

The Urgency of Preserving Regional Languages through Local Educational Curriculum

¹ Susandi Decapriu Putra Pamungkas, ² Gede Ngurah Darma Suputra, ³ Dyah Ajeng Puspa Fadillah, ⁴ Mirsya Lila Agua Rista, ⁵ Sadira Ramadhani Arisandi
¹²³⁴⁵ Universitas Jember, Kabupaten Jember, Indonesia

¹ susandipamungkas@gmail.com*; ² gedengurahdarmasuputra@gmail.com; ³ dyahajengpusp4@gmail.com; ⁴ mirsya.lila@gmail.com; ⁵ sadira.arisandi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the need for the use of regional languages in education to be applied permanently. Based on field data, the use of local languages through local content education is minimally carried out by educational institutions. This creates a problematic situation because the use of regional languages through local content education can be lost and eroded by the progress of an increasingly globalized world. This research adopts a qualitative research method, where the focus is on gathering information. Additionally, this study also employed a literature review approach, using journals, academic articles, and other. The research findings show that indeed the use of regional languages in local content subjects has become rare in some cases and is no longer applied because of curriculum regulations. Therefore, the authors suggest issuing a new policy that involves re-evaluating the curriculum collectively to ensure the preservation of regional languages in education in a sustainable manner. Of course, in discussing the curriculum, all aspects must be involved, including academics, indigenous peoples, and the government, who must synergize in realizing the use of local languages in education to remain empowered.

Keywords: Preservation local languages, local content, curriculum policy

INTRODUCTION

In human life since prehistoric times, communication has been established through writings on cave walls, as discovered by world archaeologists. Communication during that era still occurred even though there was no specific language serving as a guide for humans or the inhabitants of that time. Language is one of the tools used by humans to communicate with one another. It is a crucial component in preserving a nation's culture, used as a means of communication among communities.

Social communication that takes place within society is one way to achieve unity and solidarity within a nation. Indonesia is a country with diverse ethnicities, religions, races, and different languages. With such diversity, each region in Indonesia has its own mother tongue, which has been inherited and preserved for future generations (Pandaleke et al., 2020).

According to the latest data from the "Long Form Census 2020" by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), 73.87% of families in Indonesia still

use their local languages when communicating within their families. Meanwhile, in interactions with relatives and neighbors, local languages are used by only 71.93% of Indonesian families. Other data referring to Generation Z and Generation Alpha shows that only around 61-62% use local languages as their daily language. From this data, it can be inferred that the current generation uses local languages less frequently in their daily lives.

Local languages are an essential cultural element that can influence the recipient or interlocutor, human behavior, emotions, and even people's tendencies in facing their surroundings. Local languages are a means to formulate the life values of indigenous communities, such as customs, spiritual values, ethics, lifestyles, patterns of thought and attitudes, worldview, and all aspects and cultural inspirations within a specific community or cultural area. Local languages are used in accordance with the culture of the community. Culture has a regenerative nature in its usage, meaning that a culture is inherited from one generation to another to ensure its continuity and preservation (Budiarto, 2020). The existence of local languages is closely related to the existence of ethnic groups that produce and use them. Therefore, language is a vital supporting factor for tradition and customs.

In the present day, globalization has reached all corners of the world, including indigenous communities. Globalization and technological advancements have brought about significant changes. The impact of globalization on languages is evident in the easy accessibility of

information sources regarding language usage and understanding. The younger generation is more familiar with technological developments and globalization. They are exposed to foreign languages brought in by globalization. Consequently, many of them choose to use other languages for their daily communication (Budiarto, 2020). The preservation of local languages should be implemented now so that future generations can still enjoy using local languages. One way to preserve the local languages of a nation is through teaching the younger generation in schools. Incorporating local language education into the curriculum will make language preservation easier. Therefore, this study includes the preservation of local languages in local content education, aiming to build a smart generation for Indonesia's golden year in 2045.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research method, in which the authors focus on gathering information through social research observations and literature data. Researchers also respond to social phenomena that are relevant to the themes discussed in this qualitative research. This is in line with what Creswell (2014) stated, that qualitative research aims to explore social problems or events that occur in humans. Throughout the research process, data was collected through literature research.

