

## The Role of Parents in Preserving Local Language

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### ABSTRACT

Local languages are integral to cultural identity, linking generations to their ancestral history. Nevertheless, in the age of globalization, its existence can be endangered by the prevalence of national and foreign languages. Parents are crucial in safeguarding regional languages, particularly by integrating and familiarizing them into familial interactions. This research seeks to examine the methods by which parents contribute to the preservation of regional languages, their motivations for such efforts, and the obstacles they encounter. Data were gathered using a qualitative methodology, which included in-depth interviews, observations of family interactions, and literature reviews. The findings indicate that parents maintain the local language via daily dialogues, traditional songs, folklore, and internet platforms. Nonetheless, students encounter obstacles including the impact of national and foreign languages, insufficient environmental support, and restricted learning resources. Assistance from educational institutions and communities is essential to cultivate an atmosphere conducive to the acquisition of regional languages. This collaborative initiative not only maintains local languages but also fortifies the cultural identity of forthcoming generations. This research underscores the importance of synergy between families, schools, and communities in sustaining the nation's cultural wealth.

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## Introduction

Language is the major form of communication in everyday life, including early childhood (Amelia & Aprianti, 2020). In this setting, local languages are an integral aspect of a community's cultural identity. In other words, local languages serve as more than just communication tools; they also reflect cultural values and heritage, connecting people to their communities. As a result, the general language and the regional language work together to strengthen social relationships and preserve cultural wealth.

Local languages not only carry information but also serve as a channel for generations to connect with their predecessors' cultural heritage, and indigenous languages, according to Sutarna et al., (2022), constitute an ethnic group's identity and character. However, in this fast evolving period of globalization, many regional languages face extinction due to the dominance of national and international languages. According to Hulukati et al., (2017), the optimal time for children to acquire or be introduced to regional languages is during their early childhood years, as young children have a high capacity for language learning.

Parents play an important role in conserving regional languages, particularly by passing them on to their offspring. Parents are primarily responsible for introducing regional languages to the younger generation, whether through daily discussions, traditional storytelling, or cultural events. As a result, they not only improve the child's

linguistic skills but also develop the child's sense of cultural identity and ancestral history. As stated by García and Wei (2014), frequent family interactions in regional languages can help preserve them in the face of globalization. This initiative is critical to ensuring that regional languages stay viable and do not become extinct in the future. This magazine seeks to investigate how parents can help maintain the continuation of regional languages despite the hurdles that must be overcome.

Parents, as main educators at home, bear a substantial responsibility for developing their children's habits and ways of thinking (Nasution and Suharian, 2020). Through daily interactions, parents can introduce and acquaint children with regional languages. The use of regional languages in family communication might help children feel proud of their cultural identity. Furthermore, by teaching children the values and traditions entrenched in the regional language, parents not only conserve the language but also enhance the emotional tie between future generations and their cultural legacy.

However, the difficulties faced by parents in conserving regional languages frequently become an issue in the context of education, as schools typically stress the use of Indonesian or English as the medium of instruction. This circumstance can restrict children's usage of local languages, reducing their capacity to grasp them. According to Crystal (2000), the dominance of majority languages in education and media is one of the primary reasons for the reduction in minority language use.

To guarantee that students continue to be exposed to and enjoy regional languages, it is necessary to incorporate them into the curriculum or extracurricular activities. This approach has the potential to assist regional languages survive in the face of global linguistic dominance. This can prevent youngsters from learning and thoroughly understanding their regional language. As a result, this article will examine ways that parents can employ to establish an environment that encourages the use of regional languages at home. It is believed that by better understanding the role of parents, we may collectively contribute to the preservation of local languages as an important element of the nation's cultural heritage.

