



Integrating Javanese in Social Studies at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah Bulak

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Abstract

The fundamental reason for this research is the need to enhance students' understanding of the subject matter while preserving and strengthening local cultural identity amidst globalization. This study aims to analyze the implementation and impact of using the Javanese language in Social Studies (IPS) instruction at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah Bulak, Gondangrejo District, Karanganyar Regency. The research method used is qualitative, with a case study approach involving classroom observations, in-depth interviews with teachers and the headmaster, and document analysis. The research results show that the use of the Javanese language in social studies instruction varies at each grade level and is adapted to the student's cognitive levels. This approach has proven effective in enhancing students' understanding of Social Studies material, especially concepts related to the local socio-cultural context. The use of the Javanese language also plays a crucial role in language preservation and strengthening students' cultural identity. Despite challenges in its implementation, such as balancing with the Indonesian language, this strategy overall creates holistic learning, improves academic understanding, and strengthens students' social skills. These findings have significant implications for the development of curricula and learning strategies that are responsive to the local cultural context.

Keywords: Javanese Language, Social Studies Learning, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Cultural Identity.



INTRODUCTION

Javanese is one of the regional languages that has the largest number of speakers in Indonesia (Josaphat, Cahyaningrum, Ladifa, Syach, & Khana, 2022). As part of the cultural heritage, Javanese not only functions as a means of communication but also as a shaper of the identity and character of Javanese society. In the context of education, the use of Javanese as the language of instruction has become a topic of discussion among educators and cultural observers. This is relevant in areas with a significant population of Javanese speakers, such as in Karanganyar Regency, Central Java.

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah Bulak in Gondangrejo District, Karanganyar Regency, is one of the primary education institutions that faces challenges in integrating the Javanese language into the learning curriculum. As an Islamic-based school, this madrasah has a double responsibility: maintaining Islamic values while preserving local culture, including the Javanese language. The use of the Javanese language in learning, especially in Social Studies subjects, is an interesting phenomenon to study.

Social studies has great potential to be integrated with the use of the Javanese language. However, the implementation of the Javanese language in social studies learning is not without challenges. The balance between the use of Indonesian as the national language and Javanese as the local language needs to be considered so as not to sacrifice students' understanding of the learning material.

The gap that arises is the potential conflict between efforts to preserve local languages and the need to prepare students to face global challenges (Suradi, 2018). On the one hand, the use of Javanese in social studies learning can strengthen cultural identity and facilitate students' understanding of materials related to the local context. On the other hand, there is a concern that an excessive focus on local languages may hinder students' ability to master Indonesian and foreign languages needed to compete in the era of globalization.

Research on the use of regional languages in education has developed rapidly in various countries. For example, a study by Probyn (2019) in South Africa revealed the importance of using the mother tongue in science learning in primary schools to enhance students' conceptual understanding (Probyn, 2019). Meanwhile, Cenoz and Gorter (2020) investigated the translanguaging approach in multilingual education in Europe, demonstrating the benefits of using diverse languages in the learning process (Cenoz, 2020). However, these studies are still limited to the context of Western countries and Africa and have not extensively addressed the use of regional languages in learning in Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia.

Although there are several recent studies on the use of regional languages in education in Indonesia, such as research by Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat (2019) on language policies in education in Southeast Asia, there is still a gap in research specifically examining the use of Javanese language in Social Sciences learning at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level (Kirkpatrick, 2019). Furthermore, recent research by Tupas and Rubdy (2021) on language education in Southeast Asia highlights the importance of considering the local context in implementing language policies in schools (Park, Wee, Rubdy, & Tupas, 2021).

However, there is still a scarcity of studies that comprehensively analyze the impact and effectiveness of using the Javanese language in Social Sciences learning, especially in Islamic educational environments such as Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah. This gap becomes increasingly significant considering the important role of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in the Indonesian education system and the potential use of the Javanese language as a tool to enhance student's understanding and engagement in Social Sciences (IPS) learning, which has not been explored in depth in recent academic literature.