In addition, this study also uses a literature review approach, using journals, scientific articles, and other academic literature. Therefore, the data used is secondary data, which

consists of a literature review and includes three secondary legal materials and tertiary legal materials as an additional complement to support the success of this research. The approach used is qualitative which describes events and issues related to the urgency of preserving the use of regional languages in local content education that occurs in the community.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The perception of young people regarding the existence of local languages as local wisdom

Local language or regional language is a commonly used term for communication in a specific area within a particular ethnic group (KBBI). Customs or traditions will perish if they are abandoned by their practitioners, and the same applies to local language and literature. Literature in local languages will vanish if the local language, as its raw material, becomes extinct. The existence of local languages can be identified for daily communication if there are still people creating literature in those languages.

Preservation of local languages as an identity is crucial. The local language, as the mother tongue, is closely related to a child's character education. The mother tongue is the first language a child learns through their family environment (Susanti, 2016). Character education should begin when the growth of brain cell tissue at the age of 0-4 years reaches 50%, which is during early childhood (Puslitbang Kemendiknas: 2010). A child's character education is heavily influenced by literature in local languages. Character education for young children is carried out in

enjoyable ways, and one of them is through storytelling. The moral values contained within these stories play a significant role in character development for children, guided by the role of parents, and become determinants of the quality of a child's character (Hidaya & Aisna, 2020). As character education is closely related to the emphasis on habits, local language serves as an ideal medium for shaping character or personality based on the values that grow within the community's life.

The acquisition of language, in essence, does not necessarily need to be formally taught, as it grows naturally within the environment around us. This is evident in our mastery of a language due to its application within the family environment. Language is not learned by constructing sentences word by word using formulas but rather, this sequence is formed automatically through habits and repetition during communication. This is the reason why language is easy to learn when it becomes a habit. The younger generation who still use local languages as their means of communication within their families say that the local language is easy for them. However, it may not be the case for those who do not use the local language in their daily communication.

Intermarriage between different ethnic groups is also a reason for the decreasing mastery of local languages among the younger generation. Their parents tend to communicate using Indonesian to avoid misunderstandings and language difficulties due to the differences between their respective languages. Consequently, local languages are no

longer the first language a child learns but are displaced by Indonesian. This was confirmed by Muzakki Bashori in Kompas on 13/04/2022, as a Javanese individual who married a Sundanese person. They communicate in Indonesian, which impacts their child, causing the local language to no longer be their first language but rather their second or third language. Another reason contributing to the increasing phenomenon of the fading use of Javanese is the weak intergenerational transmission, which is caused by the strengthening position of Indonesian (Andriyanti, 2019). This claim is supported by the fact that the number of Javanese language speakers has decreased over the past four years, from 86 million in 2017 to only 68 million speakers in 2021 (Simons & Fennig in Bashori, 2022).

Looking from the perspective of the younger generation, local languages are seen as something not worth delving deeply into. They believe that a basic understanding of the local language is sufficient, and what matters most is being able to understand their conversation partner. However, language mastery reflects culture, attitude, behavior, and the identity of a nation (Fitri, 2020). Even in schools, local languages are considered optional within the local content subjects, which means not all schools implement local languages as a mandatory subject to be learned. In schools where local languages are included in the curriculum, they are not seriously taught for various reasons. The demands to excel in general subjects at school make students focus more on studying them, leaving local languages aside.

The selection process for progressing to the next level is also dominated by general subjects. It is no wonder that teachers emphasize to their students the importance of excelling in general subjects. Consequently, this creates a mistaken perception among students to neglect local languages.

Globalization, in reality, is also a cause of the disruption of local culture, especially concerning local languages. One apparent activity influenced by globalization is the shift from traditional to modern ways of living, as seen in the use of human-made tools and technology to ease daily activities (Budiarto, 2020). Undeniably, such phenomena provide opportunities for people to create new jobs, which become part of globalization and have a global impact. Effective communication understood by all parties involved is essential in these new jobs. The younger generation tends to be enthusiastic about and prioritize learning English as an international language rather than focusing on their local language. They view the local language as irrelevant to the jobs they desire. Moreover, proficiency in English enhances their chances of securing better job opportunities and, in some cases, opens doors to work for foreign companies with higher salaries. The young generation's interest in learning international languages is driven by its broad characteristics, providing access to various fields and not being limited to a specific regional area. They perceive the opportunities offered by global information to be highly beneficial. Technological advancements are also highly supported by English proficiency to avoid lagging behind other countries.

