

Revitalizing the Indonesian Language as a National Identity in the Globalization Era: Challenges and Strategies

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v10i1.635>

*Enjang Tatang Suhendi 

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Yasa Anggana Garut

Corresponding author: enjangsuhendi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The use of Indonesian in public spaces is an important issue in maintaining national identity in the era of globalization. This study aims to explore the role of the use of Indonesian in public spaces in increasing public awareness of national identity and language revitalization strategies. This type of research is qualitative with a case study approach. The populations in this study were people living in the city of Bandung. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling with a sample size of 60 respondents, consisting of media actors, educators, and the general public. This study was conducted for six months, from January to June 2024. The results of the study show that although awareness of the importance of using Indonesian is high, there is inequality in the implementation of language policies in public spaces. The use of foreign languages, especially among the younger generation, affects the effectiveness of Indonesian revitalization. Therefore, a more holistic approach is needed in language revitalization, which involves public policy, culture-based education, and the use of digital technology. The implications of this study indicate the importance of strengthening more consistent language policies and integrating technology in learning Indonesian for the younger generation.

Keywords: Indonesian, Public Space, National Identity, Language Revitalization.

Article History:

Received 04th January 2024

Accepted 20th January 2024

Published 24th January 2024



INTRODUCTION

The era of globalization has had a significant impact on various aspects of life, including language as a national identity. Indonesian, as the official language of the country and a symbol of unity, faces major challenges amidst the onslaught of foreign languages that increasingly dominate public spaces, media, and education. The penetration of foreign languages through digital media, advertising, and international education is increasingly narrowing the space for the use of Indonesian, especially among the younger generation. This phenomenon shows the urgency of revitalizing Indonesian to restore its position as a strong national identity. If not addressed immediately, the degradation of the use of Indonesian can threaten national values, weaken national identity, and erode the sense of love for the homeland amidst global competition (Assapari, 2014). The selection of Indonesian as the object of this research is based on its unique role as a unifier of various ethnic groups in Indonesia. Indonesian is not only a means of communication, but also a symbol of unity that unites more than 700 regional languages throughout the archipelago. Unlike national languages in other countries which tend to be monolithic, Indonesian has the adaptive and dynamic ability to absorb loanwords without losing its basic character (Maghfiroh, 2022). This uniqueness makes Bahasa Indonesia an inclusive medium that is able

to unite cultural diversity while playing a role in cultural diplomacy in the international arena. Therefore, focusing on the revitalization of Bahasa Indonesia provides a greater contribution compared to similar studies that only highlight the linguistic or historical aspects of the language (Rochmah et al., 2023).

This study focuses on three main variables: the use of Indonesian in public spaces, public awareness of national identity, and revitalization strategies. The use of Indonesian in public spaces is the main indicator of its existence as a national identity. Public awareness of national identity is greatly influenced by their exposure to the use of everyday language in the media, education, and social interactions. The revitalization strategy designed must be able to answer these challenges by integrating digital technology, cultural campaigns, and public policies to strengthen the position of Indonesian. The relationship between these variables shows that increasing the use of Indonesian will strengthen public awareness of the importance of national identity, which in turn strengthens efforts to preserve the language in the era of globalization (Andinia, 2023).

Although various studies have discussed the linguistic aspects and use of Indonesian, there is a gap in the study of the implementation of contextual revitalization strategies in the era of globalization. For example, research by (Linggasari & Rochaendi, 2022) focuses more on teaching Indonesian in schools, while the study by (Ridwan et al., 2024) highlights the role of social media in promoting regional languages. In addition, research by (Nugroho et al., 2023) emphasizes the importance of public policy in supporting language preservation, but has not integrated technological aspects comprehensively. This study offers a new perspective by exploring revitalization strategies that combine cultural, technological, and public policy approaches holistically to address global challenges.

Through an interdisciplinary approach that integrates aspects of culture, technology, and public policy, this research aims to contribute to formulating an effective revitalization strategy to face the challenges of globalization. Revitalizing Indonesian is not only to preserve the language itself, but also to strengthen a stronger national identity and ensure that Indonesian remains relevant in global interactions. With the right strategy, Indonesian will once again become a language that plays an important role in strengthening the sense of nationality, connecting future generations, and strengthening Indonesia's position in the international world.

