the Bonggi people still speak Bonggi. This includes all age groups, especially in the villages. That is, children learn Bonggi in the

home and even teenagers prefer to speak Bonggi rather than Sabah Malay, although they tend to do a lot more code-switching and code-mixing with Sabah Malay than the older generation. In Karakit and its surrounding villages, however, the children tend to speak Sabah Malay rather than Bonggi, and Bonggi parents also speak Sabah Malay with their children, rather than Bonggi.

As for the intergenerational transmission of Bonggi, Drinkall (p.c., in Kluge 2015a) made the following observations: all pre-school children speak Bonggi at home and outside the home. Here they learn only a little Sabah Malay. It is only when they start going to school that they start learning Malay, namely Standard Malay. According to Drinkall, the only people who are clearly shifting to Sabah Malay are children of mixed marriages, given that their parents converse in Sabah Malay with each other. Such mixed marriages seem to be quite accepted throughout the community. Moreover, the fact that the children of mixed marriages may grow up without learning Bonggi does not seem to be considered a problem.<sup>12</sup> Overall, however, the percentage of Bonggi persons marrying non-Bonggi persons does not seem to be very high. While Drinkall (p.c., in Kluge 2015a) has the overall impression that Bonggi still gets transmitted to children, Porodong (p.c., in Kluge 2015b) seems to be less optimistic, especially as far as the Bonggi villages in the area of Karakit are concerned. He reports that one of the research interviewees approached him and made the following statement: The Bonggi people speak Sabah Malay and not all parents are transmitting the language to their children.

With non-Bonggi persons, the Bonggi usually switch to Sabah Malay to accommodate their interlocutors. According to Porodong et al. (2008:2), these language choice patterns have been in place for a long time. This has to do with the fact that the Bonggi are of lesser standing than the other ethnic groups on the island, even though the Bonggi are believed to be the indigenous people group of Banggi Island. Because of their lower status, the Bonggi sense a need to use Sabah Malay with their neighbors, or even learn their languages. By contrast, none of their neighbors would learn Bonggi.

As for the palm oil plantation on Banggi Island, the use of (Sabah) Malay in this context has no apparent impact on Bonggi language vitality (Drinkall p.c., in Kluge 2015a). As mentioned, this plantation provides job opportunities for many Bonggi people (see §2.5), as well as for workers from many different areas. Hence, here the use of (Sabah) Malay is pervasive. One reason this seems to have no impact on Bonggi language vitality could be the fact that, as mentioned, the Bonggi have been using (Sabah) Malay with their non-Bonggi neighbors for a long time, without having given up their own language.

Hence, in terms of the *Ethnologue*'s EGIDS levels (Lewis et al. 2016), Drinkall (p.c., in Kluge 2015a) thinks that Bonggi may well be at Level 6a which is defined as 'vigorous;' that is, the "language is used for face-to-face communication by all generations and the situation is sustainable" (Lewis et al. 2016). Porodong (p.c., in

<sup>12</sup>If mixed marriages are regarded a problem at all, this seems to have more to do with the fact that the Christian Bonggi person has to convert to Islam to marry a (non-Bonggi) Muslim. The SIB church, for example, considers the issue of mixed marriages a tool of Islamization.

Kluge 2015b), by contrast, is less optimistic and is under the impression that not all parents are transmitting the language to their children any longer.

**2.10.2 Language use patterns in the church context** Presently, there are four Christian denominations on Banggi Island: PCS (Protestant Church of Sabah), SDA (Seventh Day Adventist), SIB (*Sidang Injil Borneo*), and UPC (United Pentecostal Church). As mentioned, the SIB church is the only denomination that has Bonggi pastors, while the other denominations have non-Bonggi pastors (see §2.8 ‘Religious situation’).

Overall, Standard Malay is dominant in the church domain, but in the SIB church which has ordained Bonggi pastors, they mix Malay with Bonggi. As for language use patterns during the church service, Drinkall (p.c., in Kluge 2015a) provides the following details. During the sermons in the SIB church, the Bonggi pastors tend to use both Malay and Bonggi more or less to the same extent. For the Bible readings either the Standard Malay *Berita Baik* (‘Good news’) or the Indonesian *Terjemahan Baru* (‘New Translation’) Bibles are used. During prayers, use of Bonggi is very common and mixing with Malay is less common. This applies to the Bonggi pastors or service leaders as well as to the congregations. As for singing, the congregations mostly use Malay, although Bonggi songs are also sung to some extent. In the SIB and PCS churches, for example, the congregations typically sing one Bonggi song at the beginning of the service, while all other songs are sung in Malay.

**2.11 Previous Bonggi research and language development efforts** The earliest study on the Bonggi language appears to be Schneeberger’s (1937) ‘Short vocabulary of the Banggi and Bajau languages.’ More in-depth research was conducted in the early 1980s, when Bonggi was included in King and King’s (1984) survey of the languages of Sabah.

In the 1980s and 1990s, two members of SIL Malaysia, A. Boutin and M. Boutin, conducted linguistic research on Bonggi and initiated the first language development efforts in the language.

A listing of materials in and about Bonggi produced between 1984 and 2014 can be found on the following three websites (accessed 18 May 2016):

- Glottolog: <http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/bong1289>
- OLAC resources: <http://www.language-archives.org/language/bdg>
- SIL Language & Culture Archives: <http://www.sil.org/resources/search/language/bdg>

**3. Research objectives** The purpose of the Bonggi research project was fourfold. The first three objectives were to investigate:

1. Bonggi language vitality, paying special attention to language contact and use patterns, language attitudes, and (Sabah) Malay bilingualism
2. Local (church) interest in Bonggi language development efforts

3. Local priorities for such development efforts, in case local communities are indeed interested in any such efforts

The fourth objective was to evaluate the research approach, which was based on a community-driven, participatory approach to language development planning, as outlined in §4.1. That is, the aim was to evaluate whether and to what extent the chosen approach (1) was useful in the context of the research-driven study of the Bonggi language situation, and (2) might in general be useful for carrying out sociolinguistic research among minority speech communities.

**4. Methodology** This section describes various methodological aspects of the Bonggi research project. The overall methodological approach for the project is discussed in §4.1. The tools implemented during the project are described in §4.2. The research team and local participants are presented in §4.3 and §4.4, respectively. The training and feedback sessions are discussed in §4.5.

**4.1 Introduction** The research project was carried out among the Christian communities in five Bonggi villages in the southern parts of Banggi Island.

The reason for limiting the research project to the Bonggi church communities is as follows. The main local coordinator responsible for organizing the different meetings on Banggi Island was the pastor of the SIB church in Limbuak Darat; he is Rungus and not Bonggi (see §4.4; see also Footnote 2 on p. 2). As a pastor, he felt it was inappropriate for him to call for village meetings that would also involve community members who do not belong to a church. The calls for such meetings would have to come from the local, officially recognized village leaders.

Instead of conducting a more traditional sociolinguistic language survey involving, for example, the administration of sociolinguistic questionnaires and language proficiency testing, a community-driven, participatory approach to language development planning was chosen. This research approach was based on Hanawalt et al.'s (2015) 'A guide for planning the future of our language,' hereafter abbreviated 'Guide.' The Guide builds on the Sustainable Use Model of Language Development (SUM), developed by Lewis and Simons (2015). Employing participatory discussions facilitated by community insiders, the Guide leads local language communities through a process which helps them (1) to understand the factors that endanger their language, (2) to identify actions and responses needed to maintain the use of their language, and (3) to decide whether they want to undertake the required efforts to invest in the maintenance of their heritage language. By being community-driven, the Guide fosters local ownership of language development. That is, during the discussions at the local level no outsiders are present. Their presence is limited to the training of the local facilitators (see LEAD ASIA 2015).

The main reason for choosing this approach, rather than a more traditional survey approach where outside researchers carry out the research in the local communities, was as follows. As mentioned, the second and third research objectives were to explore the interest of local (church) communities in Bonggi language development

efforts and potential priorities for such efforts. In preparing for the research project, the researchers came to the conclusion that their presence during community discussions related to these two research objectives was likely to influence the outcomes of these discussions. That is, the researchers were concerned that the community would verbally express interest in language development efforts, but that this interest would not be backed up by actual community ownership and support, given the sociolinguistic factors described in §2.10.1. Hence, a research approach was chosen that requires community ownership and support in order for it to be implemented at all, namely the Guide.

It was anticipated that the scope of participation of local (church) communities across the island would give some indication as to whether and to what degree the Bonggi communities are actually interested in their language and language-related efforts, and which priorities they would like to set for any such efforts.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the process would also provide the researchers with insider views on the Bonggi language situation, as reported by the Bonggi facilitators (see §4.4).

For the specific purposes of the Bonggi research project, however, the researchers modified the implementation of the Guide, as outlined in Hanawalt et al. (2015), in four major ways.

First, the process was research- rather than community-driven. That is, it was the research team that initiated the entire project and set the agenda. The team also identified a potential coordinator on Banggi Island (see §4.4). After having agreed to assist in the research efforts, and with the team's input, this coordinator promoted the project among local pastors and church leaders in different Bonggi villages. He also arranged the meetings, training and feedback sessions described in §4.5.

Second, the geographical scope of the research was limited: the participating Bonggi communities were all situated in the southern parts of the island. That is, none of the Bonggi communities from the northern, rather remote parts of the island took part in the research. Hence, no data are available regarding the Bonggi language situation and local (church) interest in and priorities for language-related work in these parts of the island.

Third, the temporal scope of the research was limited. That is, for each implementation phase, the communities had only two to four weeks' time to apply the different tools, due to time constraints on the part of the research team. In fact, the researchers had planned to carry out the entire project within the span of two months. Instead, it took three months. This is probably still less time than it would have taken if the Bonggi had implemented the Guide in a truly community-driven manner with ample time to discuss the current language situation and process ideas and plans for the future.

Fourth, some parts of the Guide process were not implemented, or implemented in less depth than envisioned by Hanawalt et al. (2015):

<sup>13</sup>Drinkall (p.c. 2016) submits, however, that this anticipation is based on the underlying assumption that "perceived lack of interest/participation in the implementation of the guide is not a rejection (lack of interest in/misunderstanding) of the methodology of the Guide itself."



- A2 ‘Identify what our community knows and feels we should pass on’ (2015:37–38): Not implemented due to time constraints.
- B3 ‘Where are we now?’ (2015:9–10): Unclear whether or not implemented.
- A1 ‘Languages we use in our community’ (2015:1–2), A1 ‘Who uses each language well’ (2015:3–4), and D1 ‘Taking action’ (2015:47–58): Implemented but not as in-depth as envisioned.

**4.2 Tools** The main research techniques were five participatory tools which are described in the following sections: Village Mapping (§4.2.1), Bilingualism Venn Diagram (§4.2.2), Mountain Metaphor (§4.2.3), FAMED Conditions Scoring (§4.2.4), and Action Planning (§4.2.5). For all five tools the language of instruction during the training sessions and implementation in the villages was (Sabah) Malay.

**4.2.1 Village Mapping** The Village Mapping tool is used to investigate language contact patterns within a given village. The following questions are explored: which speech communities live here, which ones are the dominant ones in terms of population size, which languages are used for intragroup communication and which ones for intergroup communication, and in which domains do people use the respective languages (Hanawalt et al. 2015:1–2). Community members are asked to draw a basic outline of their village with its roads, rivers, houses, schools, churches, and government office. First, they are asked to mark the places they go to on a regular basis. In a second step, the participants are asked to indicate locations outside their village where they also go to on a regular basis. Next, they indicate which languages they use in each of the places given on the map. This is done by placing small pieces of colored paper on each location with each language having been assigned a different color, such as yellow for Bonggi and red for (Sabah) Malay. Finally, the colored papers are rearranged with the language that people use most often in a given location being placed on top, followed by the language that is used second most often, etc.

