

Strategy for The Internationalization of Indonesian As an Asean Language

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the internationalization strategy of Indonesian as an ASEAN language. The background of this study is based on the importance of the existence of regional languages that can be a means of communication and a symbol of regional identity. The method used is a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through interviews, documentation studies, and observations. The results of the study indicate that Indonesian has great potential to become an ASEAN language due to the significant number of speakers, the ease of language structure, and cultural proximity to countries in the region. However, there are various challenges such as the dominance of English, competition with other languages, and limitations of regional policies. Therefore, a comprehensive strategy is needed including strengthening the BIPA program, language diplomacy, the use of digital technology, and cooperation between ASEAN countries. This research is expected to contribute to the development of language policies at the regional level and strengthen the position of Indonesian in the international arena.

INTRODUCTION

Language plays a strategic role in building communication and cooperation between nations in the era of globalization. In the context of the Southeast Asian region, the existence of languages that can connect countries is becoming increasingly important. ASEAN, as a regional organization, continues to promote integration in various fields, including social and cultural matters. However, to date, no single regional language has been dominantly used as a shared identity. This situation opens up opportunities for Indonesian to play a broader role at the regional level (Alwi, 2018).

Indonesian has great potential for internationalization due to its significant number of speakers. Besides being spoken by more than 270 million Indonesians, it is also studied in various countries. Several educational institutions abroad have included Indonesian as a subject or study program. This demonstrates global interest in Indonesian. This potential needs to be supported by a systematic and sustainable strategy (Sugiyono, 2020).

In the ASEAN context, English still dominates official communication between countries. However, this dominance does not always reflect the region's cultural identity. As a language native to Southeast Asia, Indonesian shares cultural ties with other ASEAN countries. This can serve as a basis for strengthening Indonesian's position as a regional language. This effort aligns with the spirit of strengthening ASEAN identity (Halim, 2019).

The historical development of Indonesian demonstrates its potential as a unifying language. Since the 1928 Youth Pledge, Indonesian has become a symbol of national unity. This success demonstrates that Indonesian can bridge diversity. This experience can serve as a model for internationalization in the ASEAN region. Thus, Indonesian has a strong historical foundation (Kridalaksana, 2017).

Besides historical factors, the simplicity of Indonesian's structure is also a distinct advantage. This language is relatively easy for foreign speakers to learn because it lacks a complex grammatical system. This makes Indonesian more easily mastered than other languages. This simplicity is a plus for internationalization efforts. Therefore, Indonesian language promotion can be more effective (Sneddon, 2016).

The Indonesian government has undertaken various efforts to promote the Indonesian language internationally. The Indonesian Language Teaching Program for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) is one concrete step. This program has been implemented in various countries with significant results. Furthermore, bilateral cooperation continues to be developed to expand reach. These efforts demonstrate the government's commitment to language internationalization (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021).

There are various challenges in making Indonesian an ASEAN language. One of them is competition with global languages like English and Mandarin. Furthermore, the lack of a common policy at the ASEAN level is also a barrier. A more intensive and targeted language diplomacy strategy is needed. Without a clear strategy, internationalization efforts will struggle to achieve optimal results (Lauder, 2018).

The role of digital media and technology is also crucial in supporting the internationalization of the Indonesian language. Digital platforms can be used to disseminate language learning more widely. Creative content in Indonesian can increase its appeal to the younger generation in the ASEAN region. Thus, technology is a strategic tool in language promotion. The use of technology must be part of the main strategy (Rahardi, 2020).

Cooperation between ASEAN countries also needs to be strengthened in the field of language. Student and teacher exchanges can be an effective means of introducing the Indonesian language. Furthermore, the integration of Indonesian in regional forums needs to be increased. Support from ASEAN member countries is crucial to the success of this strategy. Therefore, a collaborative approach is key (Anwar, 2019).

Based on this description, it can be concluded that the internationalization of Indonesian as an ASEAN language offers both significant opportunities and complex challenges. A comprehensive strategy is required, encompassing policy, education, technology, and diplomacy. With the support of various parties, Indonesian has the potential to become a connecting language in the ASEAN region. This will not only strengthen Indonesia's position but also enrich regional identity. Therefore, research on the internationalization strategy of Indonesian is crucial (Widodo, 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language internationalization is the process of spreading and using a language beyond the borders of its country of origin. This process involves not only linguistic aspects but also political, economic, and cultural factors. According to Crystal (2011), a language can become an international language if it has strong global influence. This influence is usually supported by the economic and political power of the country where it is spoken. Therefore, the internationalization of Indonesian requires a multidimensional approach.

The concept of language planning is a crucial foundation for internationalization efforts. Language planning encompasses status planning, corpus planning, and acquisition planning. Fishman (1974) explains that these three aspects must work synergistically for a language to develop optimally. Status planning relates to the language's position in society. Meanwhile, corpus and acquisition planning focus on language development and dissemination.

