

CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING THROUGH INDONESIAN LINGUISTICS AND CULTURE: A FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the role of Indonesian linguistics and culture in building cross-cultural understanding as a foundation for a more inclusive and harmonious future generation. This study analyzes how local cultural values can be integrated into the formal education system to increase tolerance, empathy, and openness, as well as strengthen national identity. With a qualitative descriptive approach, this study utilizes secondary data from literature studies, education policies, and empirical cases in various regions of Indonesia. The results of the study show that local culture-based education not only preserves cultural heritage but also forms a young generation who has the potential to be agents of change in promoting diversity. Implementation strategies, practical challenges, and policy recommendations that support the preservation of local culture were also identified as important steps in expanding the application of this model. The relevance of the results of this study is not only applicable in the context of Indonesia but also has the potential to be applied in other countries with similar cultural diversity. These findings make a theoretical contribution to the study of cultural linguistics and practical implications for creating a harmonious and inclusive global society

Keywords: *Cross-Cultural Understanding, Indonesian Linguistics, Education, Local Culture, National Identity, Diversity..*

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization that increasingly dominates people's lives, cross-cultural interaction has become an inevitability (Huntington, 1996). However, various facts show that many individuals and groups still experience cultural misunderstandings that often lead to social conflicts, discrimination, and intolerance (Giddens, 2002). In Indonesia, cultural diversity, which should be a collective strength, is often a challenge in building harmonious relations between communities (Geertz, 1973). In the midst of the rapid development of information technology, Indonesia is experiencing a multidimensional crisis, including a moral, ethical, and tolerance crisis. One of the main causes is the lack of understanding of the cultural diversity that exists in Indonesia (Khaerunnisa, Darmiyanti, & Ferianto, 2023, p. 37). For example, friction between ethnic groups in different regions shows that cross-cultural understanding has not been fully embedded in the daily lives of Indonesian people (Ananta,

Arifin, & Hasbullah, 2015). This condition emphasizes the importance of developing new approaches that are able to bridge the gap in cross-cultural understanding, such as approaches based on local values that are integrated into education (Hofstede, 1980).

Various literatures show that local culture-based education has great potential to improve cross-cultural understanding (Hofstede et al., 2010; Minkov & Hofstede, 2010). Theories such as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, which emphasizes the relationship between language and ways of thinking (Whorf, 1956), and Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, which highlights cultural differences between countries (Hofstede, 1980), have been widely used to understand cross-cultural dynamics. However, these theories tend to focus on the global context or Western countries, while local cultural contexts such as Indonesia are still not studied in depth (Geertz, 1973). In addition, many studies only focus on aspects of globalization without considering how local cultures can contribute to creating an inclusive society (Huntington, 1996). This gap points to the need for more focused research on the local context to address the problem (Hofstede et al., 2010).

The purpose of this study is to explore how Indonesia's linguistic and cultural diversity can be used as a tool to build cross-cultural understanding from an early age. By integrating local culture into the education system, this research aims to create a generation that is more tolerant, empathetic, and open to diversity (Hofstede, 1980; Minkov & Hofstede, 2010). In addition, this research seeks to provide new insights that are useful for educators, policymakers, and the community in implementing culture-based approaches more effectively (Geertz, 1973).

This study emphasizes that a linguistic and local culture-based approach is an important strategy to overcome cross-cultural misunderstandings that still often occur in Indonesia. Language and culture, which are the main elements in shaping an individual's identity and perspective (Whorf, 1956; Sapir, 1949), can be the basis for building an inclusive and harmonious society. This study also shows that the introduction of local linguistics and cultures from an early age can strengthen national identity while supporting more harmonious global connections (Ananta et al., 2015; Huntington, 1996). Thus, this research is not only relevant for the development of science but also has significant practical implications for community life in the era of globalization.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the contribution of Indonesian linguistics and culture in building cross-cultural understanding. This approach is in line with Creswell's (2014) guidance, which emphasizes the importance of exploring phenomena in specific contexts through the collection and analysis of non-numerical data. Data collection was carried out through the literature review method, as described by Creswell (2014) and Merriam (1998). Data sources include scientific journal articles, academic books that discuss cultural linguistics, local culture-based education, and multicultural studies, education policy documents from governments and international organizations such as UNESCO, and case studies on the implementation of local culture-based education in Indonesia. The data collection process is carried out through critical selection to ensure the relevance, validity, and up-to-date of the sources. The data were then categorized based on key themes, such as local culture-based education implementation strategies, their benefits, and practical challenges in implementation (Fajriati & Na'Imah, 2020).

