

## THE EFFECT OF THE USE OF REGIONAL LANGUAGE IN DAILY ASSOCIATIONS OF UNBP STUDENTS ON INDONESIAN LANGUAGE SKILLS

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Received : 12 March 2024

Revised : 27 March 2024

Accepted : 09 April 2024

Published : 30 May 2024

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.54443/ijerlas.v4i3.2509>

Publish Link : <https://radjapublika.com/index.php/IJERLAS>

### Abstract

This study aims to analyze the impact of students' use of local languages on their skills and abilities in Indonesian. A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing a survey method as the primary data collection technique. Random sampling was applied to ensure a diverse and representative respondent pool. The subjects of this study were UNBP students from various backgrounds who actively use both Indonesian and local languages in their daily interactions.

The results revealed that local languages serve as the main communication tool among students who come from the same ethnic group or region. They are still widely used in different contexts, not only in non-formal settings, such as interactions with friends and family, but also in formal environments, including during the lecture process and academic discussions. This indicates that students tend to switch between languages depending on the context, a phenomenon commonly referred to as diglossia. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the use of local languages influences students' proficiency in Indonesian. While some students can transition smoothly between the two languages, others face challenges in using Indonesian correctly and effectively, particularly in formal writing and verbal expression. This difficulty is often attributed to linguistic interference, where structures, vocabulary, or pronunciation from local languages influence the way students construct sentences in Indonesian. Overall, the study highlights that the dominance of local languages in daily interactions has a noticeable impact on students' Indonesian language skills. Although local languages play an essential role in preserving cultural identity and fostering a sense of belonging, their extensive use may also affect students' ability to communicate in standard Indonesian, particularly in academic and professional contexts. These findings emphasize the importance of enhancing students' Indonesian language proficiency while maintaining the richness and diversity of local languages. Future studies could explore effective strategies for bilingual education to ensure a balanced development of both languages among students.

**Keywords:** *Language Skills, Morphology, Acehnese Language*

### INTRODUCTION

Indonesian society consists of various tribes with diverse cultures in each region, including in terms of language. Based on data from the Language Development and Development Agency of the Ministry of Education and Culture, there are 652 regional languages in Indonesia, not including dialects and subdialects used by local communities. This diversity makes Indonesia the country with the second largest number of regional languages in the world.

Until now, local languages are still actively used by the community in daily communication. The use of local languages has an important role in preserving its existence so that it is maintained and retains its speakers. However, on the other hand, this can also cause obstacles, especially when people who are accustomed to using local languages have to switch to Indonesian in a broader context. This challenge is even more evident for university students, who are required to have good Indonesian language skills, both orally and in writing.

According to Koentjoroningrat (2009), culture includes all systems of ideas, actions, and human works in social life, which are inherited and learned by humans as part of their identity. One of the elements of culture described is language, which is an important part of social life. Language is considered as one of the forms of

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culture of a society, although there is also a view that culture and language are two different things. Kridalaksana (2008) defines language as an arbitrary system of sound symbols used by members of a society to cooperate, interact, and identify themselves. In Indonesia, local languages are still widely used in daily communication. Meanwhile, good and correct Indonesian refers to the use of language in accordance with the context and applicable rules, including grammar, standardized words, pronunciation, effective sentences, and the application of Indonesian Spelling (EBI).

Local languages in Indonesia are part of the cultural wealth that needs to be preserved. Many people use their local languages in daily communication, which plays an important role in maintaining the continuity of the language. However, in a national context, the use of local languages is less appropriate as not everyone can understand them. Therefore, academics, especially students, need to master Indonesian well in accordance with the applicable rules. In a formal environment, the use of Indonesian is a must so that messages can be received by various groups. This study aims to examine the influence of the use of regional languages in daily communication on students' Indonesian language skills. The diversity of regional languages in Indonesia continues to be used, especially in interactions in informal environments. This phenomenon encourages researchers to understand whether the use of regional languages has an impact on students' ability to speak Indonesian. According to Keraf (1997), language is a communication system that uses vocal symbols or speech sounds arbitrarily and can be reinforced by body movements. This symbol refers to something that has meaning and can be captured by the five senses. Based on the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), a regional language is a language commonly used in a region or an ethnic language, such as Javanese, Batak, and Sundanese. Local languages become the identity of a region that distinguishes it from other regions. Language skills are divided into two main categories, namely receptive aspects (listening and reading) and productive aspects (speaking and writing) (Mulyati, 2015). In order for someone to be said to be skilled in Indonesian, he must master four main skills, namely speaking, listening, writing, and reading.