In addition, teacher readiness and the availability of learning materials that support the use of Javanese in social studies subjects. Many teachers may not have sufficient competence in using Javanese as the language of instruction, especially for technical terms in social studies. The lack of teaching materials specifically designed to integrate the Javanese language into social studies learning is also a challenge (Hasmidar et al., 2024).

Based on initial observations conducted at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah Bulak, Gondangrejo District, Karanganyar Regency, it was found that out of the total 46 students involved in this study, 38 students (82.6%) showed increased active participation in Social Studies learning when teachers used the Javanese language. The results of pre-tests and post-tests conducted on all students showed an average increase in scores of 18.5% for Social Studies material taught using a combination of Javanese and Indonesian languages, compared to material taught using only Indonesian. Additionally, interviews with 30 students revealed that 26 students (86.7%) felt more comfortable and confident in expressing their understanding of Social Studies concepts when allowed to use Javanese in class discussions.

Of the 4 Social Studies teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah Bulak, all have implemented the use of Javanese in Social Studies teaching with varying levels of intensity. In-depth interviews with these four teachers revealed that three teachers (75%) consistently use Javanese to explain key concepts and facilitate class discussions, while one other teacher uses Javanese in a limited manner, mainly to provide contextual examples. All teachers reported challenges in balancing the use of Javanese with the need to prepare students for national

exams conducted in Indonesian. However, they also noted significant improvements in students' understanding of Social Studies material related to local culture and history when using Javanese as a medium of instruction.

Therefore, it is important to conduct research on the use of the Javanese language in social studies learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah Bulak. This study is expected to provide an overview of how Javanese is integrated into social studies learning, the challenges faced, and the impact on students' understanding and motivation to learn. The results of this study can later serve as a foundation for the development of more effective learning strategies in integrating local languages into the basic education curriculum, especially in areas with similar socio-cultural characteristics.

This research is novel compared to previous studies. In contrast to research (Khoerul, 2022), which focuses on the use of Javanese in local language learning in general elementary schools, this study specifically examines the implementation of Javanese in social studies subjects in the Islamic elementary school environment. The madrasah context provides a new dimension in understanding the integration of local language with Islamic values in learning.

In addition, this study also extends Noor, S., Suryani, & Asror. (2020) findings on the effectiveness of using Javanese language in improving students' understanding of the subject matter. However, this study further explores how the use of Javanese in social studies can affect not only cognitive understanding but also affective aspects such as students' cultural identity and learning motivation in the context of faith-based education (Noor, Suryani, & Asror, 2020).

This research is based on the sociolinguistic theory proposed by Fishman (1972) on diglossia and language maintenance (Saddiyah & Rokhman, 2018). This theory emphasizes the importance of understanding the role and function of language in different social contexts, including in the educational environment. In the context of social studies learning in madrasah, this theory helps explain how Javanese and Indonesian can be used simultaneously for different purposes without compromising students' understanding.

This research also refers to Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism, which emphasizes the important role of social and cultural interactions in the learning process (Saksono et al., 2023). This theory supports the idea that the use of local languages in learning can facilitate students' understanding by connecting new knowledge with familiar cultural contexts. In the context of social studies learning, this theory helps explain how the use of Javanese can help students construct their understanding of social and cultural concepts (Rahman & Abdulkarim, 2024).

Based on the background and gaps that have been identified, the problem

formulations in this study are: “How does the integration and impact of using Javanese in Social Studies learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah Bulak, Gondangrejo District, Karanganyar Regency?” The formulation of this problem includes aspects such as the strategy of integrating Javanese in social studies learning, the challenges faced by teachers and students, as well as the effect on understanding the material, learning motivation, and the formation of students’ cultural identity.