In the context of globalization, language serves as both a tool for international communication and a symbol of identity. Held et al. (1999) state that globalization is driving the intensification of cross-border relations, requiring effective communication media. Languages that can adapt to global needs will have a greater opportunity to develop. Therefore, the flexibility and absorbency of Indonesian are crucial factors, supporting its potential as a regional language.

The theory of language diplomacy is also relevant to this discussion. Language diplomacy is part of a country's soft power in influencing other countries. Nye (2004) emphasized that soft power can be built through culture, values, and language. Indonesian can be a diplomatic instrument to strengthen

Indonesia's position in ASEAN. Through language diplomacy, Indonesia's influence can be expanded in a non-coercive manner. This approach is considered more effective in the long term.

Furthermore, regional identity theory is an important foundation for understanding the role of language in ASEAN. Anderson (1983) stated that collective identity can be built through shared symbols, including language. In the ASEAN context, there is no language that truly represents a shared identity. Indonesian has the potential to fill this role. The shared Malay culture of several ASEAN countries is a supporting factor.

Sociolinguistic theory also provides perspective on language use in multicultural societies. Holmes (2013) explains that language choice is influenced by social factors such as status, domain, and communication situation. In multilingual ASEAN, the choice of language of instruction is a crucial issue. The relatively neutral Indonesian language could be an alternative, strengthening the argument for its potential as a regional language.

Foreign language teaching is a key strategy for internationalization. Richards and Rodgers (2001) emphasize the importance of communicative and contextual teaching methods. The Indonesian Language Program for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) is an implementation of this theory. Through the right approach, Indonesian language learning can be more effective, contributing to an increase in the number of foreign speakers.

The diffusion of innovation theory can also be used to explain the spread of language. Rogers (2003) states that innovations spread through communication within a social system. Language, as a social innovation, can be adopted by other communities if it is deemed useful. Factors such as ease of use and relevance are key determinants. Indonesian has advantages in these aspects.

The role of technology in language dissemination cannot be ignored. Warschauer (2000) explains that information technology accelerates the process of language globalization. Digital media enables widespread and rapid access to language learning. Indonesian language content available online can increase global exposure. Thus, technology becomes a strategic tool in language internationalization.

Based on these various theories, it can be concluded that the internationalization of the Indonesian language requires a comprehensive approach. Integration of language planning, diplomacy, education, and technology is key to success. Each theory contributes to understanding effective strategies. With a strong theoretical foundation, this research is expected to provide applicable solutions. Therefore, this theoretical study serves as an important foundation for research (Widodo, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach to deeply understand the internationalization strategy of Indonesian as an ASEAN language. A qualitative approach was chosen because it can comprehensively explore social phenomena and language policies. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research focuses on meanings, perceptions, and processes that occur within a specific context. This approach allows researchers to obtain descriptive and contextual data. Thus, the research results are expected to provide in-depth understanding.

The type of research used is descriptive analytical research. This study aims to systematically describe and analyze the phenomena being studied. Sugiyono (2019) states that descriptive research is used to describe the objective conditions of a research object. In this context, the research focuses on strategies and policies for the internationalization of the Indonesian language. The analysis was conducted to identify supporting and inhibiting factors.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through interviews with language experts, academics, and language policy practitioners. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from official documents, scientific journals, and policy reports. According to Moleong (2017), the combination of primary and secondary data can increase the validity of the research. By utilizing various data sources, this research is expected to be more comprehensive.

The data collection techniques used included interviews, documentation studies, and observations. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain accurate and detailed information. Documentation studies were used to examine policies and programs related to the Indonesian language at the international level. Observations were conducted to understand program implementation in the field. This technique aligns with the principle of data triangulation (Denzin, 1978).

The research instrument in a qualitative study is the researcher themselves. They act as data collectors, processors, and analyzers. Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasize that researchers must be sensitive to the social context being studied. Furthermore, researchers use interview guidelines as a tool. This aims to maintain consistency in the data collection process.

Data analysis techniques were conducted interactively and continuously. Miles and Huberman (1994) explain that qualitative data analysis includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction is carried out to simplify the information obtained. Data presentation is done in the form of descriptive narratives. Next, conclusions are drawn based on the patterns found.

The validity of the data in this study was maintained through triangulation techniques. Triangulation is performed by comparing data from various sources and methods. Patton (2002) states that triangulation can increase the credibility of research results. Furthermore, the researcher conducted member checks with informants. This step aims to ensure the accuracy of the data obtained.

