

## Cultural-Based Educational Policy Strategy in Revitalizing the Betawi Language in Elementary and Junior High Schools in Jakarta

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to analyze the implementation of revitalizing the Betawi language at the elementary school (SD) and junior high school (SMP) levels in Jakarta through the integration of local culture in educational activities. The study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to describe the practices of using the Betawi language in school learning contexts. Data were collected through classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, and analysis of learning documents and school cultural activities. The results show that the policy of revitalization of the Betawi language is more effective when integrated into project-based learning, school cultural activities, and creative activities that incorporate elements of Betawi culture, such as art performances, role-playing, and daily communication practices. This approach has proven capable of increasing students' interest, participation, and awareness of the Betawi language as part of their local cultural identity. However, its implementation of the revitalization program still faces several challenges, including the absence of a specific curriculum, limited teaching materials, lack of teacher training, and the influence of popular and global languages in students' daily lives. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a strategy to include a structured curriculum or local content program, provide relevant teaching materials, improve teacher capacity, and utilize digital technology and social media as learning media. Sustainable policy support and collaboration among schools, government, and communities are essential factors in strengthening the revitalization of the Betawi language and maintaining the sustainability of local language as part of Jakarta's cultural identity.*

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### 1. Introduction

Local languages are an important part of cultural identity and the linguistic richness of a society. In Indonesia, the diversity of local languages reflects the ethnic and cultural diversity that forms the foundation of the national cultural richness. However, the development of globalization, urbanization, and the dominance of Indonesian and foreign languages in various aspects of life have led to a decline in the use of local languages, particularly among younger generations (Sembiring & Lestari, 2024; Said et al., 2021; Ilham & Rahman, 2024; Weda et al., 2022). This condition raises concerns about the sustainability of local languages as part of the nation's cultural heritage (Crystal, 2000; Suma et al., 2024).

This phenomenon indicates the occurrence of **language shift**, a condition in which a speech community gradually abandons its traditional language and begins using another language that is perceived to have greater social, economic, or prestige value (Fishman, 1991). Language shift commonly occurs in societies experiencing rapid social change, such as urban communities with high levels of social mobility and intercultural interaction.

To address this phenomenon, various language revitalization efforts have been undertaken in different countries as part of language preservation strategies. Language revitalization refers to a series of efforts aimed at increasing the use of languages whose social functions have declined within a community (Hinton & Hale, 2001; Suma et al., 2023; Weda et al., 2022). Revitalization initiatives can be implemented through several strategies, including the development of language policies, strengthening the role of communities, and integrating local language learning into formal education systems.

One of the local languages facing such challenges is the **Betawi language**, which is the native language of the people of Jakarta. Betawi developed historically through interactions among various ethnic groups inhabiting the Batavia region during the colonial period. Therefore, the language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a representation of the social identity, history, and culture of the Betawi people, people who originally reside in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia. However, the rapid development of Jakarta as a center of urbanization has resulted in increasingly heterogeneous social interactions, leading to a decline in the use of the Betawi language in daily life, particularly among younger generations.

The decline in the use of local languages is also influenced by changes in communication patterns, where Indonesian is more widely used in formal education and urban environments. This condition causes younger generations to become less familiar with their local languages. In fact, local languages play an important role in preserving local wisdom and the cultural identity of a community (Putri & Wulandari, 2024). In addition, local languages serve as a medium for transmitting oral traditions, local literature, and social values passed down through generations (Sudarmanto, 2021).

In the context of education, schools have a strategic role in supporting the revitalization of local languages because they serve as institutional spaces where languages can be introduced and taught to younger generations. Formal education enables systematic language learning processes through curricula, learning activities, and various cultural activities that support the use of language in social contexts (Hornberger, 2008). Through this approach, schools function not only as places for knowledge transfer but also as spaces for cultural reproduction that can strengthen students' local identities.