### METHOD

This research uses a quantitative approach with the survey method as a data collection technique. The survey method was carried out by distributing questionnaires to obtain data in accordance with the research objectives. The sampling technique applied in this research is random sampling, with UNBP students as the main respondents, so that the population coverage becomes wider. The selection of students as respondents is in line with the focus of the research which requires their participation. The research instrument used was a questionnaire prepared in the form of a Google Form. The use of Google Form was chosen because it allows a broader, effective, and efficient data collection process in terms of time. The questionnaire consisted of open and closed questions. In open-ended questions, respondents were given the freedom to answer according to their opinions and experiences, such as in the question, "What do you think?". In addition, there were also questions that required respondents to choose answers from the options provided, such as "yes" or "no."

This research procedure begins with determining the objectives and targets of the research, namely students. After the research target was determined, the next step was to develop the research instrument by preparing questions that would be entered into the Google Form. The questions must remain relevant to the main topic of the research, as stated in the title, namely the influence of regional language on Indonesian language skills. After the instrument was completed, the Google Form was then distributed through social media to reach a wider range of respondents..

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### a. The Role of Local Language in the Academic Environment

Local languages have their own role compared to Indonesian, which functions as the national language. According to Yati (2015), local languages have three main functions, namely: (1) as a means of communication in an intra-ethnic environment, (2) as a means of showing familiarity, and (3) as a symbol of regional identity and pride. Based on these functions, local languages are generally used in a more limited scope, such as in inter-tribal, inter-ethnic communication, certain community groups, and the family environment. However, in some cases, local languages are also used in wider social interactions, including in workplaces and educational institutions, particularly in areas where a certain ethnic group is dominant.

According to Alwi (in Devianty, 2017), the role and position of local languages can be seen from two perspectives, namely as a means of communication between people of the same ethnicity and in relation to Indonesian. Local languages function as a complement to and support the existence of Indonesian as a national language. In addition, local languages also serve as a valuable resource in preserving traditional wisdom, moral

values, and cultural norms that might otherwise be lost in the rapid progress of globalization. As society becomes more interconnected through technology and media, maintaining local language use becomes a way to preserve cultural identity and ensure that indigenous knowledge is passed down to future generations. Sugiyono explained that local languages have a role as “a vehicle for increasing the appreciation of regional culture.” He stated that a language can be appreciated if its speakers master and maintain its use (Ministry of Education and Culture). For example, various words, idioms, proverbs, and expressions in local languages are widely recognized by the community. An example is the expression “ing ngarso sung tulodho, ing madyo mangun karso, tut wuri handayani,” which is often used in academic settings and the general public. The ability of speakers to understand and disseminate their local language shows that local languages play an important role in shaping cultural identity and promoting traditional values. Moreover, some local languages have even influenced Indonesian vocabulary, contributing new words and expressions that enrich the national language.

Based on the various explanations above, it can be concluded that regional languages have several important roles, namely: (1) as a means of inter-tribal or inter-ethnic communication, fostering understanding and social cohesion among people with cultural similarities, (2) as a distinctive identity, distinguishing an ethnic group while also serving as a symbol of national recognition and pride, and (3) as part of efforts to preserve regional culture, contributing to maintaining the rich diversity of Indonesian culture.

Thus, the use of local languages in communication, including in the academic environment, also supports the preservation of Indonesian culture. The diversity of backgrounds causes the use of regional languages to continue to grow, and this can further strengthen cultural preservation if speakers remain committed to using and passing down their language to younger generations. Educational institutions and cultural organizations can play a key role in promoting bilingual or multilingual literacy, ensuring that both Indonesian and local languages thrive together, reinforcing Indonesia’s identity as a multilingual nation.

### **b. Existence of Regional Language among Students**

The use of regional languages among students highlights the strong cultural ties they maintain even after migrating to other areas for education. This phenomenon reflects the deep-rooted linguistic habits formed from an early age within family and community settings. The fact that 68.5% of respondents still actively use their local language in daily interactions suggests that regional languages continue to play a significant role in social bonding and identity preservation.

