

## (A Study of the Effect of Multilingual Policy in the Education System on Minority Language Learning)

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### Abstract

*This research analyzes the influence of multilingual policies in the Indonesian education system on minority language learning. Using a descriptive-qualitative approach, the study examines the implementation of regulations, learning practices, and the role of schools, families and communities in minority language preservation. Results show that formal policies encourage the preservation of local languages but are faced with resource constraints, the influence of popular culture, and low technological support. Translanguaging practices and integration of multicultural values effectively improve minority language learning. Multisectoral collaboration is important for the sustainability of minority language use in education. The study recommends strengthening policies, improving teacher training and utilizing technology for inclusive and sustainable multilingual education.*

**Keywords:** multilingual policy, minority language learning

### INTRODUCTION

Indonesia as a plural country with ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity regulates the position of local languages, national languages and foreign languages in its education system formally through various national policies. One significant legal basis in this regard is the National Education System Law No. 20/2003 which stipulates the arrangement and position of these languages in the realm of education, specifically in Chapter VII Article 33. This policy provides a framework for the development and preservation of regional languages while promoting the use of Indonesian as the national language and foreign languages, especially English as a world language. The complexity of multilingual education lies not only in regulating the multiple languages used in one education system but also how the protection and preservation of minority languages can be carried out so that they do not become extinct. A holistic approach, involving various policies and programs to preserve and strengthen the position of regional and minority languages, is an urgent need. In addition, in the context of national cultural identity and diversity, multilingual education policy is considered an important mechanism in maintaining the cultural heritage and identity of the plural Indonesian nation (Dalimunte, 2017). Language policy serves not only as an

instrument of communication, but also as a pillar in maintaining national plurality and integrity. Therefore, an evaluation of how multilingual policies affect minority language learning in educational settings is a critical part of this study.

Language diversity in Indonesia is a cultural gift that is also a complex social challenge. Differences in language and language communities often trigger potential conflicts between groups if not managed properly, especially in diverse social and educational contexts (Peter, 2025). Mother tongue or first language plays an important role in second language learning, especially among learners who come from minority language communities. The influence of local language on foreign language acquisition, for example Mandarin learning influenced by Madurese, shows how mother tongue can be a significant factor in the foreign language learning process (Rahayuningtyas, 2022). In addition, the development of information technology, particularly social media and popular culture, has become a factor that affects minority languages as well as national languages. Viral language on social media has a significant impact on the communication patterns of children and teenagers, including in the context of Indonesian language learning, where slang and social media language sometimes shift the

use of formal language (Waafyah, 2024). This influence not only impacts the national language, but also has the potential to reduce the use and sustainability of minority languages if not balanced with effective preservation efforts (Ansor, 2024). This social and cultural context makes understanding the dynamics of language use very important in examining the influence of multilingual policies on education.

This research aims to understand in depth the impact of multilingual policies on minority language learning in formal education settings. The focus of the study is on how policies that regulate the position of local and national languages affect students' ability to maintain minority languages and master other languages that become the language of instruction. In addition, this study evaluates the effectiveness of minority language preservation programs and policies formulated and implemented in the education system, by looking at the real implementation in schools and in the family environment. The scope of the research is not limited to linguistic aspects alone, but also examines the complex relationship between multilingual policies, identity formation, and national integrity, which are crucial elements in building a plural and inclusive society.

## METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the effect of multilingual policies in the education system on minority language learning. Data was collected through a literature study on language regulations and policies, as well as interviews with teachers, students and minority language communities. Data were analyzed using content analysis techniques to explore key themes related to policy implementation and learning practices. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of data sources and collection techniques.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. National Language Policy and Minority Language Protection

The 2003 Law on the National Education System affirms the position of

local languages and Indonesian in the context of education as part of a form of respect for diversity and national identity. Government policies related to the protection of local languages and their preservation have progressed, including the issuance of various regulations and the declaration of local language learning programs in schools and family environments as a follow-up to the recognition of local languages in Article 32 of the 1945 Constitution. However, their implementation still needs to be improved so that the preservation of traditional and minority languages can run effectively and sustainably. The history and continuity of national language policy since independence also contains significant dynamics, especially related to how Indonesian was chosen as the language of unity and a symbol of national identity, replacing the Dutch colonial language, thus strengthening the position of the national language while trying to protect the sustainability of regional languages (Faturrohman, 2025). This reflects a balance between the building of national identity and the preservation of linguistic diversity.