In this context, local language revitalization becomes a strategic effort to maintain the sustainability of minor languages and cultures. Language revitalization can be carried out through various approaches, such as strengthening language use within families, communities, media, and formal educational institutions (Salam, 2024). Education plays an important role as a medium for transmitting language and culture to younger generations, as schools provide systematic and structured learning environments. Through curricula, local content programs, and extracurricular activities, schools can become important agents in preserving regional languages.

Several studies show that integrating local languages into formal education can increase linguistic awareness and strengthen students' cultural identities (Mahardika, 2023). Furthermore, strengthening local language and literature literacy in learning activities can encourage students to better understand and appreciate local culture (Fareza et al., 2025). Thus, schools have significant potential to become spaces for local language revitalization through contextual and culture-based learning. Research also indicates that formal and non-formal education can complement each other in the revitalization process of local languages through learning activities, cultural communities, and language literacy programs (Putri, 2024).

In the context of Jakarta, efforts to preserve Betawi culture have also been encouraged through various regional policies emphasizing the importance of strengthening local cultural identity. Nevertheless, the implementation of Betawi language revitalization in schools still faces several challenges, such as limited teaching materials, teachers' competencies, and the minimal use of the language in the daily lives of urban communities. Therefore, more in-depth studies are needed regarding policy strategies for revitalizing the Betawi language through educational institutions.

In this situation, the revitalization of the Betawi language becomes essential as part of efforts to maintain the sustainability of local culture amid the dynamics of urban society. Language revitalization is not only related to preserving linguistic systems but also to strengthening cultural identity and maintaining linguistic diversity in multicultural societies (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006). Therefore, formal education can serve as a strategic space to reintroduce the Betawi language to younger generations through learning activities that integrate language and local culture.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze implementation on how to revitalize the Betawi language at schools in Jakarta. The study focuses on the forms of implementation of language revitalization programs in schools, the learning strategies used, and the role of schools in fostering cultural and linguistic awareness among students. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of culture-based educational policies and strengthen efforts to preserve the Betawi language amid the dynamics of urban society.

## **2. Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of Betawi language revitalization occurring within the school environment, including forms of implementation, learning strategies, and the factors influencing it. The descriptive

method is used to systematically describe the phenomenon of language revitalization based on data obtained from the field.

The research was conducted in several schools located in Jakarta that have programs or activities related to the preservation of Betawi culture. The research sites were selected purposively by considering schools that have learning activities or cultural programs related to the use of the Betawi language, whether in the form of local content subjects, extracurricular activities, or school cultural programs.

The research subjects included principals, teachers, and students involved in learning activities or programs related to the Betawi language. Teachers were selected as the main informants because they play a direct role in the teaching process and the implementation of language revitalization programs in schools. Meanwhile, students were selected as supporting informants to understand how the Betawi language is received and used in both learning activities and daily interactions within the school environment.

Data were collected through three main techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to directly examine classroom activities and school programs related to the use of the Betawi language. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers, principals, and students to obtain more in-depth information regarding learning strategies, forms of language revitalization implementation, and the supporting and inhibiting factors. In addition, documentation was used to collect data in the form of curricula, teaching materials, school activity programs, as well as archives or photographs of activities related to the preservation of Betawi culture in schools.

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques based on the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was conducted by selecting and focusing on data relevant to the research objectives. Subsequently, the data were presented in narrative descriptions to facilitate understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The final stage involved drawing conclusions based on patterns emerging from the results of the data analysis.

To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation and method triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from various informants, such as teachers, students, and school authorities. Meanwhile, method triangulation was carried out by comparing data obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. Thus, the data produced in this study are expected to have a high level of validity and credibility.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1 Implementation of Betawi Language Revitalization in Elementary Schools (SD)**

The results of the study indicate that implementation on how to revitalize the Betawi language in elementary schools (SD) in Jakarta have begun to be conducted through local content policies that integrate elements of local culture into learning activities. This policy aims to reintroduce the Betawi language to younger generations while fostering awareness of the importance of preserving local culture amid the increasingly heterogeneous dynamics of urban society.