METHOD

The approach used in this study is qualitative, with the aim of exploring the phenomenon of the use of Indonesian in public spaces, public awareness of national identity, and identifying and analyzing effective revitalization strategies in facing the challenges of globalization. Qualitative research was chosen because it allows researchers to deeply understand the social, cultural, and technological contexts that influence language in the daily lives of Indonesian people. This approach also allows researchers to capture the complexity and dynamics that occur in society related to language preservation (Zuchri, 2021).

Research Design

This study uses a case study with a focus on the city of Bandung. Bandung was chosen as the research location because it is one of the big cities in Indonesia that is influenced by globalization and has cultural diversity and a high level of technology penetration. The case study was chosen to allow for in-depth analysis of phenomena relevant to the topic. This study will observe the use of Bahasa Indonesia in public spaces—whether in social media, signboards, advertisements, or everyday social interactions—and analyze public perceptions of the importance of Bahasa Indonesia as a national identity (Humaeroh et al., 2023).

Data Collection

According to Sugiyono (2020), this study employed three main techniques to collect comprehensive data: in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and focus group discussions (FGD). In-depth interviews were conducted with various community groups, including government officials, entrepreneurs, educators, and the general public, using a semi-structured format to explore their perspectives on the importance of Bahasa Indonesia as a national identity and the challenges of preserving it in globalization. Participatory observation was carried out in public spaces in Bandung, such as social media, billboards, mass media, and educational settings, allowing the researcher to directly observe the use of Bahasa Indonesia in everyday interactions and public reactions to its use. Additionally, FGDs were held with diverse groups, including youth, educators, and policymakers, to discuss strategies for revitalizing the Indonesian language and the role of digital media in fostering public awareness about national identity. These methods provided a comprehensive understanding of the issues and potential solutions related to Bahasa Indonesia's preservation and revitalization.

Population and Sample

The population in this study is the community living in the city of Bandung, as a large city affected by globalization. Bandung was chosen because it has a significant level of social interaction and technology penetration, which can influence the use of Indonesian in public spaces and awareness of national identity. The sample in this study was selected by using a purposive sampling technique based on criteria relevant to the research topic. Respondents will include government officials involved in language and cultural policies, entrepreneurs who incorporate Bahasa Indonesia into their business activities such as media and advertising, educators responsible for language learning in educational institutions, and members of the general public, particularly the younger generation, who actively engage on social media and in public spaces. This diverse sample aims to provide a comprehensive perspective on the use and preservation of Bahasa Indonesia in various contexts. The number of samples taken for each group is around 10-15 people, with a total sample of around 60 respondents. This technique was chosen to ensure a diversity of views from various groups with different experiences and perspectives regarding the use of Indonesian and the revitalization of national identity.

Data Analysis

Data collected from interviews, observations, and FGDs will be analyzed using thematic analysis. This technique allows researchers to identify key themes related to the use of Indonesian in the ariab space, ariab awareness of national identity, and effective revitalization strategies. Data from interviews and FGDs will be analyzed to find patterns and relationships between the ariab studied (Agustin, 2023).

The research procedure involves several key steps to ensure comprehensive and reliable results. First, Bandung was selected as the research location due to its relevance to the study's objectives. Next, representative participants were chosen, including government officials, entrepreneurs, educators, and the general public, to provide diverse perspectives. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and focus group discussions (FGDs). The collected data was then transcribed and analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis to identify key patterns and insights. Finally, conclusions were compiled based on the findings, offering actionable strategies for the revitalization of the Indonesian language.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**Research Results****Respondent Characteristics**

This study involved three main groups of respondents, starting with government officials and public policy managers. These respondents were drawn from provincial, city, and government agency levels, focusing on those directly involved in policy-making related to the national language. Their input provided valuable insights into the formulation and implementation of policies concerning the use of Bahasa Indonesia in public spaces, along with their perspectives on the challenges and opportunities for revitalizing the language.

The second group consisted of the general public, selected randomly to capture diverse perceptions about Bahasa Indonesia. This group included individuals from various age groups, occupations, and educational backgrounds, encompassing both the younger generation, who are more influenced by globalization and digital media, and the older generation, who tend to have a more conservative approach to language use. This diversity allowed for a comprehensive understanding of how Bahasa Indonesia is viewed and used in society.