**4.2.2 Bilingualism Venn Diagram** The Bilingualism Venn Diagram tool serves to visualize the levels of fluency which the different subsets of the community reportedly have in the different languages spoken in their community (Hanawalt et al. 2015:3–4; see also Hasselbring et al. 2011:19–20). This is achieved by drawing two overlapping circles on a large sheet of paper. One circle represents those community members who speak the vernacular language well, in this case Bonggi, while the other circle represents those community members who speak the second language well, in this case Sabah Malay. The overlapping area represents those community members who speak both languages well.

In a first step, the participants are asked to write down the names of subgroups of their community on different paper slips. The subgroups are as follows: older people (above 60 years of age), adults (aged 20 to 59), school children (aged 8 to 19), and pre-school children (aged 3 to 7). Next, the participants discuss which subgroups

speak Sabah Malay well. They are asked to place the paper slips representing the respective age groups inside the Sabah Malay circle. In the same way the participants discuss which age groups speak Bonggi well, placing the respective paper slips inside the Bonggi circle. In a third step, the participants discuss if any of the subgroups already placed within the two circles speak both Sabah Malay and Bonggi well. They are asked to move the identified subgroups into the overlapping area of the two circles. Finally, participants discuss which one of the three sections has the most people.

**4.2.3 Mountain Metaphor** The Mountain Metaphor tool helps the community to discuss the current situation of their language and where it is heading (Hanawalt et al. 2015:4–8). It compares language use patterns to climbing a mountain; that is, the way a community uses a language is similar to the way one hikes up or down a trail on a mountain (see Figure 2). The mountain trail in Figure 2 has 10 markers along the way which tell the climbers how high up they are on the mountain. There are also a few flat places with shelters for resting. The 10 markers represent the 13 EGIDS levels (Lewis and Simons 2015:106–107; see also Appendix D). Five of them represent sustainable levels of language use: National/International (EGIDS 1–3), Used for education (EGIDS 4), Spoken by all children (EGIDS 6a), Used to unite group (EGIDS 9), Remembered (EGIDS 10), and lastly Forgotten.

Thinking of their language, the participants are asked to imagine that each of these markers on the mountain is like a sign that explains what they are able to use their language for at that place on the mountain. The markers lower down on the mountain are similar to being able to use a language for fewer and fewer things. The markers higher up on the mountain are similar to being able to use a language for more and more things. The parts of the mountain that are steep are hard to climb; climbers naturally slide back down the trail until they reach one of the flat spots below. Likewise, the steep parts of the mountain represent ways of using a language that are hard to keep going over a long period of time. If communities want to keep using their language in one of these more difficult ways, they would have to put out a lot of effort similar to moving upward on these steep parts of the trail. On the other hand, the flat places with shelters on the trail represent ways of using a language that are easier to maintain over a long period of time.

**4.2.4 FAMED Conditions Scoring** The FAMED Conditions Scoring tool serves to evaluate the current situation of a language in more detail by visualizing language use patterns and attitudes (Hanawalt et al. 2015:13–36). This assessment is based on five conditions which “constitute the components of sustainable vitality (as measured by the EGIDS)”, namely Lewis and Simons’ (2015:168) FAMED conditions: Functions, Acquisition, Motivation, Environment, and Differentiation.

The tool investigates the FAMED conditions for three of the five sustainable levels of language use: ‘Used for education’ (EGIDS 4), ‘Spoken by all children’ (EGIDS 6a), and ‘Used to unite’ (EGIDS 9). For the Bonggi study, administration of the tool focused on the ‘Spoken by all children’ level:

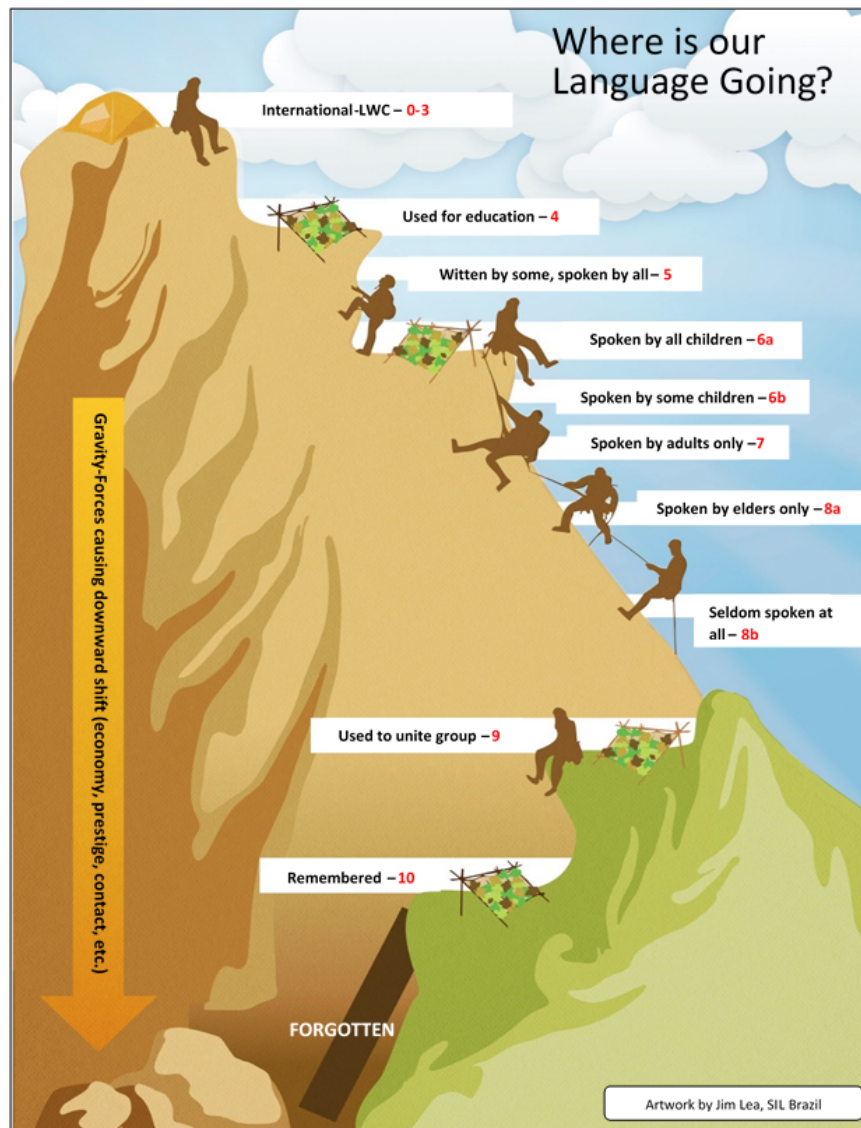


Figure 2. Mountain poster (Hanawalt et al. 2015:8)<sup>14</sup>

1. Functions: Younger and older people use Bonggi in a variety of settings.
2. Acquisition: Children under 12 years old acquire Bonggi at home.
3. Motivation: Community members believe that it is important for their children to speak Bonggi and to speak it in everyday life.

<sup>14</sup>This poster is taken from an earlier Beta version of Hanawalt et al. (2015), dated 30 April 2015 (p. 13). The EGIDS levels were added to the original poster. The Beta version label for the top marker was changed from 'National/International' (EGIDS levels 1 and 0, respectively) to 'International-LWC.' The latter label includes EGIDS levels 0 'International,' EGIDS level 1 'National,' EGIDS level 2 'Provincial,' and EGIDS level 3 'Language of wider communication' ('LWC').

4. Environment: Outsiders encourage the Bonggi to speak Bonggi; Bonggi encourage their fellow-Bonggi to speak their language.
5. Differentiation: Community members use Bonggi exclusively to talk about certain things, in certain places, or for certain occasions.

Formulated as questions, the five conditions are listed as scales on a scoring chart (see Appendix E for an example). The scale points or categories range from ‘almost none’ to ‘some’ to ‘many’ to ‘almost all.’<sup>15</sup> The scale points for questions #1 to #5a are taken from the July version of Hanawalt et al. (2015:33), whereas the scale points for question #5b are taken from an earlier version, dated 10 April 2015. The April version gives the following scale points: almost no encouragement, some encouragement, much encouragement, full encouragement. The July 2015 version, by contrast, gives the following scale points for question #5b: strong discouragement, some discouragement, some encouragement, strong encouragement.

In addition to the five scales, the chart has a dotted line which runs from the top to the bottom just to the left of the third scale point on the scale, ‘many.’ The points to the left of the dotted line (‘almost none’ to ‘some’) denote weak areas for the respective component of the FAMED conditions. In applying the tool, the community is asked to discuss the questions on the scoring chart and to indicate their assessment by choosing a specific point on the scale, or a position between two points.

Two additional comments need to be made concerning the implementation of the tool on Banggi Island. First, the Sabur facilitator changed one of the points for four of the five scales. That is, for questions #1 to #4, the point ‘almost all’ was changed to ‘all’ (see Appendix G; see also Appendix E). Second, the Selangan facilitator did not make a distinction between questions #5a and #5b (see Appendix E and Appendix G.5).

**4.2.5 Action Planning** The Action Planning tool is designed to help communities make decisions as to how they want to influence and change the future of their language (Hanawalt et al. 2015:47–58).

The following steps are involved in this planning process. First, the community is asked to revisit the outcomes from the activities presented in §4.2.1 to §4.2.4 and to reflect on the identified, current vitality levels of their heritage language. At this point, the community is invited to discuss whether they would like to influence and strengthen the use of their language throughout the community or whether they are satisfied with the current state of affairs.

Second, if the community decides that they want to influence and change the situation of their language, they are asked to choose an overall goal which reflects a sustainable level of language use, such as ‘Spoken by all children’ (EGIDS 6a) or ‘Used to unite group’ (EGIDS 9). To be successful, the goal needs to be realistic and the chosen sustainable vitality level needs to be the one immediately above or below the current language vitality level.

<sup>15</sup>Depending on the semantics of the question slightly different scales are used, such as ‘almost nowhere’ (for details see Appendix E).

In a third step, the community is asked to start discussing which specific activities and efforts might be needed to reach the agreed-upon overall goal. This discussion is based on the outcomes from the FAMED Conditions Scoring tool. That is, the community is asked to review those scales which indicate areas of weakness with respect to the five components of sustainable language vitality. If more than one scale shows areas of weakness, the community is asked to choose one or two and to discuss potential measures to strengthen the respective components. For each component, the agreed-upon measures are documented in a 'Taking Action' chart (see Appendix F for an example).

**4.3 Research team** The research team consisted of three SIL Malaysia members: language survey specialists S. Anonby and J. Choi, and linguist B. Drinkall. J. Choi was involved in the entire project; B. Drinkall participated in the first four meetings and S. Anonby in the first three meetings. Also present during the first meeting was E. de Vries, SIL Malaysia's language project director for Sabah. M. Boutin, a linguist and former SIL Malaysia member who had been involved in language development work on Banggi Island, attended some of the meetings as an observer.

**4.4 Local participant** Three groups of participants were involved in the research project: a coordinator, L1 Bonggi facilitators and assistants, and local Bonggi church communities (see also Appendix C for an overview table).

1. Coordinator

The main coordinator on Banggi Island throughout the entire research project was the pastor of the SIB church in Limbuak Darat. He started working on Banggi Island in 2014. Although he is Rungus rather than Bonggi, he is very interested in Bonggi language development. Therefore, he agreed to be the main coordinator for the research project and to arrange all the meetings.