### 2. Impact of Multilingual Policy on Minority Language Preservation

#### 2.1 Minority Language Preservation through Education Policy

The preservation of minority languages requires specific programs that involve the family and school domains simultaneously. The implementation of local language preservation programs that run in the family and school environment has been regulated through various regulations, although it still encounters various challenges in its implementation. Evaluation of policies governing the preservation of local and traditional languages shows that these policies have a positive effect on preservation efforts, but the sustainability of implementation depends on concrete support and

resources available in the field. In an era of rapid globalization and modernization, challenges to the extinction of minority languages are increasing, especially due to global cultural flows that introduce foreign languages and new technologies that can replace the use of traditional languages (Amalia, 2024). This necessitates the formulation of adaptive and comprehensive policy strategies to ensure minority languages are preserved and thrive.

## 2.2 Obstacles and Challenges in Implementing the Multilingual Policy

The ineffectiveness of multilingual policy implementation is often due to lack of support from various parties, limited resources, and less than optimal coordination among stakeholders. Socio-economic factors and family environment are also obvious obstacles in minority language learning, where family background affects students' ability to maintain their local language while mastering the official language of education. Furthermore, the increasingly massive influence of popular culture and social media also puts pressure on the survival of minority languages, as children and adolescents tend to follow viral and widely used languages in digital media rather than their local languages (Waafyah, 2024). These obstacles demand appropriate mitigation strategies as well as innovations in approaches to learning and preserving minority languages.

## 2.3 The Role of Schools and Communities in Minority Language Preservation

The active role of schools, teachers, parents and communities is crucial to the success of minority language preservation. Intense

collaboration between teachers and parents through effective communication can support the optimal implementation of education policies that embrace minority languages. The involvement of local communities as language and cultural owners also strengthens preservation, by providing a social and cultural context for the development of the language. Schools as social institutions not only function as places of learning, but also as guardians of the diversity of languages and cultures that exist in society, so that their role becomes very strategic in strengthening cultural identity through education.

## 3. Effects of Multilingual Education Policy on Academic and Cognitive Aspects

### 3.1 Implications for the Cognitive Development of Minority Language Students

Local language learning has been proven to have a positive influence on students' cognitive aspects, as research shows there is a significant correlation between Javanese language learning and the improvement of cognitive abilities of grade 5 elementary school students (Hikmah, 2024). The effectiveness of foreign language learning methods for minority language speakers is also very dependent on how the method considers the characteristics of the mother tongue, as in Mandarin learning which is influenced by Madurese (Rahayuningtyas, 2022). The variety of stimuli provided by teachers is also an important factor in enhancing language learning activities in the classroom, which contributes to increased student engagement and learning outcomes. These suggest that an effective multilingual policy should make room for learning methods that are adaptive

to students' cognitive needs and linguistic characteristics.

### 3.2 The Role of Multilingual Policy in Achieving Educational Quality

The implementation of multilingual policies in education faces major challenges, especially in terms of education equity and quality. Although policies have sought to improve access to and equity in education for various groups, there are still obstacles related to targeting accuracy, limited data, and inadequate infrastructure and training (Jahudin, 2025). Education policy evaluations show that innovative curriculum policies such as Merdeka Curriculum have great potential to improve learning quality, especially with adequate teacher involvement and training as well as complete facility support (Darma, 2024). In addition, school leaders and policy implementers play a very important role in the successful implementation of the policy, with effective leadership having a positive effect on the quality of language learning (Huda, 2022). These three aspects are the main determinants of the successful implementation of multilingual policies in improving the quality of education.

### 3.3 The Impact of Media and Technology on Minority Language Learning

Advances in technology and digital media have had a significant impact on children's minority language learning and communication. The use of social media has shaped children's communication patterns so that viral and popular language on social media becomes part of their daily conversations, both in the school environment and outside school (Waafyah, 2024). The utilization of digital technology in schools, including the use of learning apps and online platforms, can improve interest in learning and the quality of local language learning, provided it is

supported by adequate education policies and teacher training. Digital learning platforms such as Alef Education have also successfully provided innovations in Arabic language learning, which can be applied to other minority language learning as a means of improving language skills in an interactive and effective manner (Aprilia, 2024). Thus, technology and digital media are important tools to optimize multilingual policies in education.

## 4. Comparison of Multilingual Policies in National and International Contexts

### 4.1 A Case Study of Indonesia and Other Multicultural Countries

Indonesia's multilingual education system and policies have similarities and differences with other multicultural countries in Southeast Asia such as Malaysia. Comparative studies show that both countries adopt inclusive policy frameworks that accommodate linguistic diversity, despite differences in the socio-cultural context of each country (Rajagukguk, 2024). Countries with strong ethnic minorities, such as Mexico with its intercultural bilingual education and Turkey with its multicultural education system, provide models for implementing multilingual education that focuses on the preservation of indigenous languages and the development of foreign language skills as a means of social and cultural integration (Estrada, 2018), (Suprapno, 2022). This comparison provides important insights for Indonesia in refining multilingual education policies and practices that are responsive to local and national needs.