The regeneration process is a necessity for cultural heirs to preserve the existence of their culture. However, rapid developments in time demand adjustments in culture. It is not uncommon for this cultural shift to lead to the opinion that something old or conventional is not important. This creates a challenge for cultural heirs—to remain in place or move forward. Staying in place may be considered old-fashioned, but daring to move forward will make one modern (Liliweri, 2002). According to the theory of modernization, the transition process from traditional to modern ways of living is necessary and inevitable. However, if this process involves local traditions or those with sacred values, it can negatively impact the characteristics and identity of cultural heirs. Furthermore, if the assumption "something old is not important" is used, it can diminish local wisdom, leading to the loss of cultural identity. Although development is a demand, it should not be used as a reason to erase the characteristics and identity of cultural heirs. Therefore, preserving local culture is essential and should be a collective concern for cultural heirs (Budiarto, 2020).

Basically, the younger generation acknowledges the importance of preserving Indonesian cultural products. However, in practice, very few young people seriously study local languages in-depth. There is a perception that local languages are monotonous and boring. They are not widely used, and terms like *Bahasa Gaul* (slang) exist in Indonesian and other international languages for communication in public spaces. *Bahasa Gaul* is a style

of language that develops or modifies various languages, used extensively, and considered popular, lacking clarity about its formation structure. Most of the vocabulary in *Bahasa Gaul* consists of abbreviations, translations, wordplay, and some origins are unknown. *Bahasa Gaul* emerges when the general public discusses the same popular topics and follows trends on social media (Anggini & Syaputra, 2022).

In contrast to *Bahasa Gaul*, which originates from translations of other languages, local languages are considered too formal for widespread use and are limited to specific ethnic groups. The language and accent used can lead to different perceptions among the language recipients. On the other hand, *Bahasa Gaul* can also erode the existence of local languages to the point of extinction. *Bahasa Gaul* is also suspected of contributing to the decline of the character and identity reflected in society's behavior (Anggini & Syaputra, 2022). It is important to instill local languages to shape the character that aligns with the societal values amidst the rapid flow of globalization, particularly with regard to ethics, as many deviations occur among the current younger generations. The decline in the moral attitudes of Indonesians is marred by their involvement in violent acts and crimes within their own ethnic groups, leading individuals to feel ashamed of showing their identity as part of that community.

The importance of preservation and maintenance of local languages in the educational world

The importance of preserving local languages cannot be ignored because

there are strong reasons, where local languages are symbols of the identity of each ethnic group, creating diversity and cultural richness. Preserving local languages can enhance a sense of patriotism because local languages are an integral part of the nation's identity. Furthermore, local languages are important as representations of cultural identity, not just a means of communication.

The preservation and conservation of local languages in the field of education become a primary focus as it provides significant benefits to society, culture, and the overall identity of a region or nation. Some important points regarding the importance of preserving and conserving local languages in education are as follows:

1. Preserving cultural identity and self-identity.

In the field of education, local languages need to be preserved as a means of learning to introduce the culture and history of a specific region. Using local languages as the medium of instruction in education can help students to have a deeper understanding of the local culture and identity (Moh. Zain & Nadya, 2022). Preserving local languages in education is also a form of appreciation for the linguistic and cultural diversity in Indonesia. This can create an inclusive educational environment that respects differences. The use of local languages in education can help students develop communication skills in those languages, and preserving local languages in

education is a way to ensure that they do not become extinct.

2. Improving communication effectiveness.

The use of local languages in education can improve communication effectiveness within the school and community, especially among children and teenagers. Local languages are still used in daily interactions by members of the community. Teaching local languages helps students communicate better with people in their surroundings. Nowadays, children and teenagers are less familiar with and understand their own local languages. This is because the younger generation is more interested in using slang or *Bahasa Gaul*, which is a factor contributing to cultural changes in Indonesia (Hurip, 2022).