2. Facilitators

A total of five L1 facilitators and three assistants participated in the research project, as listed in Table 6. They came from five different villages: Batu Layar, Limbuak Darat, Palak Darat, Sabur, and Selangan (see also Figure 1). As discussed in §4.1, the research project focused on the Bonggi church communities. Hence, the group of facilitators included three SIB pastors, one SIB church leader, and one PCS church member. The three assistants were local church members. In addition, eight observers from two villages attended the second training session.

All of the participating local Bonggi churches are located in the southern part of Banggi Island. That is, none of the Christian Bonggi communities from the northern, more remote part of the island participated in the research.

**Table 6.** Training session participants

#	Village	Church	Pastors and church leaders
1	Batu Layar	SIB	Facilitator Assistant
2	Limbuak Darat	SIB	Facilitator (pastor) Assistant Observers (2)
3	Palak Darat	PCS	Facilitator Assistant Observers (6)
4	Sabur	SIB	Facilitator (pastor)
5	Selangan	SIB cell group	Facilitator (pastor)

### 3. Church communities

Church communities from five different villages participated in the two implementation phases, namely from Batu Layar, Limbuak Darat, Palak Darat, Sabur, and Selangan (see also Figure 1). No further information is available about these participants, nor did the researchers request information from the facilitators as to how many church members participated in the actual meetings.

**4.5 Preparatory meetings and training and feedback sessions** The research among the Bonggi communities on Banggi Island was conducted in seven stages between the beginning of June and the end of August 2015, as outlined in Table 7. The project included two preparatory meetings (§4.5.1 and §4.5.2), two training and two feedback sessions (§4.5.3, §4.5.4 and §4.5.5), and two implementation phases.

After each training session, the trained L1 facilitators and their assistants were given two to four weeks to apply the research tools in their local communities.

**4.5.1 First preparatory meeting: Meeting with the main coordinator** The main goal for the first preparatory meeting on Banggi Island was for the research team to meet with the SIB pastor from Limbuak Darat, whom the researchers had identified as a potential main coordinator, and to explore with him the possibilities for implementing the envisioned research project among the Bonggi communities. The meeting took place on 1 June 2015 in Palak Darat, at a private house. Four SIL Malaysia staff took part in the meeting.

During the meeting, the research team explained the rationale for the planned project and its potential scope. The SIB pastor concurred with the envisioned approach of training local facilitators who would conduct the actual research among the Bonggi communities without the presence of outsiders. He also agreed to organize and coordinate a preparatory meeting with local pastors and church leaders and to help plan the envisioned training and feedback sessions.

**Table 7.** Bonggi research phases

Meeting	Date	Location	Local participants	SIL staff
1. Preparatory meeting	1 June	Palak Darat (private house)	Main coordinator	4 SIL Malaysia staff
2. Preparatory meeting	16 June	Batu Layar (SIB church)	Local pastors and church leaders	3 SIL Malaysia staff, 1 observer
1. Facilitator training	4 July	Batu Layar (SIB church)	L1 facilitators	3 SIL Malaysia staff, 1 observer
1. Implementation in local villages	5–24 July	Five villages	L1 facilitators, church members	
1. Feedback and 2. facilitator training	25 July	Limbuak Darat (SIB church)	L1 facilitators	2 SIL Malaysia staff
2. Implementation in local villages	26 July–28 August	Five villages	L1 facilitators, church members	
2. Feedback	29 August	Limbuak Darat (SIB church)	L1 facilitators	1 SIL Malaysia staff

**4.5.2 Second preparatory meeting: Pastors and church leaders meeting** The main objective of this meeting was to explain the envisioned research project to local Bonggi pastors and church leaders.<sup>16</sup> The meeting was arranged by the main coordinator, the SIB pastor from Limbuak Darat, and took place on 16 June 2015 in Batu Layar at the SIB church.

In all, eight pastors and church leaders from six different villages participated in the meeting: one PCS pastor, five SIB pastors, one SDA church leader, and one SIB church leader (Table 8). Among them were two non-Bonggi, namely the main coordinator, that is, the SIB pastor from Limbuak Darat who is Rungus, as well as the PCS pastor from Palak Darat who is Kimaragan. A number of observers also attended the meeting.

The participants all agreed to identify members in their local congregations who would take part in the research as facilitators and implement the research in their local churches. One of the eight attendees, namely the pastor of the SIB church in Sabur, decided that he would take on the facilitator role in his congregations. The attendees from Limbuak Darat and Palak Darat sent other church members to the first training session. As for Kalangkaman, Mamang, and Pengkalan Darat, these

<sup>16</sup>As discussed in §4.1, the research project was limited to the Christian Bonggi communities.

communities did not participate in the actual research. Their non-participation, for which the reasons are unknown, is rather surprising as the two pastors responsible for the SIB congregations in the three villages had, to some extent, been involved in Bonggi language development work in the 1980s and 1990s (see §2.11).

**Table 8.** Pastors and church leaders meeting—Local participants

#	Village	Church	Pastors and church leaders
1	Kalangkaman	SIB cell group	Pastor Church leader
2	Limbuak Darat	SIB SDA	Pastor (main coordinator) Church leader
3	Mamang	SIB cell group	Pastor
4	Palak Darat	PCS	Pastor
5	Pengkalan Darat	SIB	Pastor
6	Sabur	SIB	Pastor

**4.5.3 First L1 facilitator training session** The main purpose of the first L1 facilitator training session was to give training to L1 Bonggi speakers who would implement the tools described in §4.2 in their local churches. The meeting took place on 4 July 2015 in Batu Layar at the SIB church.

A total of eight participants from five villages took part in the first training session (Table 9). They were divided into three groups. The two participants from Limbuak Darat formed one group and the two participants from Batu Layar together with the one participant from Sabur formed a second group. The third group comprised the three participants from Palak Darat and Selangan.

As mentioned in §4.5.2, only one of the participants, the pastor of the SIB church in Sabur, had also been present at the second preparatory meeting when the research project was explained to local pastors and church leaders. As for the trainees from Limbuak Darat and Palak Darat, they replaced their pastors who had attended the preparatory meeting on 4 July. The three assistants were local church members. In addition, eight observers from two villages attended the second training session. No representative from Batu Layar and Selangan had taken part in the preparatory meeting on 16 June 2016.

The training sessions covered the following tools: Village Mapping (§4.2.1), Bilingualism Venn diagram (§4.2.24.2.3), Mountain Metaphor (§4.1.3), and FAMED Conditions Scoring (§4.2.4). Table 10 gives an overview of the schedule for the first training session.

One of the researchers led most of the training sessions, while the other two researchers assisted with the group activities.

After having been taken through a tool step by step, the participants practiced that tool in their own group. In the afternoon, after having been taught all four tools, the participants practiced them again, this time with one of the other groups.



**Table 9.** First L1 facilitator training session—Local participants

Group	Village	Church	Participants
1	Limbuak Darat	SIB	Facilitator (pastor) Assistant
2	Batu Layar	SIB	Facilitator Assistant
3	Sabur	SIB	Facilitator (pastor)
	Palak Darat	PCS	Facilitator Assistant
	Selangan	SIB cell group	Facilitator (pastor)

**Table 10.** First L1 facilitator training session—Schedule

Time	Activities
10:00–10:10	Introduction
10:10–11:00	Village Mapping
11:00–11:40	Bilingualism Venn Diagram
11:40–12:30	Mountain Metaphor
12:30–13:30	Lunch
13:30–14:00	FAMED Conditions Scoring—Part 1
14:00–14:30	FAMED Conditions Scoring—Part 2
14:30–16:30	Practice all four tools
16:30–17:00	Question and answer time / hand-out materials

**4.5.4 First feedback and second L1 facilitator training** The main goals of this meeting were to get feedback from the first implementation phase in the five Bonggi villages and to provide further training for the L1 facilitators. The meeting took place on 25 July 2015 in Limbuak Darat at the SIB church.

In all, 16 participants attended this meeting: the five facilitators and three assistants who had attended the first training session (§4.5.4), plus eight observers from Limbuak Darat and Palak Darat who had not attended that first session (Table 11).

During the first part of the meeting the facilitators had the opportunity to give feedback on the first implementation phase. Of the five facilitators, one was prepared to report on the results from the first implementation phase, namely the one from Palak Darat. The facilitator reported on the four activities conducted in her local community: Village Mapping, Bilingualism Venn Diagram, Mountain Metaphor, and FAMED Conditions Scoring (§4.2.1 to §4.2.4). The remaining four villages presented their reports during the second feedback session (§4.5.5).

**Table 11.** Second L1 facilitator training session—Local participants

Group	Village	Church	Participants
1	Limbuak Darat	SIB	Facilitator (pastor) Assistant Observers (2)
2	Batu Layar	SIB	Facilitator Assistant
3	Sabur	SIB	Facilitator (pastor)
	Palak Darat	PCS	Facilitator Assistant Observers (6) <sup>17</sup>
	Selangan	SIB cell group	Facilitator (pastor)

The training session during the second part of the meeting focused on the Action Planning tool. Table 12 gives an overview of the schedule for the first feedback and second training session.

**Table 12.** Second L1 facilitator training session—Schedule

Time	Activities
09:00–09:20	Feedback from Palak Darat
09:20–10:20	Action Planning: Reflection on the outcomes so far
10:20–12:30	Action Planning: Making a detailed plan
12:30–13:00	Question and answer time / hand-out materials

One of the researchers led the feedback and training sessions, while the second researcher assisted with the group activities.

**4.5.5 Second feedback session** The purpose of this meeting was to get feedback from the second implementation phase in the different Bonggi villages. The meeting took place on 29 August 2015 in Limbuak Darat at the SIB church.

Only four participants attended the meeting, namely the four SIB facilitators from Limbuak Darat, Batu Layar, Sabur, and Selangan (Table 13). As for Palak Darat, neither the facilitator nor any of the assistants or observers took part in the meeting, due to a breakdown in communication.<sup>18</sup>

During the meeting, the facilitators had the opportunity to give feedback on both implementation phases. As mentioned in §4.5.4, the facilitators from the four villages of Batu Layar, Limbuak Darat, Sabur, and Selangan had not presented their results from the first implementation phase during the training and feedback session on 25 July. They gave their reports during this second feedback session. The facilitators

<sup>17</sup>One of the observers was a physically severely disabled man. Although it took him considerable effort, he made the journey to Limbuak Darat, because he was very eager to hear some of the discussion. (Drinkall, p.c. 2016).

<sup>18</sup>The congregation in Palak was not aware of the meeting until after it had happened (Drinkall, p.c. 2016).

**Table 13.** Second feedback session—Local participants

Group	Village	Church	Participants
1	Limbuak Darat	SIB	Facilitator (pastor)
2	Batu Layar	SIB	Facilitator
	Sabur	SIB	Facilitator (pastor)
3	Selangan	SIB cell group	Facilitator (pastor)

from Limbuak Darat, Sabur, and Selangan presented the results from all four activities conducted in their local communities, namely Village Mapping, Bilingualism Venn Diagram, Mountain Metaphor, and FAMED Conditions Scoring (§4.2.1 to §4.2.4). The facilitator from Batu Layar presented results only from the FAMED Conditions Scoring tool. The researchers did not inquire whether the Batu Layar facilitator had implemented the Village Mapping and Bilingualism Venn Diagram tools in her village but forgot to bring the results to the meeting, or whether she had not implemented the tools at all.

As for the reports on the second implementation phase, that is, the implementation of the Action Planning tool (§4.2.5), only one facilitator was prepared to report the results, namely the one from Batu Layar. The remaining three communities of Limbuak Darat, Sabur, and Selangan had not implemented the tool.

**5. Results** This section reports the results pertaining to the four research objectives, namely to examine Bonggi language vitality, as well as local (church) interest in and priorities for Bonggi language-related efforts, and to evaluate the methodological approach chosen for the project.