METHODS

The research method used in this study is a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design (Creswell & Poth, 2016). This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of using the Javanese language in the context of Social Studies learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah Bulak, Gondangrejo District, Karanganyar Regency. The descriptive case study was chosen because it enables the researcher to describe in detail and comprehensively how the Javanese language is used in Social Studies learning, as well as its impact on students’ understanding and engagement. This type of case study is suitable for this research because it aims to describe the phenomenon in its natural context without attempting to explain causal relationships or develop new theories (Stake, 2010).

Data collection was carried out through several techniques. *First*, participant observation: Participant observation is conducted in social studies classes to observe directly how the Javanese language is integrated into the learning process. The instrument used is a structured observation sheet that covers aspects such as the frequency of Javanese language use, the context of use, and student responses. This observation sheet was designed based on the translanguaging theoretical framework (Vogel & García, 2017) to ensure relevance to the research theme.

Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 4 Social Studies teachers, the school principal, and a sample of 15 students (out of a total of 46 students) to explore perceptions, experiences, and challenges in using the Javanese language. The interview guide was developed with reference to the concept of mother tongue-based learning (Cummins, 2021) and adapted to the local context of Javanese language use in Social Studies learning.

Third, document analysis Includes learning materials, textbooks, and student work to see the extent to which the Javanese language is used in written materials. The instrument used is a document analysis rubric that focuses on aspects such as the proportion of Javanese language use, the context of use, and alignment with Social Studies content.

All research instruments (observation sheets, interview guides, and document analysis rubrics) have been validated by experts in the fields of language education and Social Studies teaching to ensure their relevance to the research

theme and the validity of the data to be collected. Triangulation of data from various sources and methods will enable researchers to obtain a comprehensive picture of the use of the Javanese language in Social Studies learning at the madrasah.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. *The Use of Javanese Language*

The use of Javanese language in learning refers to the practice of integrating Javanese language and cultural elements into the teaching and learning process. This includes the use of Javanese vocabulary, expressions, proverbs, and structures as a medium of communication and delivery of subject matter. In its implementation, the use of Javanese can vary from full immersion to partial immersion tailored to the learning needs and context. This includes the use of Javanese in explaining concepts, giving instructions, teacher-student interaction, and even in written materials or evaluations (Hasmidar et al., 2024).

More than just a means of communication, the use of Javanese in learning also reflects efforts to preserve culture and instill local values. Javanese language, with its levels of speech (*ngoko*, *krama madya*, *krama inggil*), carries philosophical content about ethics, manners, and social hierarchy, which are integral parts of Javanese culture. In the context of education, the use of Javanese not only aims to improve students' understanding of the subject matter but also to strengthen cultural identity, develop emotional intelligence, and build character in line with local wisdom values (Setiawati & Arista, 2018). Thus, the use of Javanese in learning is a holistic strategy that combines cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural aspects in the educational process.

2. *The Use of Javanese Language in Social Studies Learning*

The use of Javanese in Social Studies learning creates a unique synergy between the preservation of local culture and the development of students' socio-cultural understanding. In the context of social studies, which includes aspects such as history, geography, economics, and sociology, Javanese can serve as a bridge that connects abstract concepts with local realities that are easier for students to understand (Sri Hastati, Wahid, & Afni, 2019). For example, when discussing the topic of social structure, the use of Javanese terms such as "*priyayi*," "*wong cilik*," or "*ndara*" can provide a deeper understanding of social stratification in Javanese culture. Similarly, economic concepts such as the barter system can be explained using the term "*ijolan*," which is more familiar to students.

The integration of the Javanese language in social studies learning also provides a richer exploration of local wisdom and traditional values. The use of Javanese expressions such as "*mangan ora mangan kumpul*" to explain the

concept of gotong royong or “aja dumeh” in discussing leadership ethics can strengthen students’ understanding while instilling moral values. Furthermore, the use of Javanese in social studies learning can increase students’ cultural sensitivity, help them understand the socio-cultural dynamics of the surrounding community, and develop comparative analysis skills between local and global phenomena. Thus, the use of Javanese in social studies not only enriches the learning process but also contributes to the formation of cultural identity and a multidimensional understanding of social phenomena.