### Methods

This article employs a qualitative method to study the role of parents in conserving regional languages. The interview approach tries to discover the ideas, experiences, and strategies people apply in introducing and using regional languages within the family setting. In addition, this observation in the context of family interactions is also undertaken to acquire a deeper picture of the use of regional languages in daily life. The word of Allah connected to language appears in Q.S Ar-Ruum (30); 22, which says:

*وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافَ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ*

It means: *"And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your languages and colors." Indeed, in that there are signals for those who know."*

In this research, the researchers also conducted a literature review analyzing the preservation of regional languages and the role of parents. These sources contain scholarly publications, research reports, and pertinent policy documents. Then, in the results and discussion section, the literature review is offered first, followed by the narrative of observations, and then extracts from interviews with three parents who were willing to be sources in this research.

The purpose of this research is:

1. To understand how parents introduce local languages to their children.
2. To grasp the reason why the parents taught the local language to the child.
3. And to comprehend the obstacles experienced by parents in introducing regional languages to their children.

### **Results and Discussions**

In the era of globalization that brings Western cultural influences through media such as television and the internet, parents play an essential role in preserving the continuity of local languages. One way parents can promote local languages is by using digital applications, such as YouTube, to present traditional melodies, folk tales, or educational materials in the local language.

In addition, parents can also introduce indigenous languages through daily conversations, family activities, or religious activities. "The use of digital media, such as YouTube, can be an effective means

for parents to introduce and preserve the Javanese language to their children, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, when online learning was more widely used," (Susanto & Sandi, 2020).

In accordance with the research by Muslihin et al., (2024), which states that gadgets also influence the development of the child. Then there is research by Faradinda (2023) which states that the media used to introduce local languages includes videos, posters, musical instruments or songs, and traditional activities.

The influence of Western media often encourages parents to be more assertive in introducing indigenous languages so that children maintain a connection with their cultural identity. By incorporating modern technology and tradition, parents can help preserve local languages so that they do not become extinct despite the challenges of globalization. "Parents play a significant role in supporting the development of a child's language from an early age." Through regular communication at home, parents can introduce numerous vocabulary and help children develop language skills (Suciati, 2017).

In addition, introducing local languages can also be done through simple methods such as singing traditional songs with children or performing traditional games that use the regional language. According to Haslam et al., (2020), Western media often influence parenting practices, making parents more strict in teaching local culture and language to prevent their children from being influenced by foreign cultures.

Rohita et al., (2021) also mentioned that parents introduce local language and culture through food, songs, and traditional activities. They can also chant regional songs with their children and use digital media to support the learning of local languages. With these straightforward steps, parents help preserve regional languages to keep them alive amidst the tide of globalization.

The mother tongue is the first language of a child after birth and the language that the infant first masters through interaction with those around them. Additionally, support from the environment that does not abandon the local language when communicating in daily life (Ratnawati et al., 2021). Similar to the research by Putri & Khotimah (2021) which asserts that the family environment is the first environment where a child grows and develops their personality.

For some parents, introducing local languages to their children is an effort to preserve cultural heritage and familial identity. They believe that regional languages are an inseparable part of identity that needs to be preserved and carried on to future generations. The method parents introduce regional languages to their children is as follows:

1. The use of local languages at home, parents often use regional languages when conversing with their children, which is commonly done when instructing their children to do something and during family gatherings. This aligns with the research by Naution and Suharian (2020), which states, "The role of parents is very important in accompanying children during online learning, not only to

support academics but also to introduce and preserve culture, including regional languages, through daily family activities."

2. Regional songs or folk tales, parents often teach their children regional songs and also play regional songs. Besides melodies, parents also tell folk tales using the local language, or include sentences that use the local language. "Parents play an important role in preserving the mother tongue within the family." By speaking Sundanese every day, parents not only teach the language but also preserve the culture that will be carried on to the next generation. (Ratnawati et al., 2022).
3. Speaking with children using the local language, from an early age, parents can communicate with their children using the regional language. This can be done while telling stories, playing, or during daily activities.
4. Reading stories in the local language will help children become familiar with vocabulary and sentence structure in the local language.
5. Providing a positive example to children, parents must actively and consistently use the local language because this will serve as a good paradigm for children to follow.