Based on interviews with local content teachers, the implementation of Betawi language revitalization is carried out through structured learning activities within the school timetable. The Betawi language is taught as part of local content education, which not only emphasizes linguistic aspects but also introduces broader elements of Betawi culture. The materials provided to students include basic Betawi vocabulary, everyday conversational expressions, and an introduction to cultural aspects such as traditional foods, arts, and Betawi community traditions. This approach demonstrates that local language learning in schools is not merely understood as the mastery of a linguistic system but also as a means of introducing local cultural identity to students.

In classroom practice, teachers develop various interactive and contextual methods to increase students' interest in the Betawi language. These methods include simple communication practices using the Betawi language, role-playing activities, group discussions, and culture-based activities such as introducing rhyme (pantun), local songs, and Betawi arts. This approach has proven effective in increasing student participation because students not only learn the language theoretically but also practice it within more concrete cultural contexts.

The research findings also show that students' responses to Betawi language learning tend to be positive, especially when the learning activities are linked to engaging cultural activities. Students demonstrate greater enthusiasm when learning involves direct experiences, such as learning about traditional Betawi foods, watching art performances, or practicing simple dialogues in the Betawi language. This indicates that culture-based learning approaches have great

potential to support the revitalization of regional languages in schools because they can build emotional and cultural connections between students and the language being learned.

However, further analysis shows that the effectiveness of such learning still faces various structural limitations. One important finding of this study is that the use of the Betawi language in students' daily communication remains relatively limited. Most students continue to use Indonesian or popular languages in their social interactions. This condition indicates that language revitalization through formal education has not yet fully transformed students' linguistic practices outside the classroom. In an urban context such as Jakarta, the dominance of Indonesian as the national language, along with the influence of popular language through social media, has shaped new communication patterns among younger generations. Therefore, revitalizing local languages through schools faces challenges that are not only pedagogical but also related to social and cultural changes in urban communities.

In addition to classroom learning activities, several schools also support Betawi language revitalization through cultural activities such as art performances, cultural festivals, and regional arts appreciation events. These activities provide opportunities for students to express Betawi culture more concretely and have the potential to strengthen pride in local cultural identity. However, student involvement in these activities is still incidental and has not yet been systematically integrated into school educational programs.

From the perspective of educational policy implementation, the research data also indicate a gap between the formulation of local content policies at the regional government level and their implementation in schools. Although policies regarding Betawi language revitalization have been disseminated through curricula and learning guidelines, teachers' understanding of learning achievement indicators and language competency standards remains unclear. This indicates that policy communication has not fully translated policy objectives into operational guidelines that are easily implemented by teachers in practice.

Moreover, limitations in human resources also present challenges in the implementation of Betawi language revitalization in schools. Some teachers do not have a specific background in local language teaching and have never participated in training related to Betawi language instruction. This condition suggests that language revitalization policies have not been accompanied by sufficient capacity building for teachers as the primary implementers in the learning process. Without adequate training support, local language learning risks becoming merely symbolic and may not produce systematic and sustainable learning processes.

This study also found that collaboration between schools and Betawi cultural communities has not yet developed optimally. In the context of local language revitalization, the involvement of cultural communities, local artists, and community leaders plays an important role in building a broader ecosystem for language preservation. Without support from the social environment outside schools, Betawi language learning risks being confined to the classroom and may not continue in students' daily communication practices.

On the other hand, the support of school principals and parents' participation indicates potential factors that can strengthen the process of local language revitalization within educational environments. Principals of the schools play a significant role in integrating Betawi language local content into school programs, while parents' involvement can expand the use of the Betawi language within family environments. Synergy among schools, families, and communities is therefore an important factor in creating a social environment that supports the sustainability of local languages.

Overall, the findings indicate that the implementation of Betawi language local content policies in elementary schools has made an initial contribution to reintroducing the local language to younger generations. However, the effectiveness of these efforts still requires strengthening in several key aspects, such as improving teacher competencies, providing more systematic teaching materials, and developing collaboration between schools and cultural communities. With improvements in these areas, schools can play a more optimal role as strategic spaces for maintaining the sustainability of the Betawi language as part of Jakarta's cultural identity.