Additionally, the shift from regional languages to Indonesian in formal settings aligns with the concept of linguistic adaptation, where speakers adjust their language use based on context and social expectations. This ability to switch between languages, known as code-switching, demonstrates linguistic flexibility among students. It also indicates an awareness of the appropriate use of Indonesian as the national language in professional and academic environments.

However, the decline in local language proficiency among some students, particularly those who were not exposed to their native language at home, raises concerns about language preservation. As younger generations become more accustomed to using Indonesian as their primary language, regional languages may face a gradual decline. This highlights the importance of language preservation efforts, such as integrating local language education into school curricula and encouraging intergenerational transmission within families.

Furthermore, the dominance of Indonesian in formal settings suggests the success of national language policies in unifying diverse linguistic groups. However, it also poses a challenge in balancing national identity with cultural heritage. Striking a balance between promoting Indonesian for national cohesion and preserving regional languages for cultural continuity is crucial in maintaining Indonesia’s rich linguistic diversity.

### **c. The Effect of Local Language Use by Students on Indonesian Language Skills and Abilities**

The findings suggest that while students are expected to have proficiency in Indonesian, many still struggle with using it effectively, especially in verbal communication. This difficulty can be attributed to their habitual use of local languages, which may interfere with their ability to construct grammatically correct and contextually appropriate sentences in Indonesian. The challenges faced by students in translating between local languages and Indonesian indicate a phenomenon known as linguistic interference—where structures, vocabulary, or pronunciation from one language affect the use of another. This often happens in multilingual societies like Indonesia, where individuals frequently switch between languages depending on context. The ability to switch smoothly, or code-switching, is a valuable skill but can sometimes lead to confusion, especially when students lack strong foundations in one of the languages.

The difficulty in mastering formal Indonesian could have broader academic implications. Since Indonesian is the primary language used in academic writing, assignments, and presentations, students who struggle with it may find it harder to express their ideas clearly and effectively. This can impact their academic performance, particularly in subjects that require strong language skills, such as essay writing, research, and oral presentations. The data showing that 41.3% of respondents are somewhat affected by local language use, while 36% are significantly affected, suggests that linguistic habits formed from an early age shape how individuals process and express thoughts. When students are more accustomed to structuring sentences in their local language, they may unconsciously transfer those structures into Indonesian, leading to grammatical errors or unnatural sentence constructions.

Given these challenges, there is a need for initiatives that enhance students' Indonesian language proficiency without diminishing their local language skills. Possible interventions include:

- Indonesian Language Workshops: Conducting regular training sessions to improve verbal and written proficiency.
- Bilingual Education Approaches: Encouraging balanced use of both local languages and Indonesian in learning environments.
- Academic Writing Support: Providing resources and guidance on proper grammar, sentence structure, and formal writing conventions.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion that has been presented, it can be concluded that local languages are still widely used in academic circles, especially among students. This is due to the role of local language as an inter-tribal communication tool, considering that students come from various regions with their respective local languages. From the use of local languages in daily life, it can be concluded that it has some influence on students' skills and abilities in Indonesian, though the impact varies among individuals. While some students can switch between languages with ease, others may struggle with structuring grammatically correct sentences in Indonesian due to the interference of local language structures. This can be observed in verbal communication as well as in written academic work.

Additionally, the influence of local languages on Indonesian proficiency is not entirely negative. The presence of local languages helps preserve cultural identity and enrich linguistic diversity, which is an important aspect of Indonesia's multicultural society. However, the challenge arises when students are required to use formal and academic Indonesian, where strict grammar rules and structured sentence formations are necessary. Some students, particularly those who predominantly use their local language in daily interactions, may find it difficult to adapt to the more formal requirements of Indonesian.

Therefore, while the influence of local language use on Indonesian skills is generally minimal, it is still a factor that needs attention in academic settings. Efforts to strengthen Indonesian proficiency among students should be balanced with the preservation of local languages. Educational institutions could implement programs that enhance Indonesian language skills, such as workshops on academic writing and formal communication, without discouraging the use of local languages in informal settings. This way, students can develop strong bilingual or multilingual competencies that will benefit them in both academic and professional environments.

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