3. Preserving the continuity and enriching the culture.

Local languages play a crucial role as a means of imparting cultural values, local stories, customs, and unique life philosophies from that particular region (Hurip, 2022). Through the education of local languages, the younger generation can appreciate cultural heritage and understand the relevance of these values in modern life. Local languages often serve as a vessel for the creativity of local arts. Preserving local languages also means preserving the uniqueness of the distinct arts from a particular region.

4. Supporting the nation's culture as a whole.

Preserving and maintaining the local language contributes to the cultural

diversity of a nation, enriching and expanding the perspectives of the entire society. It can also help create an inclusive society that respects the rights of minorities in a multicultural environment.

The preservation and conservation of the local language in the context of education are related to Sustainable Development Goal number 4, SDG 30, which aims to "ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (Agus, Dian, & Utari, 2020). The use of the local language in education can play a role in creating an inclusive educational environment that values diversity. Additionally, the use of the local language in the learning process can contribute to achieving the 4th SDG target.

Preserving and maintaining the local language can contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal number 4. The use of the local language in education can help improve access for students with different mother tongues. Utilizing the local language in the educational process can support lifelong learning opportunities, which is one aspect of achieving the SDGs. By preserving the local language, students can continue to use and develop language skills throughout their lives, enabling them to continue learning and participating in lifelong education. Preserving the local language creates a multicultural learning environment, allowing students to understand and appreciate their own culture as well as the cultures of others.

Inclusivity and equality in education are one way to preserve and introduce the local language in the curriculum. The local language is

part of cultural identity, and teaching students how to respect and appreciate linguistic diversity enhances access for students from various cultural backgrounds to the world of education. Teaching the local language as a subject helps students recognize and appreciate aspects of local culture and traditions.

Incorporating the local language into the teaching and learning process can enhance the quality of education and promote the use of the local language in daily life. Using the local language actively in the educational environment helps students communicate more effectively and understand the subject matter deeply. By actively incorporating the local language in education, students feel more connected to their culture and linguistic identity.

Actively preserving the local language in education supports the achievement of SDGs, particularly goals related to inclusive education, improving the quality of education, respecting cultural diversity, and empowering local communities. This encourages an inclusive, sustainable, and fair approach to achieving social and cultural development (Alvira, Vioreza, & Deti, 2022).

The implementation of the local language in the education sector currently varies between regions, depending on government policies, educational structures, and local cultural diversity. Although there are different approaches, there are some common strategies that can be used to implement the local language in education, as follows:

1. Adopting a bilingual or multilingual curriculum.

In the field of education, there are two approaches that emphasize teaching and learning using more than one language, namely bilingual and multilingual curriculum. The goals of both approaches are to develop language skills and provide communication opportunities for students.

Bilingual curriculum is an approach where teaching and learning are conducted using two different languages. One language is the mother tongue or local language dominant in their environment, while the other language is the national language or international language (Artini & Nitiasih, 2014). The aim is to preserve language and culture by providing opportunities to master another language with global and local communication value.

Multilingual curriculum is an approach where teaching and learning are conducted using three or more different languages. The main goal of this approach is to create students who are highly proficient in multilingual and multicultural skills. In addition to the local language, national language, and international language, students can also learn other languages (Sandi & Ilham, 2022).

Several countries or regions implement bilingual or multilingual education systems, where the local language is used together with the national language or international language in the teaching and learning process. In this approach, subjects are taught using the local language as the first language, while the national language or international language is used as the second language. This strategy is considered capable of helping students stay connected to local culture and gradually master

the official language of the country or international language.

2. Introducing the local language as a subject.

Introducing the local language as a subject holds significant importance in the efforts to preserve and appreciate the language and culture within a region. The local language can be integrated into the curriculum as a local content subject. Students will learn and understand the local language, including its vocabulary, grammar, and writing system (Edi, 2022). This subject serves as a means to preserve and strengthen the use of the local language by providing knowledge about the language, culture, and inherent values it carries.

3. Introducing the local language in the teaching and learning process.

Teachers can use the local language when teaching and interacting with students in the classroom. This approach includes providing instructions and communicating with students using the local language. It is believed to help students feel more familiar with the subject matter and create an inclusive and enjoyable learning environment.