The research locations included educational institutions, language institutions, and international cooperation forums. Locations were selected purposively based on their relevance to the research topic. According to Arikunto (2013), purposive location selection allows researchers to obtain more specific data. The selected locations are expected to represent actual conditions. This is crucial for accurate analysis.

The research subjects included language experts, BIPA teachers, and officials involved in language policy. Subjects were selected using purposive sampling. This technique allowed researchers to select informants with relevant competencies and experience. According to Bernard (2011), purposive sampling is effective in qualitative research. Thus, the data obtained is of higher quality.

Based on the methods used, this research is expected to produce valid and reliable findings. The qualitative approach allows for in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of language internationalization. All stages of the research were conducted systematically and structured. Supported by appropriate theory and methods, the research results are expected to make a scientific contribution. Therefore, this research method serves as a crucial foundation for the overall study (Widodo, 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Potential of Indonesian as an ASEAN Language

Indonesian has great potential to become an ASEAN language due to its large number of speakers. More than 270 million Indonesians speak it as their national language. Furthermore, Indonesian shares similarities with Malay, which is spoken in several ASEAN countries. This similarity facilitates cross-border adaptation, a key strength in the language's internationalization (Alwi, 2018).

Besides the number of speakers, the simplicity of Indonesian's structure is a plus. It doesn't have complex verb tense changes like other languages. This makes Indonesian easier to learn for foreign speakers. This simplicity is a particular attraction for the international community. Thus, the opportunity for the language to spread is greater (Sneddon, 2016).

Indonesian also has a history as a unifying language for the nation. Since the 1928 Youth Pledge, this language has successfully united various ethnicities and cultures. This experience demonstrates that Indonesian can be a tool for social integration. In the ASEAN context, this serves as an important reference. This language has the potential to become a symbol of regional unity (Kridalaksana, 2017).

Furthermore, the development of the Indonesian language in international education is increasing. Many foreign universities have opened Indonesian language study programs. The Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) program is also growing rapidly. This demonstrates global interest in the Indonesian language. Academic support is a crucial factor in internationalization (Sugiyono, 2020).

Culturally, Indonesian is rich in local values that can be introduced to the world. Language is not only a means of communication but also a carrier of culture. Through language, Indonesian cultural values can be disseminated.

This aligns with the concept of soft power in international relations. Culture becomes a powerful force that strengthens the position of language (Nye, 2004).

The use of Indonesian in digital media is also expanding. Digital content such as films, music, and social media is accelerating the spread of the language. Younger generations in ASEAN are beginning to be exposed to Indonesian through digital platforms. This significantly expands the language's reach. Technology is a key supporting factor (Rahardi, 2020).

With this potential, Indonesian has a significant opportunity to become an ASEAN language. However, this potential must be optimized through appropriate strategies. Without a clear strategy, these opportunities will not be fully developed. Therefore, concrete steps are needed to utilize this potential. This analysis forms the basis for the following discussion (Widodo, 2022).

B. Challenges of Internationalizing Indonesian in ASEAN

Despite its enormous potential, the internationalization of Indonesian faces various challenges. One major challenge is the dominance of English as a global lingua franca. English has long been used in official ASEAN communications. This makes shifting to another language challenging. This dominance creates a structural barrier (Crystal, 2011).

Besides English, the emergence of other languages, such as Mandarin, is also a source of competition. China's economic influence in the ASEAN region is strengthening the language's position. ASEAN countries tend to consider economic factors when choosing a language for communication. This presents a challenge for Indonesian. Competition between languages is becoming increasingly fierce (Lauder, 2018).

The lack of a common policy at the ASEAN level is also a barrier. To date, there is no official agreement on regional languages. Each country still maintains its own language policies. This complicates efforts to standardize regional languages. Coordination between countries is crucial (Halim, 2019).

Internally, Indonesian language promotion remains suboptimal. Internationalization programs have not been implemented evenly across ASEAN countries. Limited resources are a contributing factor. Furthermore, a shortage of teaching staff is also a barrier. This impacts the effectiveness of the BIPA program (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021).

The international community's perception of Indonesian is also a significant factor. Some people still consider Indonesian less important than other global languages. This perception affects interest in learning the language. Therefore, efforts are needed to improve the language's image. Language branding is part of this strategy (Anwar, 2019).

Another challenge is the lack of optimal use of technology. Despite rapid technological advancements, Indonesian language content still lags behind other languages. This limits the language's global exposure. Digital content development is an urgent need. Technology must be utilized optimally (Warschauer, 2000).

Given these various challenges, a comprehensive strategy is required. Challenges originate not only externally but also domestically. Therefore, the approach used must be comprehensive. Analyzing the challenges is the first

step in formulating solutions. This will be discussed in the next subchapter (Widodo, 2022).