The efforts made by parents to introduce or preserve local languages in early children include introducing greeting words, practicing pronunciation, introducing items, speaking, and storytelling or narrating (Anggraini, 2020). see line with Helmi's research (see Anggraini, 2015), the intensity with which parents engage their children



in conversation is a key predictor in stimulating children's language skills.

Although many parents love teaching their children regional languages, they often encounter obstacles in both educating and familiarizing their children with the use of regional languages. The barriers or challenges experienced by parents are:

1. The influence of national and foreign languages, children more often use the national language, which is Indonesian, and foreign languages, such as English, in their official schooling and via electronic media that are now popular, such as YouTube or TikTok. Thus, the use of regional languages has diminished.
2. The absence of support from the surrounding environment, currently not many individuals utilize regional languages in regular communication. Thus, youngsters find it challenging to get the opportunity to practice the local language outside the home.
3. The shortage of professional professors. Not all teachers have the requisite skills to teach regional languages. Often, teachers who teach regional languages also have to teach other topics, thus the time and attention for regional languages become limited.
4. The absence of support from the government has resulted in the preservation of regional languages being less than desirable. Programs and policies that assist the learning of regional languages are still not well-structured.
5. The lack of learning resources such as teaching materials, books, and

media for regional languages is still limited. Sometimes, teachers have to build their own teaching materials that match the demands of the students.

The results of the interview demonstrate that regional languages play a very essential role in safeguarding cultural identity and selfhood. By speaking the regional language within the family, the ties among family members become closer, since the regional language frequently gives a distinct sense of warmth and familiarity. As experienced by informant 1 as a parent:

*"Yes, I introduce my child to Javanese, coincidentally I am Javanese. So that within the family, people may comprehend each other's local language and be pleased to utilize it."*

Regional languages also serve as a link to traditions. When children are taught regional languages, they do not just learn the words, but also understand the underlying meanings behind them, such as customs, folklore, and values passed down by their ancestors.

The usage of regional languages also instills a sense of pride in youngsters regarding their origins. They develop a sense of appreciation for the culture that molds their identity. In addition, regional languages often serve as a vehicle to introduce children to the richness of arts and culture, such as songs, dances, or traditional activities that might not be properly expressed in other languages. As experienced by informant 2, which is also in line with informant 3:

*"If you often sing Javanese songs with your child, later you can explain*

*the meaning to them."*

*"If it's for you, just open YouTube, listen to Javanese songs, and stories from Java like that."*

Support from the surrounding environment is particularly crucial for the successful introduction of regional languages to young children. In addition to the responsibilities of parents, schools and communities must also be active in fostering the usage of regional languages. On the topic of My Country, schools can also host activities that involve the usage of regional languages, such as art performances, folk tales, or competitions that employ regional languages. Formal education can be one strategy to conserve regional languages by integrating them into the school curriculum and other learning activities. (Zulaeha & Hum, 2017).

The community also plays a very essential role. The community can host events such as cultural festivals, traditional markets, or folk tale competitions that use the local language. These events give youngsters the opportunity to experience directly how the local language is utilized in daily life, outside of the family and school environment.

With the help of schools and the community, children will sense that the local language is vital and must be maintained. They will also find it easier to acquire and use the regional language in their daily life, which in turn will help preserve the language and culture of the region.

### **Conclusion**

Local languages are an important part of cultural identity that must be preserved, especially amidst the challenges of globalization that

affect the younger generation. Parents play a key role in introducing and familiarizing children with regional languages through daily interactions, such as speaking, singing traditional songs, or reading folk tales. Digital media can also be utilized to strengthen regional language learning at home.

However, these efforts are not without various challenges, such as the dominance of national and foreign languages, lack of support from the social environment, limited learning resources, and suboptimal policies. Support from schools and communities is essential to create an environment that fosters the preservation of regional languages. With the synergy between families, schools, and communities, the preservation of regional languages can contribute to strengthening cultural identity, fostering intergenerational relationships, and maintaining the nation's cultural wealth.

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