4. Developing learning materials in the local language.

Using the appropriate and structured approach will help students develop pride in their language and cultural identity. Steps that can be taken to introduce the local language as a subject include starting with the development of engaging learning materials. These can include textbooks, audio materials, videos,

and can be integrated with art, music, local history, and literary lessons (Lustantini, 2022). Next is to focus on developing oral and written skills. It is important to develop speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in the local language. Additionally, utilizing language learning software, apps, and online platforms can help strengthen students' language skills in an engaging manner.

Efforts to preserve regional languages through local content education towards indonesia emas 2045

The formation of binding legal regulations in the field of education.

The formation of binding legal regulations in the field of education involves the creation and implementation of laws, rules, and policies that govern various aspects of the education system. These regulations are put in place to ensure the quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of education for all individuals within a country or region.

The process of creating binding legal regulations in education typically involves legislative bodies, government agencies, educational institutions, experts, and stakeholders. They work together to develop and establish laws and policies that address issues such as curriculum standards, teacher qualifications, student rights and responsibilities, funding and budgeting, school management, and other important aspects of the education system.

Once these regulations are enacted, they become legally binding and must be followed by all relevant

parties within the education sector. Compliance with these regulations is essential to maintain a standardized and fair education system that meets the needs of students and supports the overall goals of society and the nation.

The organization of the Local Language Month in educational institutions

Local governments throughout Indonesia can promote the development of regional languages by organizing the Local Language Month. One month is sufficient time to enhance and preserve languages in each region, especially among the younger generation. This initiative can be targeted at all students in various educational levels and the general public. In its implementation, both the government and private sectors can organize various events, activities, or competitions that emphasize the use of regional languages. These activities can include poetry competitions, speech contests, short video competitions, and storytelling contests conducted in the local language. While Indonesia has designated October as the National Language Month to commemorate the Youth Pledge, which includes the promotion of the Indonesian language, it is also important to have separate language months for each region in Indonesia.

The Local Language Month has already been successfully implemented at the regional level in Indonesia, such as in Bali Province. Bali Province has regularly organized the Balinese Language Month since the enactment of the Governor of Bali Regulation Number 80 of 2018 on the Protection and Use of the Balinese Language, Script, and

Literature, as well as the Implementation of the Balinese Language Month. The Balinese Language Month is celebrated every February and is organized by the Provincial Government in coordination with the regencies and cities' governments. Additionally, it can also be carried out by traditional villages, educational institutions, private entities, and the local community. This regulation serves as the legal framework prepared by the Bali Provincial Government to preserve the Balinese language and prevent its extinction.

Educational institutions, as one of the implementing bodies, can dedicate at least one day to conduct activities such as festivals, competitions, exhibitions, performances, seminars, or other relevant events during the Local Language Month. Students will become more acquainted with the local wisdom in their surroundings, including the regional language. They will also actively participate in activities organized by educational institutions during the Local Language Month. As a result, regional languages as part of the local curriculum will further develop, and efforts for language preservation will become more effective. Therefore, the preservation of regional languages across Indonesia can progress successfully, with one of the approaches being the organization of the Local Language Month in each region, promoting the potential of regional linguistic wisdom.

CONCLUSION

The younger generation is aware of the importance of preserving Indonesian cultural products. But in

practice, very few young people are serious about learning the local language in depth. This is because teenagers tend to adapt to international languages and feel embarrassed to use local languages. In this study it was proven by the small number of children of the younger generation who felt foreign to the local language and tended to be unwilling to recognize it. Research shows that the preservation and maintenance of regional languages in education has become a major focus because they provide significant benefits for society, culture, and the identity of a region or nation as a whole through a process of cultural regeneration in local content education for regional languages.

The utilization of regional languages in the educational process can support lifelong learning opportunities, which is one aspect of achieving sustainable SDGs goals. Therefore, efforts for the preservation of regional languages through local curriculum education must be consistently enforced through various means. These include redefining educational curriculum policies, involving community members, educators, and local governments, to create opportunities for regional languages to be included as mandatory local curriculum subjects.

Additionally, regular language month celebrations with themes that highlight the uniqueness of each regional language in Indonesia can also be implemented. These events can be held once a month. By doing so, regional languages as part of the local curriculum will further develop, and the efforts for their preservation will become more effective.

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