Language contact patterns are discussed in §5.1, reported language fluency in Bonggi and (Sabah) Malay in §5.2, language use and acquisition patterns and language attitudes in §5.3, overall language vitality levels in §5.4, envisioned future language vitality levels in §5.5, and local interest in Bonggi language-related efforts in §5.6. The methodological approach is evaluated in §5.7.

**5.1 Language contact patterns** Language contact patterns between Bonggi and other languages within the five researched Bonggi communities were investigated by means of the Village Mapping tool (see Appendix G; see also §4.2.1). Overall, however, the maps are not very conclusive. First, the residential areas are often not clearly marked. Second, as for public places, only the local primary schools and churches are shown, if at all. Markets or food stalls are, with one exception, not shown. And third, language use in the different locations is not clearly indicated.

The following information reports the findings for the five researched villages, as far as could be established from the drawings. (The village map for Batu Layar is the one obtained during the first training session, given that the Batu Layar facilitator did not bring a map to the feedback session, as mentioned in §4.5.5.)

Batu Layar is located in the southwestern part of Banggi Island. Most inhabitants are Bonggi, but there are also a few Ubian people who live in Batu Layar. The Bonggi mostly live in the western part of the village, whereas the Ubian live in the eastern part of the village, where not many Bonggi live. For Bonggi intragroup communication Bonggi is used, whereas Sabah Malay is the language for intergroup communication with the Ubian. Standard Malay is also used in the local primary school. In the local SIB church both Bonggi and (Sabah/Standard) Malay are being used, with the village map indicating that Bonggi is used more often than Malay.

Limbuak Darat is also located in the southwestern part of Banggi Island. The Bonggi form the majority of inhabitants there. In addition, there are some Bajau people living in the village, but the results from the Village Mapping tool do not indicate where in the village the Bonggi and where the Bajau live. At home, the Bonggi use Bonggi. In more public contexts, Sabah Malay and Bajau are also used. That is, in the local fish market and guesthouse, Bonggi, Bajau and Sabah Malay are used. In the local kindergarten and churches (SDA and SIB) both Bonggi and (Sabah/Standard) Malay are used.

Palak Darat is located in the eastern part of Banggi Island, further away from the ferry jetty point in Karakit than Batu Layar and Limbuak Darat. Besides the Bonggi, there are also a few Mapun people living here, but their houses are outside the village boundaries: some Mapun live to the east, at the local pier, while others live to the north of the village boundaries.<sup>19</sup> Among themselves, the Bonggi use Bonggi for all intragroup communication. For intergroup communication with the Mapun, Sabah Malay is used. In the local school, Standard Malay is used, while in the PCS church Bonggi is used.

Sabur is also located in the eastern part of Banggi Island, north of Palak Darat and still further away from the ferry jetty point. The majority of inhabitants are Bonggi but there is also a substantial number of Ubian people living here. Within the village, both speech communities have their own distinctive areas where they live. The Bonggi live in the western and southern parts of the village, while the Ubian live in the eastern part. The Bonggi use Bonggi for intragroup communication and Sabah Malay for intergroup communication with the Ubian. There are two local churches, PCS and SIB. In the PCS church, Bonggi is used while in the SIB church both Bonggi and (Sabah/Standard) Malay are used.

Selangan is also located in the eastern part of Banggi Island, north of Sabur. Among the five villages it is the one located the furthest away from the ferry jetty point in Karakit; the exact location of the village could not be established, however. As in the other villages, most people in Selangan are Bonggi. In addition, there are also Ubian living here. It seems that the Bonggi live in the eastern part of the village, while the Ubian live in the western part. Overall, however, the map is inconclusive as far as residential areas and language use patterns are concerned.

In summary, in the five researched villages, the majority of inhabitants are Bonggi. Alongside the Bonggi, there are also minorities of other language groups living in

<sup>19</sup>Boutin (p.c. 2016) submits that the mentioned Mapun people live in Palak Laut, rather than in Palak Darat.

these villages, namely Bajau, Mapun, or Ubian. In Batu Layar, Palak Darat, Sabur, and Selangan, these non-Bonggi populations live in distinct parts of the respective villages. In Batu Layar, Limbuak Darat, Palak Darat, and Sabur, Bonggi is used for intragroup communication, while Sabah Malay is used for intergroup communication with the non-Bonggi populations (for Selangan the data are inconclusive). As for language use patterns across different domains, the reported information is mostly limited to the local schools and churches. In the schools in Batu Layar, Palak Darat, and Sabur, Standard Malay is used. In the local churches in Batu Layar and Limbuak Darat, both Bonggi and (Sabah/Standard) Malay are used. In Sabur, one church also uses both Bonggi and (Sabah/Standard) Malay, while another one only uses Bonggi. Likewise, the church in Palak Darat only uses Bonggi. As mentioned in §2.10.2, however, the Bible readings are taken from the Standard Malay *Berita Baik* ('Good news') or the Indonesian *Terjemahan Baru* ('New Translation').

**5.2 Language fluency in Bonggi and (Sabah) Malay** Language fluency in Bonggi and in (Sabah) Malay was investigated with the Bilingualism Venn Diagram (see also §4.2.2). The results identify those social groups that speak Bonggi well, those that speak (Sabah) Malay well, and those that speak both languages well. (The Venn Diagram for Batu Layar is the one obtained during the first training session, as the Batu Layar facilitator did not bring a diagram to the feedback session, as mentioned in §4.5.5.) Table 14 presents the results in an overview table (see also Appendix G).

The results given in Table 14 suggest that in Batu Layar, Limbuak Darat, Palak Darat, and Sabur most Bonggi people have good fluency in both Bonggi and (Sabah) Malay. In Limbuak Darat and Sabur, however, pre-school children and old people are fluent only in Bonggi. Likewise, the pre-school children in Palak Darat only speak Bonggi well. The results are unclear, however, as to whether uneducated people in Palak Darat speak (Sabah) Malay well. Likewise, the results are ambiguous as to whether children and old people in Batu Layar speak Bonggi and/or Malay well. The research participants in Batu Layar, Palak Darat, and Sabur stated that non-Bonggi outsiders and non-Bonggi spouses in their communities only speak Malay well. The overall results for Selangan are inconclusive.

**5.3 Language use and acquisition patterns and language attitudes** Language use and acquisition patterns and language attitudes were investigated by means of the FAMED Conditions Scoring tool (see §4.2.4). Of the five researched communities, however, only three applied the tool, namely Batu Layar, Sabur, and Selangan. Table 15 displays the findings in a summary table (see also Appendices E and G).

The findings presented in Table 15 indicate, first, that Bonggi is used in 'most settings' in Sabur and Selangan, but only in 'some settings' in Batu Layar. Furthermore, the researched communities use exclusively Bonggi for 'most topics.' It is noted, however, that for Batu Layar these findings seem to contradict each other: 'some settings' versus 'most topics.' As for motivation and language attitudes, 'many' community members in Batu Layar and Selangan believe that their children should speak Bonggi, while in Sabur only 'some' believe this to be important. Inside stakeholders in Batu

**Table 14.** Language fluency in Bonggi and (Sabah) Malay

Village	Speak only Bonggi well	Speak both Bonggi & (Sabah) Malay well	Speak only (Sabah) Malay well
Batu Layar	children, old people	children, adults, educated people, old people	children, youth, non-Bonggi outsiders, non-Bonggi spouses school children
Limbuak Darat	pre-school children, old people	adults	
Palak Darat	pre-school children, uneducated people	school children, youth, educated people, Bonggi spouses in mixed marriages, uneducated old people above 70 years of age	non-Bonggi outsiders, non-Bonggi spouses
Sabur	pre-school children, old people above 70 years of age	school children, students, well educated people, Bonggi spouses in mixed marriages	non-Bonggi outsiders, non-Bonggi spouses
Selangan	children, young people, old people	educated people of all age groups	children, young people, old people

**Table 15.** Language use and acquisition patterns and language attitudes

Village	Functions	Acquisition	Motivation	Environment		Differentiation
				Outside	Inside	
Batu Layar	‘some’ settings	‘some’ children	‘many’ members	‘some discouragement’	‘much’ encouragement	‘most’ topics
Sabur	‘most’ settings	‘most’ children	‘some’ members	‘some discouragement’	‘much’ encouragement	‘most’ topics
Selangan	‘most/all-most all’ settings	‘most’ children	‘many’ members	‘some’		‘most’ topics

Layar and Sabur provide ‘much encouragement’ to speak Bonggi, while there is ‘some discouragement’ from outside stakeholders. In Selangan, the community chose the ‘some’ scoring point but they did not specify whether this refers to ‘some discour-

agement’ from outside stakeholders, or to ‘some encouragement’ from inside stakeholders. As for language acquisition patterns of children in Batu Laya, only ‘some’ children below the age of 12 years still acquire Bonggi. In Sabur and Selangan, by contrast, ‘most’ children of that age group still learn to speak Bonggi. This means that in none of the three communities ‘almost all’ or ‘all’ children are still acquiring the heritage language.

**5.4 Language vitality levels** Overall language vitality levels were investigated with four tools: Village Mapping (§4.2.1), Bilingualism Venn Diagram (§4.2.2), Mountain Metaphor (§4.2.3), and FAMED Conditions Scoring (§4.2.4). Table 16 presents the results in a summary table (see also §5.2 and §5.3 and Appendices D, E and G).

**Table 16.** Language vitality levels

Village	Intra-group language	Inter-group language	Bonggi fluency	Malay fluency	Mountain Metaphor	EGIDS levels
Batu Laya	Bonggi	(Sabah) Malay	all generations	all generations	some children	6b
Limbuak Darat	Bonggi	(Sabah) Malay	most people	most people	some children	6a to 6b
Palak Darat	Bonggi	(Sabah) Malay	most people	most people	all children	6a
Sabur	Bonggi	(Sabah) Malay	most people	most people	all children	6a
Selangan	Bonggi	(Sabah) Malay	ambiguous	ambiguous	all children	6a

The results presented in Table 16 show that in all five villages Bonggi is used for intragroup communication, while (Sabah) Malay is used for intergroup communication with the non-Bonggi populations. Furthermore, the findings suggest that among the five villages Bonggi language vitality is ‘vigorous’ (EGIDS 6a) in Palak Darat, Sabur, and Selangan (see also Lewis and Simons 2015:106–107 and Appendix D for a description of the EGIDS levels). That is, in these villages Bonggi is the dominant language and children still grow up learning their heritage language. In Batu Laya, by contrast, the vitality of Bonggi appears to be ‘threatened’ (EGIDS 6b) by (Sabah) Malay which seems to be the dominant language in the village. In Limbuak Darat, Bonggi language vitality seems to be between ‘vigorous’ and ‘threatened.’ These findings suggest a link between Bonggi language vitality and the village locations vis-à-vis the ferry jetty point in Karakit which brings the island communities into contact with the outside world of mainland Sabah.<sup>20</sup> In the three villages located the furthest away from Karakit, namely in Palak Darat, Sabur, and Selangan, Bonggi language vitality

<sup>20</sup>Boutin (p.c. 2016) suggests that “[p]erhaps the establishment of a neighborhood of concrete houses has had more impact on language use in Batu Laya than its proximity to the Karakit.”

still seems to be ‘vigorous.’ By contrast, in the two villages situated closer to Karakit, that is in Batu Layar and Limbuak Darat, Bonggi language vitality seems to be weaker (‘threatened,’ or between ‘vigorous’ and ‘threatened’).

**5.5 Envisioned future language vitality levels** Future Bonggi language vitality levels, as aspired to by the researched communities, and practical steps that the local communities can take to reach the envisioned goal were discussed by means of the Action Planning tool during the second implementation phase (see Appendix G; see also §4.2.1).