### **3.2 Implementation of Betawi Language Revitalization in Junior High Schools (SMP)**

The results of the study based on interviews with local content teachers at junior high schools (SMP) in Jakarta indicate that implementation to revitalize the Betawi language have begun to be conducted through the integration of Betawi cultural learning into various educational activities in schools. Language revitalization is not merely understood as a process of formal language instruction but also as part of introducing local cultural identity to students through cultural and contextual learning activities.

Teachers stated that the policy of preserving the Betawi language is appreciated because it is considered important for maintaining the sustainability of local culture amid the increasingly heterogeneous dynamics of urban society. The policy is also viewed as relevant for reintroducing the Betawi language to younger generations, most of whom no longer use the language in daily communication. Prior to the implementation of this policy, the use of the Betawi language among students tended to be passive and limited to basic vocabulary recognition. Although some students are familiar with the Betawi language through family or community environments, its use has not yet become part of active communication practices.

In practice, the implementation of Betawi language revitalization in schools is not always carried out through a specific subject. Instead, language learning is often integrated into project-based learning activities and school cultural programs. One form of implementation identified in this study is through the **Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5)**, which incorporates Betawi cultural themes. Through this activity, students are introduced to various aspects of Betawi culture, including the use of the Betawi language in artistic performances, creative activities, and other cultural events. This approach provides opportunities for students to learn the language within a more authentic cultural context.

During the learning process, students show considerable enthusiasm when learning activities are linked to participatory activities. Teachers reported that students' interest increases when Betawi language learning is conducted through activities such as role-playing, drama performances, or artistic performances inspired by Betawi traditional arts such as Lenong. This practice-based cultural learning approach is considered more effective than purely theoretical methods because it allows students to learn the language while also understanding the socio-cultural context behind it. Thus, language learning focuses not only on linguistic aspects but also on fostering students' cultural awareness.

Furthermore, the use of digital technology has begun to be incorporated into Betawi language learning to enrich sources of information about Betawi language and culture. Digital media are used to introduce vocabulary, expressions, and cultural information to students. However, the use of technology in learning is still relatively simple and has not yet been systematically developed as an integrated regional language learning strategy within the school curriculum.

The research findings also show that institutional support from the school plays an important role in the implementation of Betawi language revitalization. School principals support activities related to Betawi culture, particularly in project-based learning and cultural programs. In addition, parents' involvement also serves as a supporting factor in the preservation of the Betawi language, for example through participation in school cultural activities or by supporting students' learning activities related to regional culture.

Nevertheless, the implementation of Betawi language revitalization in schools still faces several limitations. One of the main obstacles is the absence of a specific subject that systematically teaches the Betawi language at the junior high school level. The lack of a clear curriculum structure causes language learning to depend largely on teacher initiatives or specific school programs. Moreover, the availability of official textbooks specifically designed for Betawi language learning remains limited, forcing teachers to independently search for or develop learning materials.

Another limitation relates to policy support and human resource capacity building. Teachers reported that they have never participated in specific training related to Betawi language teaching and have not received guidance from language institutions or relevant agencies. This condition indicates that the implementation of language revitalization policies at the school level has not been fully accompanied by efforts to strengthen teachers' competencies as the main actors in the learning process.

A more critical analysis suggests that this condition reflects a gap between local language preservation policies at the local government level and their implementation in schools. Although language revitalization policies have provided a normative framework for preserving local languages, they have not been fully supported by systematic implementation mechanisms in the curriculum, teaching materials, or teacher capacity development. As a result, language revitalization in schools tends to be partial and depends on the creativity and initiative of individual schools or teachers.

The findings also show that culture-based learning approaches have significant potential to increase students' interest in the Betawi language. This approach aligns with contextual learning principles that view language as part of the social and cultural practices of society. Through participatory activities, students not only learn language as a linguistic system but also understand the cultural values embedded within it.