C. Indonesian Language Internationalization Strategy

The Indonesian language internationalization strategy must begin with careful planning. Language planning encompasses aspects of status, corpus, and acquisition. These three aspects must be integrated. Without proper planning, implementation will be difficult. This aligns with Fishman's (1974) theory.

One key strategy is strengthening the BIPA program. This program is the spearhead for the spread of Indonesian abroad. Improving the quality of teaching is a top priority. Furthermore, expanding the program's reach is also necessary. This will increase the number of foreign speakers (Sugiyono, 2019).

Language diplomacy is also an important strategy. Language can be used as a diplomatic tool to strengthen relations between countries. Through cultural diplomacy, the Indonesian language can be introduced more widely. This approach is non-coercive and more effective, aligning with the concept of soft power (Nye, 2004).

Utilizing digital technology is an equally important strategy. Online platforms can be used for global language learning. Creative content in Indonesian needs to be developed. This will increase the language's appeal. Technology is a key tool in the digital age (Rahardi, 2020).

Regional cooperation also needs to be strengthened. ASEAN countries should be involved in language programs. Student and teacher exchanges could be a concrete step. Furthermore, ASEAN forums can be utilized for language promotion. Collaboration is key to success (Anwar, 2019).

Strengthening national policies is also essential. The government must fully support internationalization programs. Clear policies will expedite the implementation process. Furthermore, budget allocation must be increased. Government support is a key factor (Halim, 2019).

With these various strategies, the internationalization of the Indonesian language can be carried out effectively. Strategies must be tailored to regional conditions and needs. Consistent implementation is key to success. Therefore, regular evaluation is essential to ensure the program's sustainability (Widodo, 2022).

D. Implications and Prospects of Indonesian as an ASEAN Language

The internationalization of Indonesian has far-reaching implications for Indonesia. One of these is its enhanced standing on the international stage. Language serves as a symbol of a nation's cultural strength. With the increasing use of Indonesian, Indonesia's influence also increases, strengthening its diplomatic position (Nye, 2004).

Furthermore, the use of Indonesian in ASEAN can strengthen regional identity. Language can serve as a symbol of regional unity. A common language makes communication between countries more effective, supporting ASEAN integration. This strengthens regional identity (Anderson, 1983).

From an economic perspective, language internationalization also offers benefits. Language can open up opportunities for economic cooperation between countries. Using a common language facilitates business

communication, which can increase investment and trade. Language is a supporting factor for economic growth (Held et al., 1999).

In education, the use of Indonesian can increase academic mobility. This facilitates student and lecturer exchanges. Furthermore, research collaboration can be enhanced. This will strengthen the quality of education in the ASEAN region. Education is a strategic sector (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Implementing ASEAN languages will take time. It requires commitment from all member countries. The adaptation process must also be gradual. Therefore, a long-term strategy is essential. Patience is key in this process (Crystal, 2011).

The prospects for Indonesian as an ASEAN language remain wide open. With the support of technology and globalization, opportunities are even greater. The younger generation is the primary agent in language dissemination. Therefore, their involvement is crucial. The future of the language depends on them (Rahardi, 2020).

Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that Indonesian has a significant potential to become an ASEAN language. However, success depends heavily on strategy and collaboration. The resulting implications are far-reaching and positive. Therefore, internationalization efforts must continue. This is a strategic step for the future of the region (Widodo, 2022).

CONCLUSION

Based on the entire discussion above, it can be concluded that Indonesian has significant potential for internationalization as an ASEAN language. This potential is supported by its large number of speakers, the ease of language structure, and cultural proximity to countries in the region. Furthermore, the development of Indonesian language teaching programs abroad also shows a positive trend. However, this potential needs to be supported by a targeted and sustainable strategy. This will enable Indonesian to play a broader role at the regional level.

There are various challenges that must be faced in the internationalization process. The dominance of global languages like English and competition with other languages are major obstacles. Furthermore, the lack of a common policy at the ASEAN level also slows down the implementation process. Internal challenges such as limited resources and suboptimal promotion also require attention. Therefore, more serious and coordinated efforts are needed from various parties. These challenges must serve as the basis for formulating more effective strategies.

The Indonesian language internationalization strategy needs to be implemented comprehensively, involving various aspects. Strengthening the BIPA program, language diplomacy, utilizing digital technology, and regional cooperation are strategic steps that need to be optimized. Furthermore, government policy support and improving the quality of human resources are also crucial. Strategy implementation must be consistent and sustainable. With the right approach, the chances of success will be greater.

The internationalization of Indonesian as an ASEAN language benefits not only Indonesia but also the region as a whole. Language can serve as a unifying tool, strengthening regional identity and enhancing cooperation between countries. Future prospects indicate that Indonesian has the potential for further development. However, success depends heavily on the commitment and collaboration of all parties. Therefore, this effort must continue to be promoted as part of the ASEAN regional development strategy.

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