Of the five church communities, only the SIB church in Batu Layar implemented this tool and came up with a tentative initial action plan. Based on the results from the FAMED Conditions Scoring tool, the community had identified four weak points with respect to sustainable levels of Bonggi language use:

- Mixing of Bonggi and Sabah Malay
- Lack of interest in Bonggi
- Lack of parents’ education and encouragement
- Influence from other languages

The participants discussed a number of actions and steps they would like to undertake in order to strengthen the use of Bonggi in their community. They identified four main action points: (1) to strengthen the acquisition of Bonggi in the younger generation, (2) to encourage and advise the use of Bonggi, (3) to work on parents’ lack of encouragement as far as the use of Bonggi is concerned, and (4) to screen the influence from other languages.

These action points, together with the listed sources and steps, are general and somewhat vague, as shown Table 17. It remains to be seen whether and to what extent any of these ideas will be implemented in the future. The results do show, however, that the participants are aware of and have identified a number of areas that threaten the future of the Bonggi language.

**5.6 Bonggi interest in Bonggi language-related efforts** Overall, the interest and sense of ownership that the Bonggi church communities as a whole display with respect to Bonggi language development efforts seem to be rather limited. There are two Bonggi individuals, however, who display a real interest in Bonggi language-related efforts, namely the facilitator from the PCS church in Palak Darat, and the pastor of the SIB church in Sabur. Besides participating in the research as facilitators, they also attended an oral storying workshop in September 2015 and a songwriters’ workshop in January 2016; both workshops were held in Kota Kinabalu. During the research project, the Palak Darat facilitator also expressed interest in opening a *taska* (playschool for three to four year olds) in Palak Darat. Hence, one of the researchers introduced her to an SIL Malaysia specialist for multilingual education when she attended the songwriters’ workshop in Kota Kinabalu. Another five Bonggi speakers



**Table 17.** Action chart (Batu Layar)

Main issue	Action	Sources and steps	Act on our own	Need outside help
Mixing of Bonggi and Sabah Malay	Strengthen acquisition of Bonggi in the younger generation	Encourage older people to teach young people Bonggi in more depth	Yes	
		Encourage parents to teach their children Bonggi at home	Yes	
Lack of interest in Bonggi	Encourage and advise use of Bonggi	Campaign for using Bonggi	Yes	
		Seminar about the importance of Bonggi	Yes	
Lack of parents' education and encouragement	Conference on parents' responsibilities	Educate parents to give preference to Bonggi over other languages Church holds a Bonggi conference		Yes
	Bonggi class for parents	Non-Bonggi spouses in mixed marriages need to learn Bonggi		Yes
Influence from other languages	Screen and control usage of other languages	Try not to be too preoccupied with other languages	Yes	
	Avoid usage of other languages	Try not to speak other languages too much	Yes	

from three different church communities attended the songwriters' workshop. Two of them were from the SIB church in Batu Layar, one from the SIB church in Limbuak Darat, and two from the PCS church in Palak Darat.

In addition to these Bonggi individuals, the Rungus SIB pastor from Limbuak Darat, who was the main coordinator for the research project, has a clear desire to see the Bonggi language developed. He was and is ready to take personal responsibility in this undertaking; hence, his support for the Bonggi research project. Sooner or later, however, the pastor will be assigned to another SIB congregation off Banggi Island. Therefore, given the apparently limited interest of the Bonggi in the development

of their language, he is concerned about the future of any kind of language-related efforts once he has left the island.

As for the concern about Bonggi language maintenance and the interest in language-related efforts expressed during the Guide meetings, one of the researchers who was involved in training the facilitators made the following statement. He submits that during the Guide meetings he and a second trainer encouraged the Bonggi participants to engage with Bonggi language preservation efforts so that their language would not die. This happened during the second participatory meeting when the researchers explained the envisioned research to the gathered church leaders and pastors. It also happened during the training sessions when the trainers followed the instructions put forward in the Guide training manual. According to the same trainer, the Guide manual does not only encourage the participants to engage with their language during the Guide process itself, but also conveys the message that it is preferable to preserve one's language. Hence, during the research project it was not any Bonggi themselves who said that they would like to do something about their language. Instead it was outsiders who—explicitly and implicitly—encouraged them to do so.

**5.7 Evaluation of the research methodology** The fourth objective of the Bonggi research project was to evaluate the research approach, which was based on Hanawalt et al.'s (2015) 'Guide,' a community-driven, participatory approach to language development planning. As outlined in §4.1, the present study was an attempt to apply the Guide in a new way for language survey research purposes.

The implementation of the modified Guide approach had two major benefits. The entire project helped to deepen SIL Malaysia's relationship with the Bonggi speech community. In addition, the project raised some awareness among the Christian Bonggi communities as to the (potentially) threatened future of their language and their own influence on Bonggi language vitality levels.

At the same time, a number of problems and questions emerged concerning the usefulness and appropriateness of the Guide approach for conducting sociolinguistic research among minority speech communities. In particular, the following topics are discussed: limited geographical scope, limited temporal scope, matters pertaining to the facilitators, matters pertaining to data documentation, and neutrality of the Guide manual. Some of these issues also apply to the Guide proper.

#### 1. Limited geographical scope

The limited geographical scope of the research project to the southern part of the island is due to the rudimentary infrastructure on Banggi Island (see §2.5). Including the remote Bonggi communities from the northern parts of the island would have constituted a major logistical and financial problem for the local church communities. If a more traditional, sociolinguistic language survey approach had been chosen, the researchers would also have visited some of the northern villages of the island. The limited geographical scope of the Bonggi research project also raises the question of how the Guide proper can be implemented in remote, spread-out language commu-

nities with limited access to transport and limited financial means.

## 2. Limited temporal scope

Implementing the Guide, as outlined by Hanawalt et al. (2015: iii), “should be looked at as a journey of discovery together;” that is, the Guide is designed as a process “that will take time.” Sociolinguistic language survey research, by contrast, is typically designed as a result-oriented project with a clear starting and ending point. For the current study, this means that the communities did not have time to meet at their own pace to revisit some of the issues and process their findings. Still, it took three months to carry out the entire study, whereas the research team had originally thought that the project could be carried out in two months. If the project had also included the Christian communities from the northern parts of the island as well as non-Christian communities, it would have taken even longer than three months. Hence, the question presents itself of whether and to what extent it is realistic for a language survey team to use the Guide approach to conduct sociolinguistic research.

## 3. Matters pertaining to the facilitators

The Guide facilitators “should ideally have at least a high school education, be good at interacting with people, and be able to relate abstract concepts with concrete examples” (Hanawalt et al. 2015: i). As for the Bonggi facilitators, their precise educational backgrounds are unknown, but during the training sessions it became evident that some of them had problems understanding how to use the tools and how to implement them. One explanation could be that facilitators’ educational backgrounds and abilities to understand and relate the abstract concepts behind the tools were insufficient. A second explanation could be that the facilitators were not provided with enough training. A third explanation could be that the facilitators had difficulties remembering how to implement the tools correctly because the time span between the training event and the actual tool implementation in the local communities was too long. These considerations raise the following questions: How can qualified trainers be found in areas with overall low education levels? How much training is enough? Is it enough to provide training for a given tool only once? How long or short should the time span between the training and the implementation be? How can the outside trainers ensure that the facilitators implement the tools promptly and correctly? These questions also apply to the Guide proper.

## 4. Matters pertaining to data documentation

With the research-driven Guide approach, an in-depth documentation of the results and other pertinent observations during the implementation phases is neither envisioned nor possible. For one, the researchers are not present during the community discussions. Moreover, the statements with which the results for the different tools are typically documented do not adequately reflect the preceding discussions on which these results are based (examples are the one-word statements for the FAMED Conditions Scoring chart or the EGIDS numbers for the Mountain Metaphor). In

the context of research-driven sociolinguistic studies, this lack of documentation, in turn, has negative consequences for the ensuing data analysis.

In the context of a research-driven Guide approach, the researchers could document the facilitators' presentations of community results during the feedback sessions. During these presentations, they could also follow-up on inconclusive or contradictory results. During the Bonggi study, however, the researchers did not do this. They felt there was no value in questioning the results given that there was no time to reimplement the tools in question. Furthermore, they did not wish to put the facilitators on the spot who presented inconclusive or contradictory data, as they were under the impression that within the participatory framework outsiders should not question what the local communities present. This, however, is not the way the Guide was envisioned by those who developed it.<sup>21</sup> This reluctance to engage critically with the results and the facilitators, however, is not helpful for the purposes of research-driven sociolinguistic studies, such as the Bonggi project.

#### 5. Neutrality of the Guide training manual

One of the researchers involved in training the facilitators submits that during the Guide meetings he and the second trainer tried to encourage the Bonggi participants to engage with Bonggi language preservation efforts so that their language would not die. According to the same researcher, the manual itself conveys the message—be it explicitly or implicitly—that is it preferable for a community to preserve their language. Hence, the question presents itself whether and to what extent the Guide training manual is indeed neutral with respect to language vitality and language shift or whether it is worded in such a way that it leads communities in a certain direction, namely towards language preservation efforts.

**6. Summary and recommendations** The Bonggi research project had two main objectives. The first was to examine Bonggi language vitality and to explore local (church) interest in and priorities for Bonggi language-related efforts. The second was to evaluate the methodological approach chosen for the project.

The findings, all of which are based on reported data, suggest that in the more remote areas Bonggi is still widely used and acquired by children, while in the area around Karakit Bonggi it is used (much) less widely and is only acquired by some children. At the same time, bilingualism in (Sabah) Malay seems to be pervasive among the Bonggi, with Malay being used in many domains typically reserved for a heritage language. Local interest in Bonggi language-related efforts appears to be mixed. That is, while the Bonggi (church) community as a whole seems to have only limited interest, a number of Bonggi individuals do seem to have interest in such efforts. For those interested in Bonggi language development, creating Bonggi songs would be their first priority.

<sup>21</sup>When implementing the Guide, the trainers and facilitators need to provide sufficient guidance and if necessary a course correction by pointing out goals or decisions that are unrealistic or simply not true (Eberhard and Hanawalt, p.c. 2016).

The evaluation of the methodological approach showed a number of shortcomings, resulting in the reported data gaps. Hence it is concluded that a research-driven Guide approach is not appropriate in the context of sociolinguistic studies. It needs to be reiterated, however, that the Guide was developed as a community-driven, participatory approach to language development planning and not as a sociolinguistic research tool (Hanawalt et al. 2015). Depending on the research questions for a given sociolinguistic study, the individual participatory tools may still be useful in the context of community interviews. They should be implemented with the researchers being present, so that they can facilitate and/or observe the community discussions and properly document community opinions. Moreover, the researchers need to ensure that an adequate (geographical) sample of the speech community is included in the research. As for the community-driven implementation of the Guide proper it is recommended to engage critically with the questions that were raised regarding the geographical and temporal scopes for implementing the Guide proper, as well as matters pertaining to adequate facilitator training and mentoring, data documentation, and maintaining the neutrality of the Guide itself.

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## Appendices

The appendices include a list of abbreviations (Appendix A), Porodong et al.'s (2008:20) map of Banggi Island (Appendix B), an overview of the local participants (Appendix C), the EGIDS scale (Appendix D), an example of the FAMED Conditions Scoring chart (Appendix E), an example of an action chart for the Taking Action tool (Appendix F), and the villages results (Appendix G).

