

# REVITALIZATION OF LOCAL LANGUAGES THROUGH EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM: STRATEGIES AND IMPLICATIONS

Subiantoro<sup>1\*</sup>, M. Makhrus Ali<sup>2</sup>, Fauzan Akmal Firdaus<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> STIT Darul Ishlah Tulang Bawang, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> STAI Ibnu Rusyd Kotabumi, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> STIT Az Zahra Tasikmalaya, Indonesia

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### \*Correspondence:

subiantoro810@gmail.com

## Abstract

*The decline in the use of local languages among Indonesia's younger generations is an urgent issue, where the dominance of Indonesian and foreign languages is increasingly limiting the space for regional languages in daily life. This study aims to identify strategies for revitalizing local languages through the educational curriculum and to examine the challenges encountered in its implementation. The research method used in this study is a literature review, analyzing relevant articles, journals, and policy documents. The findings indicate that although integrating regional languages into the curriculum has been undertaken, significant challenges include teacher training, limited high-quality teaching materials, and insufficient policy support. Therefore, to ensure the revitalization of local languages, collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and the community is needed, along with developing a more adaptive curriculum and supporting resources.*

## INTRODUCTION

Local languages are invaluable cultural assets that reflect a community's identity and represent local wisdom passed down through generations. The existence of local languages is crucial from a linguistic perspective and as a means of preserving Indonesia's cultural diversity. However, in recent decades, local languages in Indonesia and worldwide have experienced a significant decline. Various factors, such as globalization, technological advancements, and urbanization, play an important role in the decreasing use of local languages among younger generations. Therefore, revitalizing local languages through education is urgently necessary to preserve this cultural heritage. Without strategic measures, regional languages could become extinct within a few generations. Revitalization efforts must be carried out through an integrated approach to the educational curriculum, which can foster

a sense of love and pride for local languages.

Revitalizing local languages through the educational curriculum can be seen as a comprehensive effort to preserve the nation's cultural identity. One of the most effective measures is incorporating local language instruction into school subjects. As a country with hundreds of ethnic groups and languages, Indonesia has extraordinary cultural diversity. Therefore, teaching regional languages in schools must be enhanced to ensure that younger generations can inherit their language and culture properly. According to (Nadar, 2020), local languages serve as a cultural window that allows individuals to understand the perspectives and values within a particular society. Thus, integrating regional languages into the educational curriculum will enrich students' knowledge, shape their character, and instill pride in their culture.

However, the effort to revitalize local languages does not always proceed smoothly. The main challenge is the dominance of Indonesian as the national language, which increasingly limits the use of regional languages in public spaces. Indonesian is perceived as a more modern and practical language in many regions. In contrast, regional languages are increasingly considered limited usage, confined only to family settings or small communities. This perception leads younger generations to prefer Indonesian daily, even when interacting with fellow speakers of their local language. Therefore, revitalizing local languages must be considered part of the broader effort to preserve Indonesia's culture as a whole. The societal tendency to underestimate the importance of regional languages (Suryadi, 2021) further exacerbates this situation.

The educational curriculum serves as an effective medium for addressing this issue. As explained by (Dewi, 2022), education plays a central role in maintaining the sustainability of local languages. Students can learn, recognize, and actively use their local language by incorporating regional language materials into the curriculum. A curriculum based on regional cultural wealth can also enhance students' understanding of the nation's cultural diversity. Therefore, it is crucial to design a curriculum that teaches local languages theoretically and integrates practical language use into daily life. This culture-based education can provide students with a deeper understanding of the importance of preserving regional languages to prevent their extinction.

Cultural learning theories, which assert that language is an inseparable part of culture, also support the significance of a local language-based curriculum. Through language, students can understand the values, traditions, and thought patterns that shape a community (Smith, 2019). Thus, a curriculum that integrates regional languages offers linguistic benefits and introduces students to broader social and cultural contexts. Additionally, such a curriculum will contribute to fostering a society more aware of cultural diversity and the importance of preserving local heritage.

Various studies indicate that a local language-based curriculum can have a positive impact on strengthening students' cultural identity. A survey conducted by (Rahman, 2023) found that introducing regional languages from an early age helps students better understand their cultural heritage, increases pride in their ethnic identity, and strengthens social connections within the community. Teaching local languages also fosters pride in the cultural richness possessed by each region. Moreover, research by (Hidayati, 2021) discovered that learning local languages, accompanied by knowledge of local history and traditions, can enrich students' learning experiences and cultivate an emotional attachment to their cultural

heritage.

The strategy for integrating regional languages into the educational curriculum must be tailored to the local context of each region. Since every region has different languages and cultures, these variations must be considered when teaching local languages. For instance, in areas where the number of regional language speakers is declining, the teaching approach must involve more engaging methods that align with the needs of today's younger generations, such as utilizing information technology and social media in the learning process (Saputra, 2020). This is an effective way to attract students' interest in learning local languages in a manner that is relevant to their daily lives.