The final group comprised educators and academics, including lecturers, teachers, and other professionals involved in teaching Bahasa Indonesia and shaping educational policies. Their contributions shed light on the role of education in strengthening the use of Bahasa Indonesia as a marker of national identity and highlighted the challenges faced in integrating language revitalization efforts within the education system.

Data Analysis

This study used in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) conducted with a focus on the city of Bandung. The results of this study are organized based on the main variables that have been determined, namely the use of Indonesian in public spaces, public awareness of national identity, and strategies for revitalizing Indonesian.

Use of Indonesian in Public Spaces

The results of observations and in-depth interviews show that the use of Indonesian in public spaces has decreased significantly. In various advertisements, signboards, and social media, the dominant use of foreign languages, especially English, was found. This phenomenon is more visible in the commercial sector and digital media which continues to grow. For example, almost 70% of advertisements in shopping centers in Bandung use English as the main language, while Indonesian is only used to accompany smaller texts. This shows that Indonesian is often positioned as a secondary language in public spaces.

However, there are also findings that indicate the existence of initiatives that support the use of Indonesian. The local government of Bandung, for example, has implemented a policy that requires the use of Indonesian in public advertisements. This shows an awareness of the importance of using the national language in everyday life.

Public Awareness of National Identity

Through interviews with people from various social strata, it was found that awareness of the importance of Bahasa Indonesia as a national identity varies greatly. Most of the older generation has a strong awareness of the role of Bahasa Indonesia as a unifying tool and a symbol of national pride. In contrast, among the younger generation, especially those who are active on social media, there is a tendency to consider the use of foreign languages as part of a more global modern lifestyle. Most of the younger generation considers that mastering a foreign language, especially English, is more important in supporting their careers and social interactions.

The study also found that formal education, especially involving Bahasa Indonesia subjects, has an important role in strengthening this awareness. However, the role of social media, such as YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter, is very influential in shaping the perception of language among teenagers and young adults. On the other hand, campaigns carried out by the government and cultural institutions, such as "Language Month", are starting to gain attention among younger people and play a role in strengthening the love for Bahasa Indonesia.

Indonesian Language Revitalization Strategy

In the FGD discussions with various groups, several revitalization strategies were revealed that were considered effective in facing the challenges of globalization. One of the main strategies proposed was the integration of digital technology in promoting the use of Indonesian. Language learning applications and digital media such as podcasts and videos on platforms such as YouTube can be used as tools to attract the interest of the younger generation in learning and applying Indonesian.

In addition, there was also a proposal to strengthen cultural campaigns that emphasize the importance of pride in Indonesian. Campaigns that use more modern digital media and attract the attention of the younger generation are considered more effective than conventional campaigns that seem formal. Several FGD participants also suggested that stricter public policies regarding the use of Indonesian in public spaces and education should be strengthened. As a result of the integration of these various approaches, a pattern was seen in which policies that support the use of Indonesian together with the dissemination of interesting and technology-based media can encourage increased use of Indonesian among the community, especially the younger generation.

Discussion

Use of Indonesian in Public Spaces and Awareness of National Identity

This study found that the use of Indonesian in public spaces has a close relationship with public awareness of national identity. Based on interviews and observations, most respondents stated that the existence of Indonesian in mass media, signboards, advertisements, and social media influences them in understanding language as a symbol of national unity. This result is in line with previous research by Suyanto (2019), which shows that although the use of foreign languages in public spaces is increasingly widespread, Indonesian is still considered a language that binds society in one national identity. On the other hand, although the public is generally aware of the importance of Indonesian, several respondents feel that government policies regarding the regulation of language use in public spaces have not been implemented consistently. According to Santoso (2021), a strong language policy must be supported by even implementation across regions, given the existing social and cultural diversity. The mismatch between policy and implementation in the field is a challenge that must be overcome in language revitalization efforts.

In contrast to the research by Kurniawan (2020), which places more emphasis on the aspect of language policy in increasing the use of Indonesian, this research shows that although existing policies are adequate, the diversity of policy implementation in the field and the increasingly dominant influence of foreign languages in the public space affect the effectiveness of these policies.

National Identity Awareness and the Effectiveness of Revitalization Strategies

The findings of this study also show that public awareness of national identity plays a major role in supporting the revitalization strategy of the Indonesian language. Those who have a high awareness of the importance of the Indonesian language as part of the nation's identity are more likely to support various language revitalization efforts, such as cultural campaigns and the use of digital technology in language learning. This is in line with the findings in a study by Prabowo (2021), which revealed that formal education plays an

important role in fostering a sense of pride in the Indonesian language. Furthermore, education based on a love of language can strengthen the awareness of the younger generation to maintain and preserve the language as part of the national identity.