### A. Abbreviations

EGIDS	Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale
FAMED	Function, Acquisition, Motivation, Environment, and Differentiation
PCS	Protestant Church of Sabah
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
SIB	Sidang Injil Borneo
SUM	Sustainable Use Model
UPC	United Pentecostal Church

### B. Map of Banggi Island

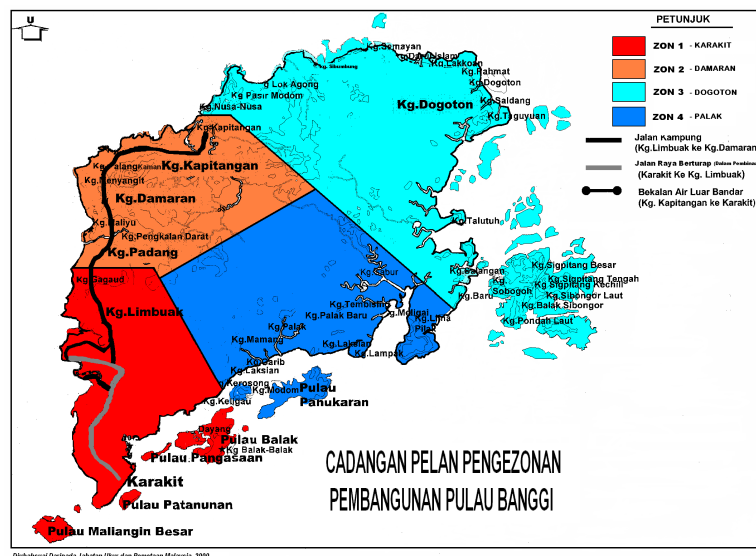


Figure 3. Porodong et al.'s (2008:20) map of Banggi Island<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup>In their socioeconomic study of Banggi Island, Porodong et al. (2008:20–23) suggest four *Mukim*, or development zones for Banggi Island. On the map they are marked in different colors.

### C. Overview of the local participants during the preparation, training and feedback sessions

Table 18 gives an overview of the research participants during the preparation, training and feedback sessions (see also §4.4). As for the number of local church members taking part in the actual implementation phases no information is available, given that the researchers did not inquire from the facilitators how many people took part in these meetings.

**Table 18.** Overview of local participants during the preparation, training and feedback sessions<sup>23</sup>

Villages	1. Prep-Mtg (Co-ord.)	2. Prep-Mtg (Loc. leaders)	1. Training	1. Feedback / 2. Training	2. Feedback
Batu Layar			yes	yes	yes
Kalangkaman		yes			
Limbuak Darat	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Mamang		yes			
Palak Darat		yes	yes	yes	
Pengkalan Darat		yes			
Sabur		yes	yes	yes	yes
Selangan			yes	yes	yes

<sup>23</sup>Abbreviations: Coord. = Local main coordinator, Loc. leaders = Local pastors and church leaders, Prep-Mtg. = Preparatory meeting.



#### D. EGIDS scale

The EGIDS scale forms the basis for the Mountain Metaphor, described in §4.2.3.

**Table 19.** Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS—adapted from Fishman 1991) (Lewis and Simons 2015:106–107)

Level	EGIDS label	Description	UNESCO
0	International	The language is used internationally for a broad range of functions.	Safe
1	National	The language is used in education, work, mass media, government at the nationwide level.	Safe
2	Regional	The language is used for local and regional mass media and governmental services.	Safe
3	Trade	The language is used for local and regional work by both insiders and outsiders.	Safe
4	Educational	Literacy in the language is being transmitted through a system of public education.	Safe
5	Written	The language is used orally by all generations and is effectively used in written form in parts of the community.	Safe
6a	Vigorous	The language is used orally by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language.	Safe
6b	Threatened	The language is used orally by all generations but only some of the child-bearing generation are transmitting it to their children.	Vulnerable
7	Shifting	The child-bearing generation knows the language well enough to use it among themselves but none are transmitting it to their children.	Definitely endangered
8a	Moribund	The only remaining active speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation.	Severely endangered
8b	Nearly Extinct	The only remaining speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation or older who have little opportunity to use the language.	Critically endangered
9	Dormant	The language serves as a reminder of heritage identity for an ethnic community. No one has more than symbolic proficiency.	Extinct
10	Extinct	No one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language, even for symbolic purposes.	Extinct

### E. FAMED Conditions Scoring: Chart example

Figure 4 presents an example of the chart used for the FAMED Conditions Scoring tool, described in §4.2.4. The chart is taken from an earlier Beta Version of Hanawalt et al. (2015), dated 2 April 2015 (p. 43).

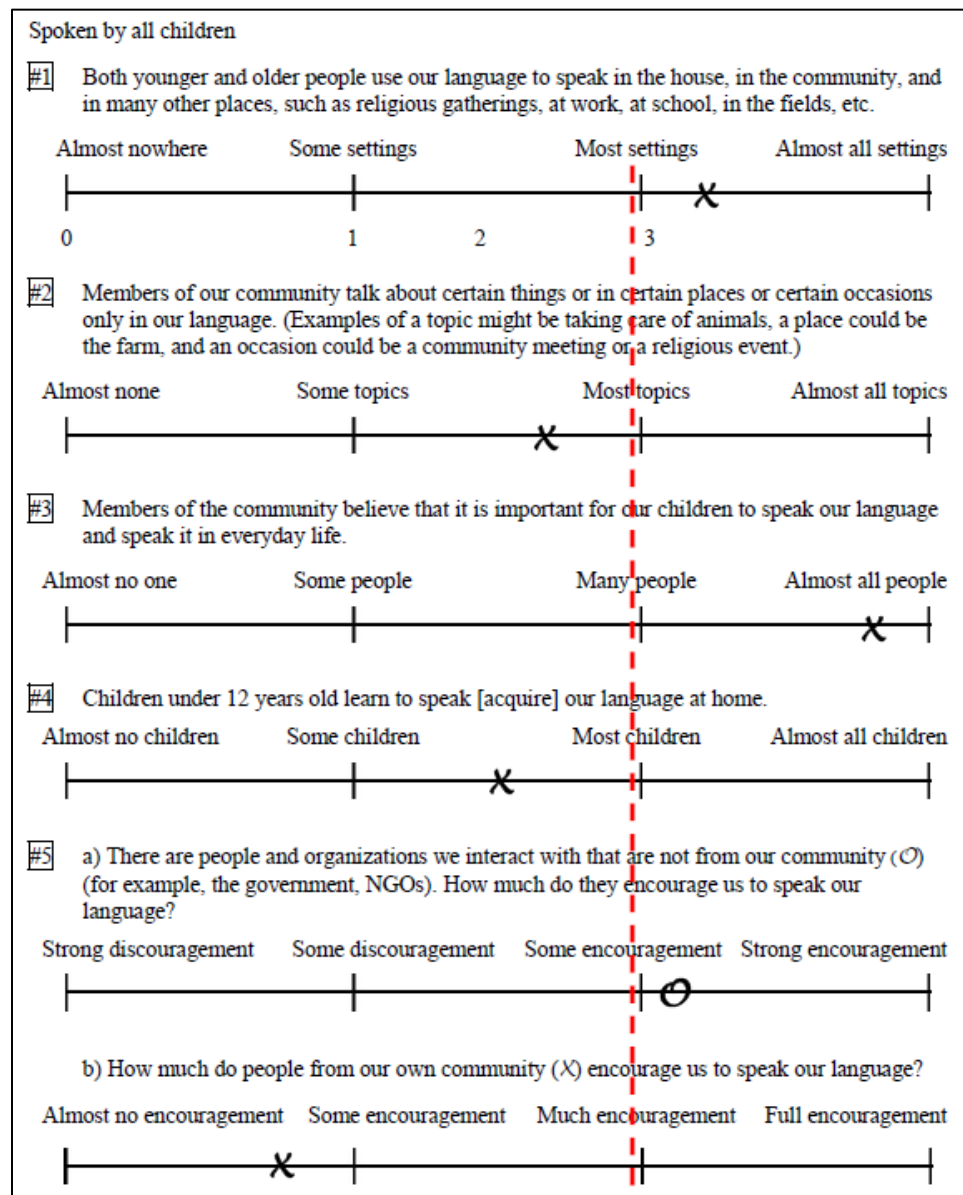


Figure 4. FAMED Conditions Scoring chart

## F. Taking Action: Action chart

Table 20 gives an example of an action chart. The chart is part of the Taking Action tool, described in §4.2.5 (Hanawalt et al. 2015:57).