The data analysis process uses the content analysis method as suggested by Creswell (2014). The stages of analysis include: (1) data reduction, i.e. identifying important information and grouping data based on key themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994); (2) data presentation, by organizing data in narrative form; and (3) drawing conclusions, i.e. concluding findings based on the relationships identified in the data. The entire process is accompanied by verification to ensure the validity of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of science and educational practices that are more inclusive and cultural-based.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section explains how Indonesian linguistics and culture can play a key role in creating a better cross-cultural understanding. The focus of the idea is how local culture-based education can be applied to build a more tolerant and inclusive generation. This discussion also includes an analysis of the challenges and opportunities faced in efforts to integrate cultural values into the formal education system.

Cross-Cultural Understanding

Cross-cultural understanding in Indonesia is becoming increasingly urgent given the country's ethnic, linguistic, and customary diversity. Lack of intercultural communication

skills can lead to misunderstandings that lead to social conflicts and discrimination (Nabeel, 2023). As a country with more than 300 ethnic groups, Indonesia needs serious efforts in building effective intercultural communication to maintain social harmony. In the context of comparative cross-cultural education applied in Indonesia and New Zealand, it shows similar effectiveness in building students' cultural awareness. However, greater social and cultural diversity in Indonesia provides greater opportunities for students to experience multicultural interactions directly (Zamroni et al., 2021).

Linguistics and culture play an important role in shaping cross-cultural awareness from an early age. The introduction of local languages and cultures through education can instill the value of tolerance and respect for diversity. Multicultural education in elementary schools, for example, helps children understand and respect cultural differences, which in turn forms inclusive and tolerant characters (Mumtaz, 2023).

In the era of globalization, cross-cultural interaction is increasingly intensified, requiring individuals to have qualified intercultural communication competencies. Multicultural education is an important instrument, not only to understand local diversity but also to prepare for global dynamics. By understanding and appreciating cultural differences from an early age, Indonesia's young generation will be better prepared to participate in a multicultural global society (Lonto & Umbase, 2020; Maulidiah et al., 2023). In the context of globalization and local challenges facing Indonesia, we can integrate multicultural education into the curriculum. The younger generation is expected to build cross-cultural awareness, adapt to global changes, and still appreciate local values. This is important to prevent discrimination, reduce intolerance, and promote harmony in a diverse society (Kerebungu et al., 2019; Banks, 2016). Multicultural-based education not only provides local benefits but also creates a foundation for active participation in the global community.

The Role of Linguistics and Culture in Education

Language and culture are fundamental elements in the formation of individual and group identities. Language not only serves as a means of communication, but also as a reflection of the values, traditions, and histories that shape the identity of a community. Through language, people express and inherit their cultural heritage, which in turn shapes the way of perspective and social interaction in daily life (Sapir, 1949). In addition, the interaction between language and culture creates a frame of mind that influences an individual's perception of the world around them. The use of certain languages can strengthen cultural identity and group solidarity, while language shifts or the loss of regional languages

can lead to erosion of cultural identity (Whorf, 1956). Therefore, a deep understanding of the interconnection between language and culture is essential in efforts to preserve cultural identity in the midst of globalization, which often threatens cultural diversity (Geertz, 1973).

The integration of regional languages and local cultural values into the formal education curriculum has a strategic role in strengthening national identity while preserving cultural heritage in the midst of globalization. Research shows that local culture-based education can increase students' sense of pride in their cultural heritage, which encourages collective responsibility for cultural preservation (Sihotang, 2024; Niman, 2019). In an international context, UNESCO (2021) emphasizes the importance of incorporating local cultural elements into the education system as part of a global strategy to maintain cultural diversity. In addition, this approach can increase students' motivation to learn by making educational materials more relevant to daily life. Furthermore, the integration of local culture in education can foster an attitude of tolerance and appreciation for diversity, which is especially important in a multicultural country like Indonesia. Local culture-based education allows students to recognize and appreciate cultural differences, thereby strengthening social cohesion (Suryani, 2023). In a global context, research in multicultural countries such as Canada shows that education based on local values can create a more inclusive and tolerant young generation (Johnson & Johnson, 2019). Therefore, the integration of local culture in the curriculum not only supports cultural preservation but also contributes to the formation of a harmonious and inclusive society.