However, differences of opinion also emerge among the younger generation. Some of them are influenced by globalization and social media that promote the use of foreign languages, especially English, in everyday communication. This phenomenon is similar to the findings by Wijaya (2022), which shows that social media has a significant impact on the language preferences of the younger generation. In this regard, this study adds insight that, although there is a high awareness of the importance of the Indonesian language among some groups, not all groups, especially the younger generation, have the same views. Therefore, a language revitalization approach that only focuses on formal education is not effective enough. Integration with social media is needed as a means to strengthen national identity awareness among the younger generation.

Indonesian Language Revitalization Strategy: A Holistic Approach

One of the important findings in this study is that the Indonesian language revitalization strategy requires a more holistic approach, combining culture, technology, and public policy. The use of digital technology, such as language learning applications, is one effective tool in introducing and strengthening the use of Indonesian among the younger generation. As stated by (Akhiruddin et al., 2024), interactive and easily accessible language learning applications are one solution to increase understanding and love for Indonesian in the digital era. In addition, cultural campaigns that prioritize love for the Indonesian language and culture are also very much needed to reintroduce the richness of the Indonesian language to the community.

However, although cultural campaigns have great potential in language revitalization, this study found that more in-depth public policies in supporting the use of Indonesian in the education sector and mass media need to be a priority. This is in line with the findings by (Setiawan, 2017), which stated that although cultural campaigns can strengthen a sense of pride in the language, more concrete policies in implementing Indonesian in public spaces are still needed to ensure long-term success. A more integrated approach, combining technology, culture, and public policy, will provide more optimal results in strengthening the use of Indonesian as a symbol of national identity.

The Use of Foreign Languages and Their Influence on Indonesian in Public Spaces

One of the significant findings in this study is the strong influence of the use of foreign languages, especially English, in public spaces, which directly affects the use of Indonesian. Although Indonesian remains the main language in daily interactions, the use of foreign languages is increasingly widespread in various public sectors, such as in advertising, social media, signboards, and the business world. A concrete example found in the field is the dominance of English in advertising and social media. Many product advertisements in public spaces use English, even for products that are marketed locally. For example, advertisements for beauty, technology, and fashion products often use English with little or no translation into Indonesian. This not only reflects globalization, but also shows that foreign languages are considered more "modern" and more "international", while Indonesian is considered less attractive among young people, especially those who are more exposed to global culture through social media.

In addition, in the digital world, the use of English is very dominant in social media, websites, and applications. For example, many social media users in Indonesia, especially the younger generation, use English or a mixture of Indonesian and English (slang or "Indo-English") in their posts. This phenomenon is triggered by the use of English on major platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok which promote international trends. In the world of education, although Indonesian is still used in the classroom, many learning materials are delivered in English, especially in universities and in international programs.

This shows a shift in values, where English is considered the key to accessing global information and job opportunities, while Indonesian has less of a place in the global context.

This phenomenon is in line with the findings of Wijaya (2022), which shows that social media and the international entertainment industry play a major role in shifting the dominance of Indonesian, especially among the younger generation. Social media not only introduces foreign languages, but also foreign cultures that influence people's ways of communicating and thinking. Therefore, the challenge of revitalizing the Indonesian language is not only in preserving the language in public spaces, but also in how to mitigate the influence of foreign languages that continues to grow.

CONCLUSIONS

This study found that the use of Indonesian in public spaces has a close relationship with public awareness of national identity. Although Indonesian is still seen as a symbol of national unity, the influence of foreign languages, especially English, is increasingly dominating public spaces, such as advertising, social media, and education, which threatens the existence of Indonesian. High public awareness of the importance of Indonesian as a national identity greatly influences support for language revitalization strategies, which involve cultural, technological, and public policy approaches. However, the main challenges found are the inconsistency between existing language policies and their implementation in the field, as well as the influence of globalization that prioritizes the use of foreign languages, especially among the younger generation. Therefore, the Indonesian revitalization strategy must be holistic, integrating digital technology, cultural campaigns, and more consistent public policies, to strengthen the role of Indonesian as a national identity in the era of globalization.