**Table 20.** Action chart

Main issue	Action	Sources and steps	Act on our own	Need outside help

## G. Village results

### G.1. Batu Layar

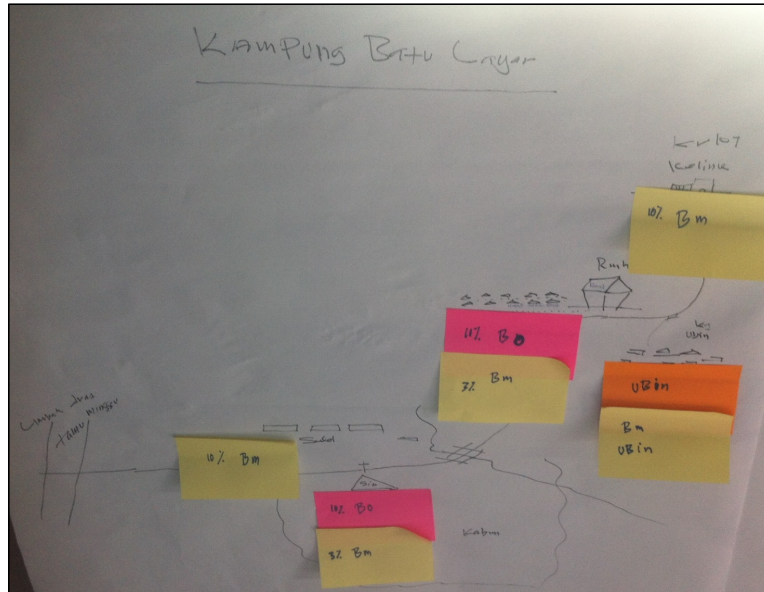


Figure 5. Bilingualism Venn Diagram

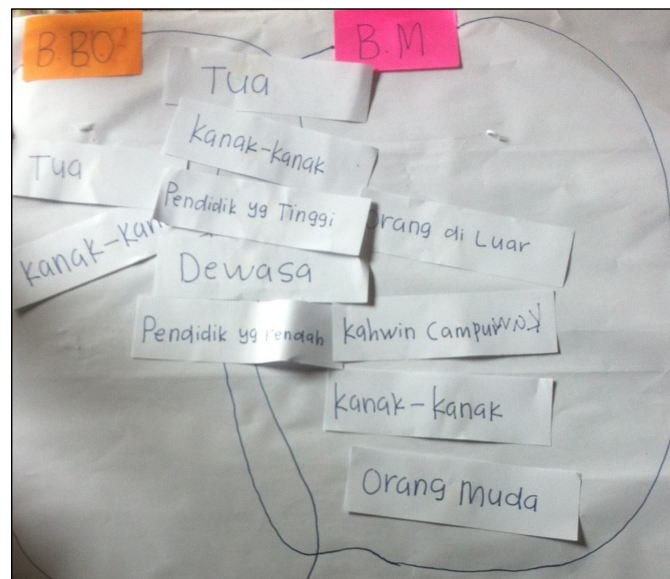


Figure 6. FAMED Conditions Scoring chart

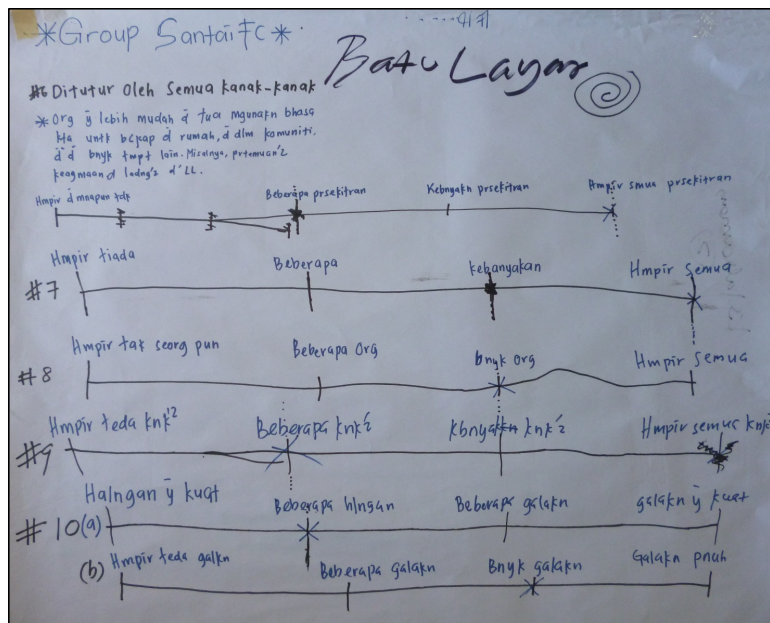


Figure 7. FAMED Conditions Scoring

**MENGAMBIL TINDAKAN (KOMUNITI)**

**Batu Layar**

Masalah untuk di tangani	Tindakan untuk diambil	Sumber 2 y di perlukan Langkah 2 y di perlukan	Mula dari kita sendiri	Perlu bantuan luar
* Bahasa Cam-puran	* Menguasai bahasa dgn baik	* Merujuk kepada org yang lebih tua - Belajar bahasa dn mendalamiya bahasa dri org yg lebih tua.	Ya	
	* Peranan ibu bapa	* Mendidik anak mnggunakan bhasa asal pad'k's lagi	Ya	
Tembirang/ lupa asal usul (tidak mencintai bhasa Dusun bonggi)	* Menegur	* Membuat kempen bahasa dusun bonggi	Ya	
	* Menasihati	* Memberi ceramah tentang kepentingan bhasa dusun bonggi	Ya	
Kurang didjkn dn galakn dri ibu bapa	* Konferensi bt kengaan tanggungjawab ibu bapa	* Ibu bpa lebih mementingkn bahasa lain b'banding bhasa bunade - Gereja mnganjurkan konferensi bahasa bonggi		Ya
	* Krusus bhasa bonggi untk ibu bapa	* Ibu bpa y khawin campur prlu di beri krusus untk mampelsjkn bhasa dusun bonggi.		Ya
Pengaruh bahasa luar @ asing	* Menapis bahasa luar	* Tidak trlalu obses dgn bhasa asing	Ya	
Pengaruh bahasa b'lain bonggi	* Tidak trpgaruh dgn bhasa lain	* Tidak terlalu menuturkn atsu mgikut prtuturan bhasa lain.	Ya	

