

COLLECTION GLOSSES*

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Abstract

The approximate meaning of an entry in parallel word lists must be given in one language of scientific interchange, and may be given in two.

Primary <u>G</u> loss Language *	English
Its language code *	ENG
Secondary Gloss Language	Indonesian
Its language code	INZ

Figure 1: Two glossing languages, from the Collection panel of JG-SulSel12.

In order to work with many languages at once, we need to choose one or two languages in which we are likely to publish our results. The **glossing** languages are used to identify the approximate meanings of words in the languages whose relationships we are studying.

Comparative phonology lines up words of similar meaning and similar form. A Wordcorr entry might consist of the words for "house" in twenty languages that might be related, for example, and another entry have in it the words for "horse" in those same languages. And it might turn out that in one of the languages the "house" word doesn't match, but the "shack" word matches the "house" words in the other languages.

Word lists are not dictionaries. They are imprecise about exactly what the words in them mean. And because the meanings of words change over time just as their forms do, what we need for comparison had better not exclude words that could have come from the same ancestral form as words in other languages that now mean something a little different.

With each glossing language name goes its Ethnologue code.

NOTE: The codes that identify languages, both the languages of description (the glossing languages) and the languages being compared (the subject languages) have recently had some codes modified

*Version 1.2: May 23, 2006 1:39 am -0500

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by international agreement. Verify codes against the Fifteenth Edition of the Ethnologue¹. As a quick clue, codes in capital letters, like the ones in Figure 1, are from the Fourteenth Edition or older. Currently valid codes are in lower case.

¹http://www.ethnologue.com/language_index.asp