One of the primary challenges in implementing a local language-based curriculum is the lack of competent human resources to teach regional languages and the scarcity of available teaching materials. As a result, many schools struggle to implement local language learning programs effectively. Therefore, training for local language teachers is necessary to ensure they have the appropriate skills to teach local languages effectively. Furthermore, developing textbooks and relevant, engaging learning materials must also be a key focus in implementing this curriculum (Sulistyo, 2022). The availability of sufficient resources is a determining factor in the success of local language revitalization in education.

Revitalizing local languages through the educational curriculum also requires support from various stakeholders, including the government, communities, and academic institutions. The government needs to establish policies that support teaching regional languages in schools, both at the primary and secondary levels. Policies encouraging the preservation of local languages can motivate schools to teach local languages to their students actively. Additionally, communities and parents must also actively maintain and teach their children local languages, both at home and in daily interactions. These efforts may not be maximally practical without strong support from all parties.

With the increasing attention toward the importance of local languages in the context of globalization, research on strategies for revitalizing regional languages through the educational curriculum is highly relevant. This study aims to examine various strategies that can be implemented in the educational curriculum to support local language revitalization and the implications of implementing such a curriculum in Indonesia's educational context. This research will provide a clear picture of the various approaches that can be taken to sustain local languages in Indonesia.

Therefore, this study must provide recommendations that can be utilized by relevant stakeholders, including educational institutions, policymakers, and the general public, so that efforts to revitalize local languages through the educational curriculum can proceed effectively and have a significant impact on preserving Indonesia's local cultures. Proper and consistent implementation will ensure that local languages survive and thrive amid rapid societal changes. Consequently, all stakeholders must collaborate to establish an education system based on Indonesia's cultural diversity.

## **METHODS**

This study employs a literature review method to examine and analyze previous studies on revitalizing local languages through the educational curriculum. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to comprehensively explore theories, concepts, and findings from prior studies on this topic. The literature reviewed includes scientific journals, books, research

reports, and published policy documents. The main focus of this literature review is to identify strategies that have been implemented in teaching local languages across different educational systems and to understand the challenges faced in implementing a local language-based curriculum.

The literature collection process was conducted using academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ProQuest, utilizing relevant keywords such as “local language revitalization,” “local language-based educational curriculum,” and “language preservation in education.” Each piece of literature found was evaluated based on its quality, relevance to the research topic, and its contribution to the understanding of efforts to revitalize local languages through the educational curriculum. The collected data were then analyzed thematically to identify patterns or emerging trends within these studies. Thus, this literature review aims to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation and effectiveness of local language-based curricula in Indonesia's education context.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Strategies for Local Language Revitalization through the Educational Curriculum**

The literature review findings indicate that various strategies have been implemented to integrate local languages into the educational curriculum. One of the main approaches is establishing regional language subjects as part of the mandatory curriculum at the elementary school level. According to (Dewi, 2022), introducing local languages early is crucial in fostering students' cultural awareness and ethnic identity. A local language-based curriculum enables students to learn linguistic aspects and understand the cultural values embedded in the language. Integrating local languages into the curriculum also ensures that younger generations maintain proficiency in speaking and comprehending their regional languages.

Another strategy in teaching regional languages is incorporating local language content into other subjects such as history, cultural arts, and geography. (Rahman, 2023) emphasizes that this approach is more effective than teaching local languages separately, as it connects language learning with broader social and cultural aspects. This method allows students to learn local languages in a more practical and relevant context rather than through theoretical lessons alone. Additionally, this approach facilitates cultural-based learning without adding an excessive burden to the existing curriculum.

However, this strategy's success highly depends on educators' preparedness. Studies, such as those conducted by (Sulistyo, 2022), show that many regional language teachers lack adequate training in teaching methods for local languages. This results in a lack of innovation in delivering material, making students less interested in learning their regional languages. Therefore, training and certification programs for regional language teachers are necessary to enable them to teach local languages using more creative and engaging methods. These training programs should also include technology and digital media to enhance the appeal of language learning.

In addition to teacher-related challenges, the availability of adequate teaching materials is also a significant obstacle in implementing a local language-based curriculum. (Saputra, 2020) found that many schools, particularly in remote areas, struggle to access textbooks and teaching materials that meet educational standards. This limitation affects the quality of regional language learning, thereby reducing the effectiveness of local language revitalization programs. Consequently, efforts must be made by the government and educational institutions

to develop and distribute high-quality teaching materials tailored to the needs of each region.

The use of technology in regional language learning has also emerged as a popular solution in recent years. With increasing access to the internet and digital devices, many schools have started implementing local language learning through mobile applications, educational videos, and e-learning platforms. According to (Rahman, 2023), incorporating technology into regional language education can boost student interest as they are more accustomed to digital-based learning methods. Additionally, technology allows students to access learning resources anytime and anywhere, providing more opportunities to practice their regional language daily.