Figure 8. Action Planning





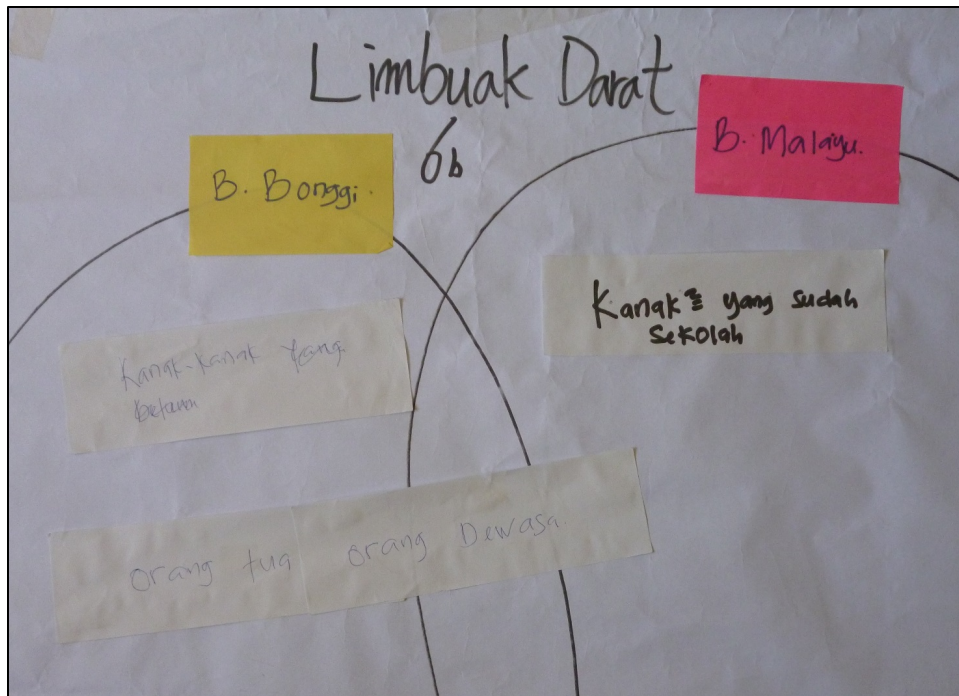


Figure 10. Bilingualism Venn Diagram

### G.3. Palak Darat

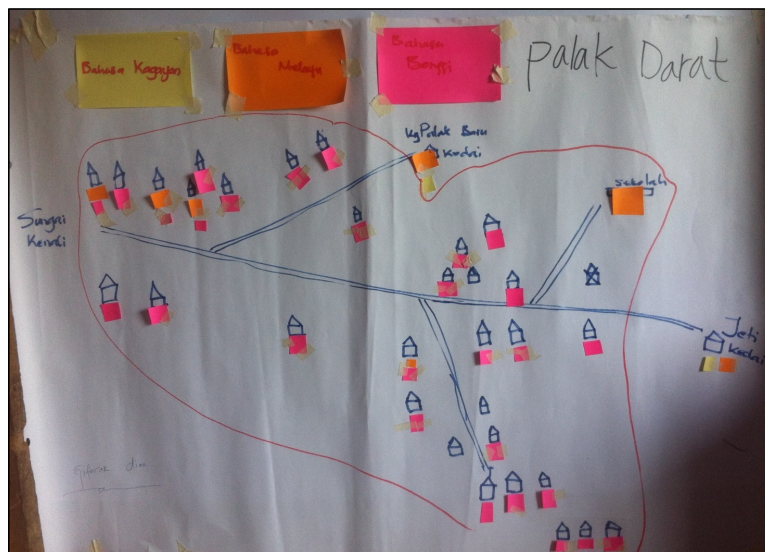


Figure 11. Village Mapping

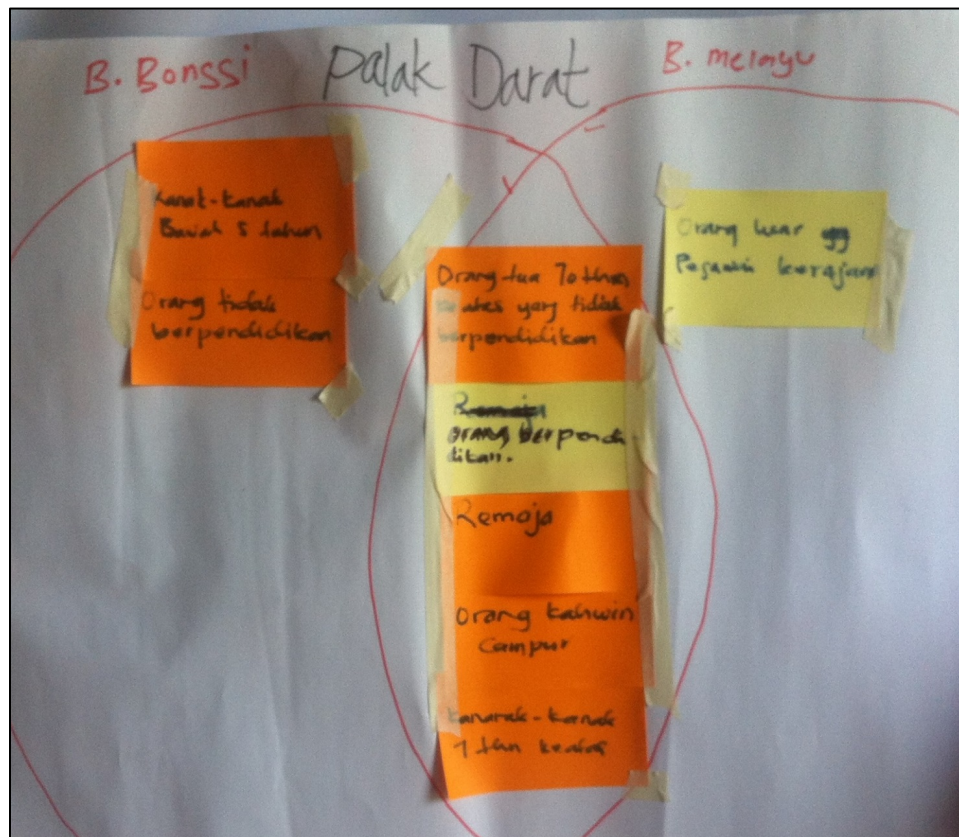


Figure 12. Bilingualism Venn Diagram



#### G.4. Sabur



Figure 13. Village Mapping

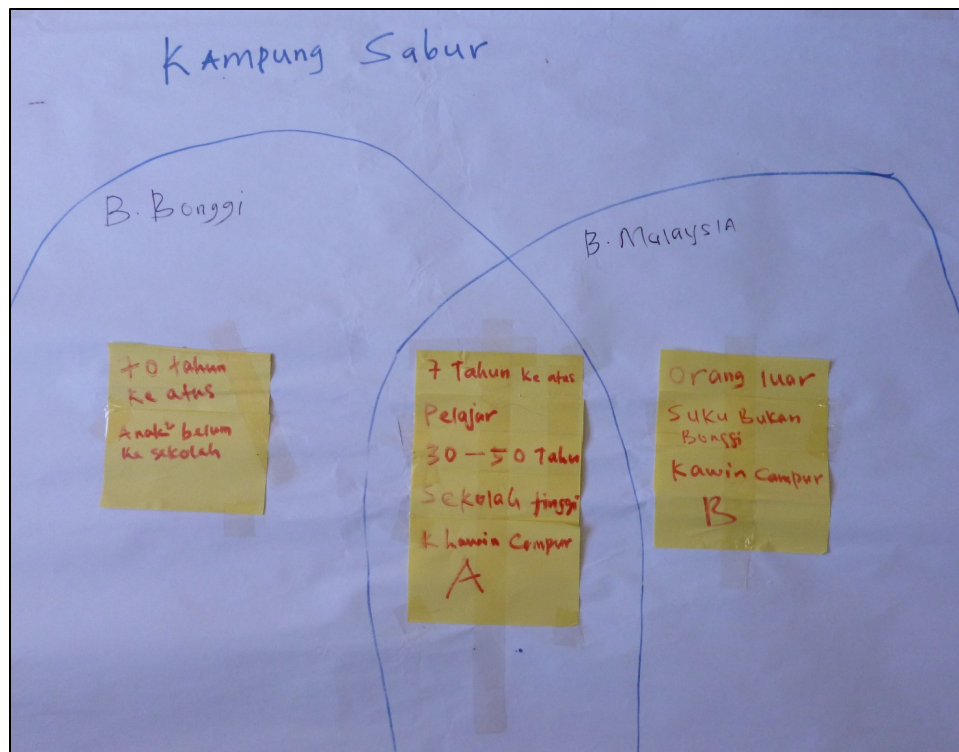


Figure 14. Bilingualism Venn Diagram

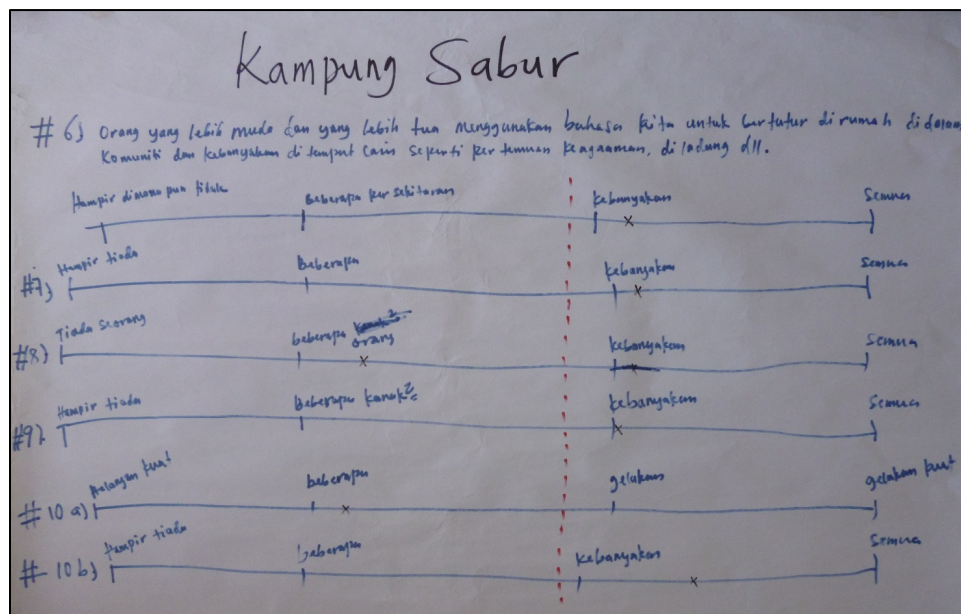


Figure 15. FAMED Conditions Scoring

## G.5. Selangan

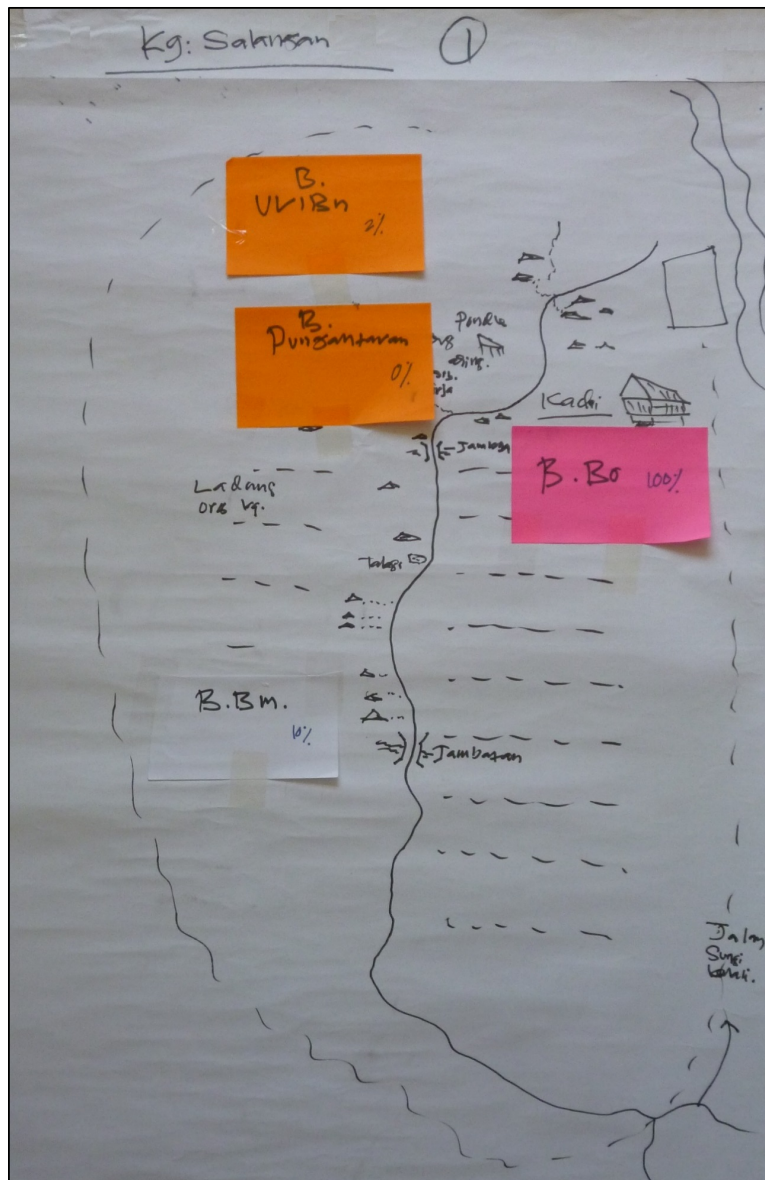


Figure 16. Village Mapping



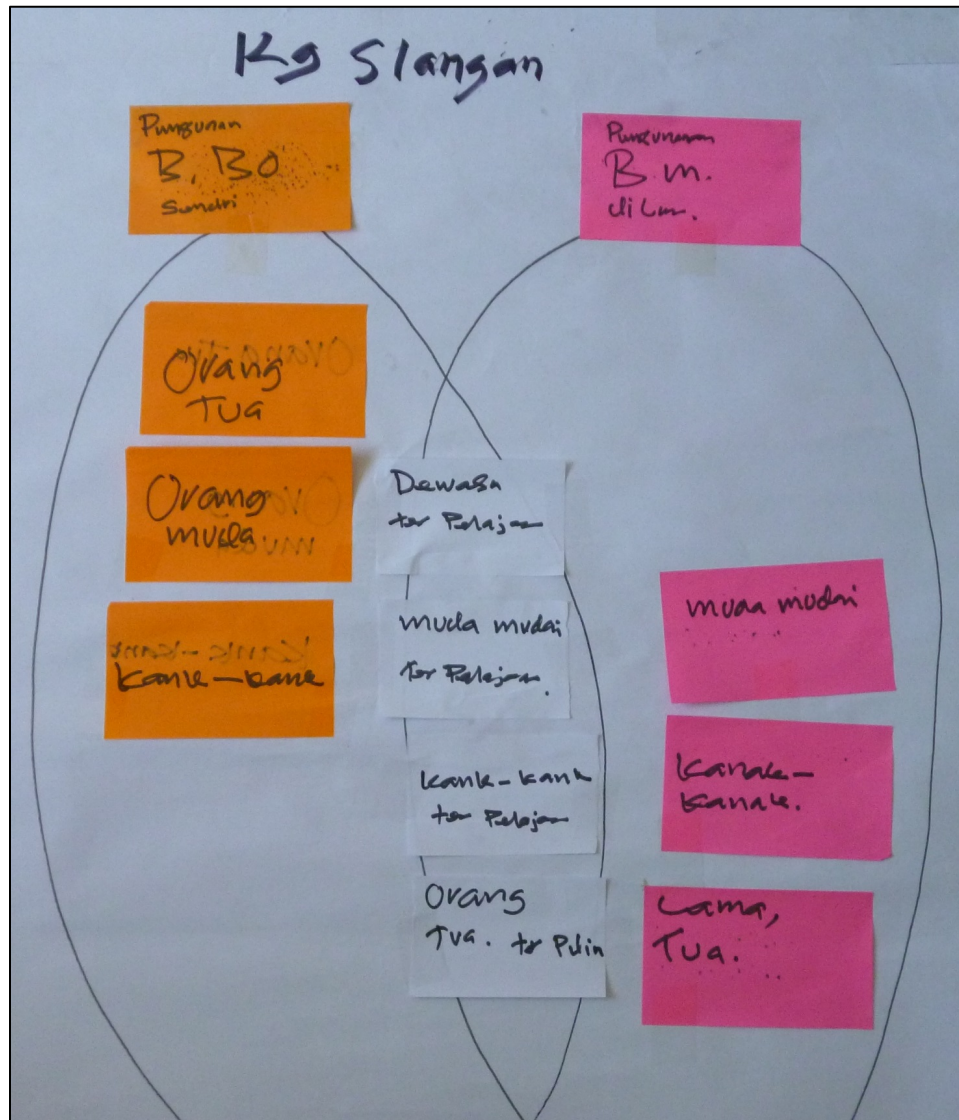


Figure 17. Bilingualism Venn Diagram

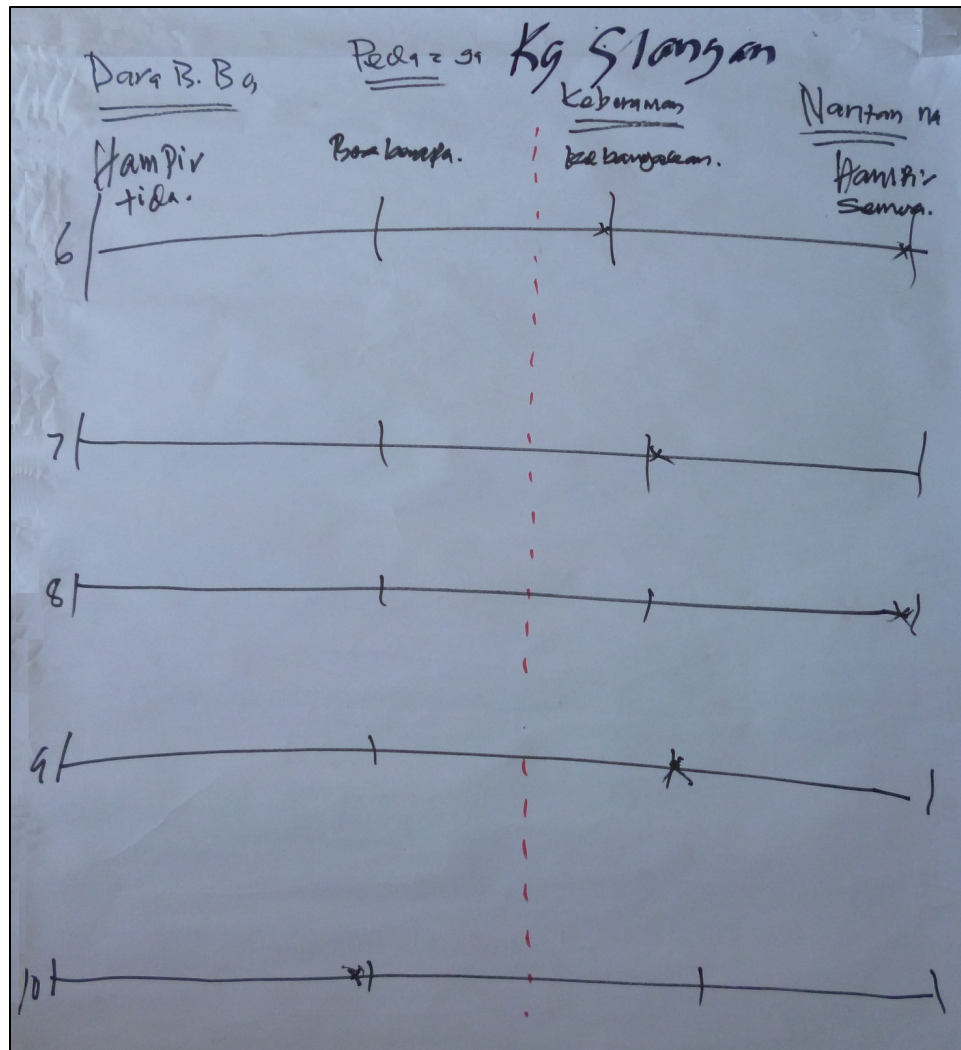


Figure 18. FAMED Conditions Scoring

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