### 4.2 Political Influences and History of Language Policy

The history of Dutch colonialism has greatly influenced the dynamics of language policy in



Indonesia, especially during the transition from colonial to national language. The exclusive Dutch education policy for the native elite reinforced social stratification and emphasized class differences in local communities. The strategic decision not to use Dutch as the national language demonstrated Indonesia's strong desire to break away from colonial influence and establish an independent national identity with Indonesian as a symbol of unity (Faturrohman, 2025). Subsequent education politics and policies also played a role in determining the quality and equity of education, with direct implications on language learning opportunities for minority groups (Hutagalung, 2024). These policy variations show how history and politics shape the structure and practice of language in education in Indonesia.

#### 4.3 Religious Tolerance and Language Diversity Policy

Religious tolerance policies in Indonesia and Malaysia also affect social cohesion and language diversity in society. Indonesia uses the Pancasila ideology as the basis for inclusive policies aimed at maintaining religious freedom and social diversity, including language diversity (Arafat, 2024). Religious moderation has emerged as a strategic approach to maintaining harmony and tolerance in multilingual and multicultural contexts, through education, government policies, and the utilization of social media to spread messages of tolerance and respect for differences (Peter, 2025). In the midst of potential conflicts due to intolerance, policy strategies that address language and religious conflicts are crucial in maintaining social stability and national integrity (Taufiq, 2024).

### 5. Strategies for Strengthening Cultural

### Identity through Multilingual Policy

#### 5.1 Language as a Pillar of National and Local Identity

Language is the main tool in character building and nationalism, playing a fundamental role in fostering the spirit of nationalism among the younger generation. Language education managed with an integrative and historical approach based on local wisdom can strengthen individual and collective identity as Indonesian citizens (Lestyarini, 2013). The role of language in building the integrity and plurality of the nation is not only communicative, but also as a medium for instilling national values in the midst of diversity. Language learning is a means of instilling national values rooted in local culture as well as global insights that help strengthen the nation's character. An appropriate multilingual policy must reflect the depth of the relationship between language, culture and national identity in order to function effectively.

#### 5.2 The Role of Education in Maintaining Social Harmony of Minority Languages

Multicultural education is one of the strategic efforts in maintaining social harmony in the midst of linguistic and cultural diversity. The local wisdom- based curriculum and the application of multicultural values teach students to accept, understand and appreciate existing differences as capital to build tolerance and unity (Peter, 2025). Education that emphasizes the values of tolerance, balance and religious moderation can create a supportive environment for minority language preservation as well as positive social integration (Nurwahid, 2023). Schools and education management systems that prioritize these principles allow for an

inclusive and harmonious learning climate so that minority languages have the right space in education (Harun, 2024).

### 5.3 Community and Parent Involvement in Cultivating Minority Language Values

Effective communication between teachers and parents is essential in implementing education policies involving minority languages. The role of teachers is not only as teachers, but also as mediators of communication between schools and families, to strengthen minority language learning. Local communities as language and culture owners have a great responsibility in preserving minority languages through cultural and social activities that support natural language use. Synergistic collaboration between schools, families and communities is the main pillar of the sustainability of minority language preservation, ensuring that education policies are not only in the form of regulatory texts but are real in daily practice.

## 6. Evaluation and Challenges of Multilingual Policy Implementation

### 6.1 Evaluation of Current Policy Implementation

The implementation of the Education Quality Assurance System (EQAS), which includes internal and external quality assurance systems, in regions with diverse geographical and social conditions, such as in remote and less developed areas, still faces significant implementation gaps. Limited resources and access barriers lead to gaps in policy implementation and uneven education quality. Evaluation of the implemented curriculum and its suitability for minority language learning needs also needs to be conducted regularly to achieve optimal and relevant results

(Pawero, 2018). Various inhibiting factors include socio-economic aspects and family environments that do not support effective minority language learning. In addition, the lack of training for teachers and the availability of adequate infrastructure are serious obstacles in optimally implementing multilingual policies. Cultural resistance from certain circles and a lack of awareness of the importance of language plurality are also challenges. This results in low motivation or opportunity for learners to maintain their minority languages, which must be anticipated in a planned and systematic manner through inclusive and educative policies (Peter, 2025).