Research shows that the contextual approach based on local culture in learning has a very positive impact. In elementary and intermediate education, by using examples that are relevant to students' daily lives, such as calculating crops or understanding traditional weaving patterns, students can more easily understand abstract concepts in mathematics. This approach not only creates meaningful learning but also increases students' motivation to learn, especially those from indigenous communities (Kuswidi et al., 2021; Pathuddin & Raehana, 2019; Sijabat et al., 2022). At the higher education level, the development of a local culture-based learning model in the Regional Cultural Education course has proven effective in improving student academic achievement. Research shows that students who are involved in the exploration of local culture become more active and creative, which enriches their understanding of the nation's cultural heritage (Simamora e. (Simamora et al., 2018; Fauzi et al., 2022; Kurniawan, 2023).

The integration of local cultural values into the formal education curriculum has a significant impact, both at the local and global levels. By studying their cultural heritage, students not only appreciate diversity but also learn the importance of tolerance and respect for diversity. Research shows that local culture-based education can build inclusive character, increase learning motivation, and strengthen social cohesion (Wahyudin, 2017; Sudjarwo et al., 2018; Chaer et al., 2021). This emphasizes that local culture-based education is not only a means of cultural preservation but also a tool of social transformation to create a harmonious and inclusive society.

Benefits for the Young Generation

The introduction of local culture to the younger generation has significant benefits in building an inclusive and resilient character. Local culture-based education allows students to understand and appreciate their cultural heritage, while also developing an attitude of tolerance, empathy, and openness to diversity. By getting to know their own culture and other cultures, students can strengthen their national identity as part of a diverse community. This not only helps the younger generation understand the noble values of local culture, but also prepares them to become agents of change that promote diversity in a global society (Hakim, 2023). In this context, the younger generation plays the role of cultural successors as well as movers who are able to connect local values with the challenges of globalization.

Furthermore, the introduction of local culture has a positive impact in reducing negative stereotypes and prejudices. Kawamura (2013) emphasized that "education based on local values can create a more inclusive and tolerant young generation" (p. 275). According to Muhtarom et al. (2023), effective intercultural communication can strengthen mutual understanding and foster empathy, thereby supporting the harmonization of a pluralistic society. In addition, local culture-based education has proven to be an effective means of forming a tolerant and empathetic young generation. Diniah et al. (2023) noted that multicultural education programs integrated with local cultural recognition can improve students' ability to understand differences, develop empathy, and manage conflicts constructively. Thus, the integration of local culture in education is not only relevant for cultural preservation but also becomes the foundation for a more inclusive and harmonious society.

Furthermore, local culture-based education has a strategic role in strengthening national identity in the midst of globalization that often threatens cultural diversity. The integration of local cultural values into the education system can strengthen the nation's

identity while preserving the cultural values that are characteristic of Indonesia (Hakim, 2023). By getting to know local culture from an early age, students learn to appreciate diversity and feel responsible for preserving it. This approach is in line with efforts to build cultural-based nationalism that is relevant to the life of modern society. In an international context, UNESCO (2021) emphasizes the importance of local culture-based education as a way to preserve cultural identity while promoting cultural diversity at the global level. Education that incorporates elements of local culture into the curriculum can increase students' sense of pride in their cultural heritage, ultimately reinforcing national identity.

At the international level, the younger generation plays a crucial role in supporting the global agenda related to diversity. Research by Akçay (2024) shows that the participation of young people in international forums and technology-based initiatives, such as social media campaigns, allows them to be the driving force in creating an inclusive global society. By utilizing technology as a means of cross-cultural communication, the younger generation not only promotes diversity but also makes a significant contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This research emphasizes that education that instills the value of diversity not only strengthens local identity but also builds a harmonious global consciousness (Habibah & Sapriyah, 2021).

New Insights for Educators and Policymakers

A culture-based approach to education offers implementation strategies that focus on integrating local values into the curriculum and learning activities. This strategy includes the development of teaching materials based on local culture, training educators to understand local wisdom, and collaboration with cultural communities to support contextual learning (Qomarrullah, 2024). Policy recommendations include the allocation of funds for research and preservation of local culture, the provision of training modules for educators, and the development of multicultural education programs in schools. However, practical challenges such as the limitation of competent human resources, community resistance, and lack of political support often arise. To overcome these obstacles, policymakers are advised to use a participatory approach by involving stakeholders, such as educators, parents, and indigenous leaders, so that the designed policies are more effective and accepted by the community (Sarnita, 2023).