Furthermore, revitalizing local languages can also be achieved through extracurricular activities based on local culture. Some schools have implemented programs such as regional language drama performances, speech competitions, and traditional music and arts activities that use local languages. (Hidayati, 2021) states that such activities provide students with more profound experiences in actively using regional languages. Additionally, this approach is more engaging for students than conventional learning methods focusing solely on grammar and vocabulary.

Beyond the school environment, family and community involvement in regional language learning is also crucial to the success of local language revitalization. According to (Suryadi, 2021) research, children who receive support from their families in using regional languages at home tend to have better language proficiency than those who learn the language solely at school. Therefore, parents and local communities should also be engaged in language revitalization programs, for instance, through campaigns promoting the use of regional languages in daily conversations.

Despite the various strategies implemented, one of the main challenges that must still be addressed is the declining interest of younger generations in learning regional languages. Local languages are often perceived as less relevant to modern life, particularly in globalization, which increasingly emphasizes national and foreign languages. (Sulistyo, 2022) research found that many students are more interested in learning English or other foreign languages, as they believe these languages offer more significant benefits for their future. Therefore, the government and educational institutions need to raise awareness of the benefits of local languages as part of cultural heritage and as an asset that enriches individual and community identity.

Regarding educational policy, stricter regulations are needed to integrate local languages into the national curriculum. Some regions have adopted policies mandating teaching regional languages in schools, but implementation remains uneven across Indonesia. According to (Dewi, 2022), the government must be more proactive in supporting regional language revitalization by providing funding, policies, and incentives for schools that successfully implement local language teaching programs. These policies should also be accompanied by strict supervision to ensure that local language revitalization programs are effectively applied in schools.

Thus, revitalizing local languages through the educational curriculum must be approached holistically, involving various stakeholders, including the government, schools, educators, students, families, and local communities. Although there are several challenges in its implementation, opportunities for enhancing regional language proficiency remain open, provided adequate policy support, sufficient resources, and innovative teaching methods appeal to younger generations. The success of this strategy not only contributes to the

preservation of regional languages, strengthens cultural identity, and enriches Indonesia's linguistic diversity.

### **Challenges in Implementing a Local Language-Based Curriculum**

Implementing a local language-based curriculum in education faces significant challenges, particularly concerning the dominance of Indonesian and foreign languages in daily life. One of the biggest challenges is the declining interest of younger generations in using regional languages. (Suryadi, 2021) notes that in the era of globalization, Indonesian is often seen as more practical and universal than regional languages, which are perceived as being used only in specific contexts or within limited communities. This phenomenon leads to younger generations, even in linguistically rich regions, preferring to use Indonesian when communicating with fellow speakers of their regional languages, as they find it more efficient and widely accepted.

Furthermore, the tendency to use Indonesian, which is understood by broader audiences, has contributed to the decline in regional language usage in daily interactions. (Rani & Fiddienika, 2024) research reveals that local language use is restricted to family or community interactions in many regions, while Indonesian is more commonly used in broader social settings. This has led to the perception that regional languages are irrelevant to social and economic advancement, further shaping the younger generation's attitude toward language use. Therefore, efforts must be made to shift this perception and demonstrate that proficiency in regional languages is a valuable asset that enriches cultural identity and preserves national diversity.

Another challenge in implementing a local language-based curriculum is the limited government policies that promote regional language preservation. Although some regions have policies supporting regional language education, insufficient budgets and resource allocation for these programs often hinder implementation. (Zainuddin et al., 2023) study shows that while policies exist, the funding allocated for regional language education is usually minimal, making it difficult for schools to provide teaching materials, teacher training, and adequate extracurricular activities. This exacerbates challenges in improving the effectiveness of local language teaching in schools.

Even at the policy level, national and regional language-based education policies often overlap. (Hamied & Musthafa, 2019) research highlights that teaching Indonesian and foreign languages in many regions is prioritized due to their perceived relevance for the global job market. As a result, policies supporting regional language education are frequently overlooked or regarded as secondary. This poses a significant obstacle to implementing local language-based curricula, as schools ultimately focus on subjects deemed more essential for students' career development.

Despite these challenges, collaboration among stakeholders including the government, local educational institutions, and communities is essential in formulating effective strategies to address these issues. Joint efforts should include funding regional language education, developing well-trained human resources, and distributing high-quality teaching materials. All parties must actively advance local language-based education to ensure that regional languages continue to be preserved and passed down to future generations.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the study and discussion, revitalizing local languages through the educational curriculum is a crucial step in preserving Indonesia's cultural diversity. Integrating regional languages into the education system strengthens students' cultural identities and increases their awareness of Indonesia's linguistic diversity. However, challenges such as the dominance of Indonesian and foreign languages, the lack of teacher training, limited supporting resources, and low public awareness pose significant obstacles.

Therefore, policy improvements, teacher capacity-building through relevant training, and the development of appropriate teaching materials including the use of technology in language learning are necessary. Collaboration among the government, educational institutions, and society is essential to effectively implementing local language-based curricula. Through these efforts, local languages can continue to thrive and become integral to Indonesia's social and cultural life.

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