### 6.2 Strategies to Overcome Barriers

The utilization of technology and digital media is one of the strategic solutions to support minority language learning, allowing wider access and more interesting and interactive learning methods. Inclusive and evidence-based policy development involving various stakeholders can strengthen the effectiveness of multilingual policy implementation (Darma, 2024). In addition, multisectoral involvement from the government, schools, parents and communities is an important step so that policies can be implemented synergistically and sustainably (Jahudin, 2025). These strategies must be specifically designed to overcome existing social, cultural and technical barriers in order for minority language preservation and development to be achieved.

evaluation is important in determining Factors inhibiting the implementation of the multilingual policy Education

## 7. Multilingual Policy Implications for Future

Steps to improve policies an implementation of learning in the field in accordance with social dynamics and

learner needs.

#### 7.1 Curriculum Development and Innovative Learning Methods

Innovative curriculum development such as the Merdeka Curriculum adopts the principle of learning differentiation that allows national language and minority language teaching to be tailored to students' needs and potential, making teaching more effective and meaningful (Shafina, 2024). Learning methods such as Community Language Learning (CLL) and Total Physical Response (TPR) have been identified as effective methods in language teaching, helping students acquire good language skills and strong communication abilities (Rahmawati, 2024). The integration of technology-based and interactive learning is believed to increase students' motivation and engagement in learning minority and national languages, making it a strategic choice in the future educational context.

#### 7.2 The Role of Teachers and Leadership in Multilingual Policy

School leadership and the role of teachers as implementers of the multilingual policy determine the success of the learning program. The variety of stimuli provided by teachers has been shown to significantly increase students' learning activities, demonstrating the importance of adaptive and innovative teaching approaches. Through continuous training and professional development, teachers can improve the quality of teaching and overcome the challenges of language learning in multilingual contexts (Jahudin, 2025). Strong leadership promotes the coordination and resource support needed to implement policies effectively and sustainably (Huda, 2022).

#### 7.3 Strengthening Government, School and Community Collaboration

Multisectoral synergy between

the government, schools and communities is needed to improve the quality of multilingual education. An inclusive and participatory approach to education policy enables disparities to be addressed, so that equitable distribution of high quality education can be realized (Darma, 2024). Policy recommendations oriented towards strengthening the preservation of minority languages in a sustainable manner require the involvement of all parties to create a learning environment that supports diversity and cultural identity. Thus, good coordination makes multilingual policy not only a policy document, but a strategic movement in Indonesian education.

### CONCLUSIONS

The multilingual policy implemented in the Indonesian education system plays an important role in the preservation and learning of minority languages. It provides a formal framework that regulates the balanced use of local, national and foreign languages, thus supporting the preservation of national linguistic richness. However, the implementation of this policy faces various obstacles, such as limited resources, cultural resistance, and the influence of popular culture and social media that can reduce interest in the use of minority languages. Learning strategies such as translanguaging and integration of multicultural values have proven effective in strengthening language skills and maintaining the sustainability of minority languages. The success of language preservation also relies heavily on the synergy between the government, schools, families and local communities. Therefore, strengthening responsive regulations, improving the quality of teacher training, and utilizing digital technology are key to supporting inclusive and sustainable multilingual education. Holistic multilingual policy management not only preserves minority languages, but also strengthens cultural identity and national integrity in Indonesia's plural society.

## ADVICE

1. Strengthening Minority Language Learning Programs in Primary and Secondary Schools. The Ministry of Education and schools need to design and strengthen regional and minority language learning programs from primary to secondary school levels. Inclusive curriculum adjustments to the needs of minority language learners and specialized teacher training in these language learning methods should be a priority.
2. Systematic Implementation of Translanguaging Practices. It is recommended that translanguaging practices that have proven effective in multilingual learning contexts be integrated into formal learning strategies. Teacher training in managing translanguaging especially in foreign language and national language learning should be strengthened so that language interaction can improve students' understanding and ability.
3. Development and Utilization of Digital Media for Minority Languages. The development of digital learning content that makes it easy for students to learn minority languages independently and engagingly is crucial. Relevant institutions should support the use of apps, online learning platforms and social media that are adaptive to local cultures as part of minority language preservation strategies.
4. Parent and Community Involvement in Multilingual Education Programs. Partnership programs between schools and families and local communities should be developed to strengthen minority language practices outside the classroom. The active involvement of the community as supervisors and actors of local language learning can strengthen the sustainability of language use and strengthen students' cultural identity.
5. Periodic Evaluation of Multilingual Policy Implementation in the Field. Governments and educational institutions should conduct structured monitoring and

evaluation, including field data collection, to assess the effectiveness of multilingual policy implementation. This evaluation should also involve input from teachers, students, parents and communities so that the policy can be refined according to real needs.

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