However, culture-based approaches also have limitations if they are not balanced with more systematic language instruction. Without a clear learning structure, students' mastery of the Betawi language may remain limited to cultural

recognition or symbolic appreciation rather than active and productive language competence. In other words, cultural activities may enhance students' cultural awareness but may not necessarily develop sufficient linguistic competence.

In addition to institutional and pedagogical factors, this study also indicates that language use among students is influenced by the development of social media and digital communication culture. Many students are more accustomed to using popular or foreign languages that are perceived as more modern and aligned with contemporary youth communication trends. This phenomenon reflects the sociolinguistic reality of urban societies, which are multilingual and dynamic, where local languages often experience functional shifts in everyday communication spaces.

Nevertheless, social media also has the potential to become a new space for regional language revitalization if creatively utilized in the learning process. The integration of digital media into Betawi language learning can open opportunities for developing more engaging learning materials that are relevant to the characteristics of the digital generation. Thus, local language revitalization can be conducted not only through traditional culture-based approaches but also through adaptation to the development of communication technologies.

From the perspective of educational policy, the revitalization of the Betawi language requires synergy among schools, local governments, and communities. Schools function as institutional spaces where regional language values can be introduced and instilled in younger generations, while local governments are responsible for providing regulations, curricula, and learning resources that support policy implementation. Meanwhile, community and cultural group involvement is also essential to create a social environment that enables the use of the Betawi language in daily life.

Overall, the findings indicate that Betawi language revitalization in junior high schools in Jakarta already has a practical foundation through various culture-based learning activities and educational projects. However, the implementation of this policy still faces several structural limitations, particularly related to curriculum, learning resources, and teacher capacity development. Therefore, revitalizing the Betawi language through formal education requires more comprehensive and sustainable policy strategies so that local languages are not only recognized as cultural symbols but can also be actively used by younger generations in their social lives.

## **4. Conclusion**

### **4.1 Conclusion**

This study shows that implementation of revitalizing the Betawi language in schools in the Jakarta area have begun to be conducted through the integration of local cultural learning into educational activities. Language revitalization is not carried out through a specific subject but rather through project-based learning activities, school cultural programs, and various activities that incorporate elements of Betawi culture.

The results indicate that culture-based practical learning approaches, such as art performances, role-playing, and creative activities related to Betawi culture, are able to increase students' interest and participation in learning the Betawi language. These approaches provide more contextual learning experiences, allowing students to understand language as part of their local cultural identity.

However, the implementation of Betawi language revitalization in schools still faces several limitations. The absence of a specific Betawi language curriculum, limited teaching materials, and a lack of teacher training remain major obstacles in implementing systematic local language learning. In addition, the influence of popular and global languages in students' communication environments also presents a challenge in efforts to revive the use of the Betawi language among younger generations.

Therefore, revitalizing the Betawi language through formal education requires stronger and more structured policy support. Language revitalization requires not only initiatives from schools but also synergy among educational institutions, local governments, and communities in creating an environment that supports the sustainable use of local languages.

## 4.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be considered to strengthen the revitalization of the Betawi language in schools.

First, it is necessary to develop a curriculum or local content program that specifically includes Betawi language learning at the junior high school level. Such a curriculum is expected to provide a more systematic and sustainable learning framework.

Second, local governments and education authorities need to provide adequate teaching materials and learning resources to support Betawi language learning in schools. The provision of textbooks, learning media, and digital materials can assist teachers in implementing local language instruction more effectively.

Third, improving teachers' capacity through continuous training and mentoring in Betawi language instruction is essential. Strengthening teachers' competencies is a crucial factor in ensuring the successful implementation of local language revitalization policies in schools.

Fourth, the use of digital technology and social media can serve as an alternative strategy to introduce the Betawi language to younger generations. Integrating digital media into the learning process can enhance the attractiveness of learning materials and expand opportunities for the use of local languages among students.

Through these policies, the revitalization of the Betawi language within educational environments is expected to be more effective and contribute to maintaining the sustainability of local languages as part of the cultural identity of Jakarta society.

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