The implementation of a culture-based approach in education requires a holistic integration between curriculum, educator training, and community engagement. Curriculum adjustments by incorporating elements of local culture, such as folklore, traditional arts, and

indigenous practices, can provide students with an in-depth understanding of their cultural identity (Akbar et al., 2023). Educator training is a key element to ensure they have the competence to teach culturally based material in an engaging and contextual way. Additionally, collaborations between schools, governments, and cultural communities can support extracurricular programs such as dance, traditional music, or cultural festivals that enrich students' learning experiences. However, the success of this implementation still faces obstacles, such as limited human resources and a lack of clear policy guidance. To overcome this challenge, supporting regulations, adequate funding, and the establishment of special teams at the school and regional levels are needed to monitor and evaluate the implementation of culture-based education in a sustainable manner.

Local culture-based education is a strategic approach to strengthen cultural identity while building a generation that is more tolerant and respectful of diversity. The implementation of this approach requires curriculum adjustments, educator training, and cultural community involvement to create relevant and contextual learning. Measures such as the allocation of special funds, the development of local culture-based modules, and the involvement of indigenous leaders and cultural organizations are key elements for the success of this program. However, the successful implementation of this policy still faces practical challenges, such as a lack of trained educators, community resistance, and limited funding. To overcome these barriers, a participatory approach from all stakeholders, including governments, schools, and cultural communities, is needed. With supportive regulations, comprehensive training programs, and consistent supervision, local culture-based education can be an effective solution to preserve cultural heritage, strengthen national identity, and create an inclusive and characterful society.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

A culture-based approach to education offers significant opportunities to strengthen social identities and relationships amidst diversity. Research shows that the integration of local cultural values into the educational curriculum not only enriches students' learning experience, but also helps them understand and appreciate their cultural heritage. This is in line with the views of Musanna (2011), who emphasized the importance of revitalizing local values and culture as the foundation for curriculum development in Indonesia. By getting to know the local culture, students can develop an attitude of tolerance and empathy, and play an active role in creating an inclusive and harmonious society (Albantani & Madkur, 2018).

However, the implementation of culture-based education faces various challenges, including resistance to curriculum changes and limited resources. According to Ekaningtyas and Ni Luh Drajati (2020), the development strategy of multicultural education requires a comprehensive approach to overcome these obstacles. In addition, the essential value of multiculturalism in building an inclusive, just, and harmonious society has been highlighted by Apriliani and Santoso (2023), who emphasized the importance of respecting and understanding cultural differences and promoting respectful relationships between cultural groups. Thus, local culture-based education is not only relevant to Indonesia but can also be a global model to preserve local culture through the education system.

Local culture-based education has a strategic role in strengthening national identity, promoting diversity, and creating an inclusive and harmonious society. By integrating local cultural values into the curriculum and learning, this approach not only preserves cultural heritage but also shapes a younger generation that has tolerance, empathy, and openness to differences. This study confirms that local culture-based education is not only relevant in Indonesia but also has the potential to be applied in other countries with similar cultural diversity. For successful implementation, supportive policies, adequate training of educators, and collaboration between the government, cultural communities, and educational institutions are needed. With integrated efforts, local culture-based education can be a solution to face the challenges of globalization while maintaining the uniqueness of cultural identity in the modern era.

CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes that cross-cultural understanding through Indonesia's linguistic and cultural diversity is an important foundation to create an inclusive, harmonious, and resilient future generation to face global challenges. In the context of the urgency of cross-cultural understanding, this study highlights that Indonesia's cultural diversity, although presenting challenges in the form of misunderstandings and social conflicts, also holds great potential to build social cohesion through local culture-based education. By integrating the values of tolerance, empathy, and appreciation for diversity into education from an early age, the younger generation can not only strengthen their national identity but also become agents of change that promote harmony in a multicultural society. With relevance that transcends Indonesia's geographical boundaries, this study presents an innovative model that is able to answer the challenges of globalization, while preserving the cultural wealth that is the nation's identity. This study not only enriches the scientific literature in the field of cultural

linguistics, but also provides real solutions to create a more just, inclusive, and sustainable world.

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