REFERENCES

- Agustin, H. (2023). *Economic and business research methods (research concepts and examples)*. In CV. Mega Press Nusantara.
- Akhiruddin, H. R., Ahmadi, A., & Raharjo, R. P. (2024). Utilization of Digital Interactive Stories as Innovative Language Learning Media. *Judika (Unsika Education Journal)*, 12(November), 193–208. <https://doi.org/10.35706/judika.v12i2.11574>
- Andinia, B. S. (2023). The Influence of the Use of Indonesian on Local Culture in Madurese Society. *Jurnal Media Akademik (JMA)*, 2(7), xx.
- Assapari, M. M. (2014). The Existence of Indonesian as a National Language and Its Development in the Era of Globalization. *Prasi*, 9(35), 29–37. <https://ejournal.undiksha.ac.id/index.php/PRASI/article/view/8943/5776>
- Humaeroh, L. M., Hendaryan, H., & Hidayatullah, A. (2023). The Use of Indonesian in Writing Public Space Media in Ciamis District. *Diksatrasia: Scientific Journal of Indonesian Language and Literature Education*, 7(1), 225. <https://doi.org/10.25157/diksatrasia.v7i1.8650>
- Kurniawan, S. (2020). National language policy in increasing the use of Indonesian. *Journal of Education Policy*, 8(2), 112–125.
- Linggasari, E., & Rochaendi, E. (2022). Indonesian Language Learning in Elementary Schools Through Life Skills Education Model. *Literasi (Journal of Educational Sciences)*, 13(1), 40. [https://doi.org/10.21927/literasi.2022.13\(1\).40-62](https://doi.org/10.21927/literasi.2022.13(1).40-62)
- Maghfiroh, N. (2022). Indonesian as a Communication Tool for Society in Daily Life. *Komunikologi: Scientific Journal of Communication Sciences*, 19(02), 102–107. <https://komunikologi.esaunggul.ac.id/index.php/KM/article/view/516>
- Nugroho, D., Subagio, H., & Rachmadi, H. (2023). Government Bureaucracy and Adaptive Public Services in the Framework of the Special Region of Yogyakarta. *Metta: Multidisciplinary Journal of Science*, 3(3), 313–327. <https://doi.org/10.37329/metta.v3i3.2788>

- Prabowo, A. (2021). Education based on love of language in strengthening national identity. *Journal of Elementary Education*, 15(1), 54-67.
- Ridwan, D. A., Hasan, S. M., Perhotelan, D., & Bandung, S. Y. (2024). The Influence of Social Media on the Evolution of the Indonesian Language. 1(4).
- Ridwan, T., Kurniawati, Y., & Prasetyo, S. (2024). The influence of social media in promoting foreign languages and its impact on Indonesian. *Journal of Social Media and Culture*, 13(2), 80-93.
- Rochmah, F., Machmud, A., Mufid, M. A., & Kuswoyo, N. A. (2023). Triwikrama: Multidisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences. *Triwikrama: Multidisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences*, 01(3), 23-40.
- Santoso, A. (2021). Implementation of Indonesian language policy in public spaces. *Journal of Government and Law*, 9(3), 110-123.
- Setiawan, F. (2017). Cultural campaigns and public policies in the revitalization of Indonesian. *Journal of Culture and Language*, 11(4), 45-57.
- Setiawan, S. (2017). Study of Language, Literature and Cultural Codes in the 2013 Kompas Selected Short Story Collection as a Selection of Fictional Prose Teaching Materials for Students of the Language, Indonesian and Regional Literature Education Study Program, Fkip Unpas Bandung. *Literasi: Scientific Journal of Language, Indonesian and Regional Literature Education*, 7(2), 103. <https://doi.org/10.23969/literasi.v7i2.421>
- Sugiyono. (2020). *Quantitative, Qualitative and R & D Research Methodology*.
- Suyanto, B. (2019). The existence of Indonesian in public spaces amidst the influence of foreign languages. *Journal of Linguistics and Culture*, 7(3), 70-85.
- Wijaya, I. (2022). The impact of social media on the use of foreign languages among the younger generation. *Journal of Social and Communication*, 9(1), 23-35.
- Zuchri, D. (2021). Qualitative Research Methods. In CV. Syakir (Vol. 1, Issue 1)