3. The Use of Javanese Language in Social Studies Learning

The use of the Javanese language in the teaching of Social Studies (IPS) at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah Bulak can be analyzed from the perspective of Fishman’s (1972) sociolinguistic theory on diglossia and language maintenance, as well (Cooper & Fishman, 1974) as Vygotsky’s (1978) social constructivism theory, as cited in (Mu’in, Jumadi, & Noortyani, 2023). These theories provide a robust foundation for understanding the dynamics and impact of integrating regional languages into the context of formal education. These two theories provide a strong framework for understanding the dynamics and impact of local language integration in the context of formal education.

Fishman’s theory of diglossia explains the phenomenon in which two language varieties coexist in a society, each with a different social function. In the context of social studies learning in madrasah, Javanese and Indonesian occupy different but complementary positions. Javanese, as the ‘L’ language (low variety), is used to explain concepts that are closer to students’ daily lives and to strengthen cultural identity. Meanwhile, Indonesian, as the ‘H’ language (high variety), is used for more formal and academic concepts. This approach reflects the effort to preserve the Javanese language amidst the dominance of the national language while facilitating more effective learning by utilizing students’ familiarity with their local language (Alimin & Ramaniyar, 2020).

Vygotsky’s social constructivism theory emphasizes that learning occurs through social and cultural interactions (Vygotsky & Cole, 2018). In the context of using the Javanese language in social studies learning, this theory provides an understanding of how students construct their knowledge through the language and culture they are familiar with. The use of Javanese terms, folklore, and contextual examples in Javanese helps students connect abstract social studies concepts with socio-cultural realities (Arini & Umami, 2019). This is in line with Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) concept, where effective learning occurs when new material is presented in a context that is familiar to students.

The integration of these two theories in analyzing the use of Javanese

language in social studies learning shows a holistic and contextual approach (Nasution, Siregar, Siregar, & Manullang, 2024). On the one hand, this approach maintains the function and value of the Javanese language as part of students' cultural identity (according to Fishman's theory). On the other hand, the use of Javanese as a mediation tool in social studies learning facilitates the construction of more meaningful and relevant knowledge for students (according to Vygotsky's theory) (Erbil, 2020). Thus, this practice not only contributes to the preservation of the Javanese language and culture but also increases the effectiveness of social studies learning by building a cognitive bridge between local knowledge and universal concepts in social studies.

Observations conducted in grades IV, V, and VI of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah Bulak showed varied patterns of Javanese language use in social studies learning. In class IV, the use of Javanese is more dominant, especially in explaining basic concepts and teacher-student interaction. Teachers often use Javanese folktales and traditional games to illustrate material such as cultural diversity and local economic activities. In grade V, there is a balance between the use of Javanese and Indonesian. Teachers use Javanese mainly to explain contextual examples and moral values, while Indonesian is used for more complex concepts. Meanwhile, in grade VI, the use of Javanese is more selective, focusing on strengthening understanding and critical analysis of local social issues, with Indonesian as the main language for discussion of broader and more abstract topics.

Interestingly, at all grade levels, the use of Javanese in social studies learning appears to have a positive impact on student engagement. Students tend to participate more actively when discussions use Javanese, especially when discussing topics related to local life and culture. However, challenges arise, especially in grade VI, where some students, particularly those from non-Javanese backgrounds, sometimes have difficulty understanding more complex Javanese terms. To overcome this, teachers were seen implementing code-switching strategies between Javanese and Indonesian, as well as using visual media to clarify difficult concepts. Overall, the use of Javanese in social studies learning at all three grade levels shows a consistent effort to integrate local wisdom with the subject matter, albeit with intensity and methods adapted to the student's level of cognitive development.

The results of interviews with teachers and the head of madrasah at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah Bulak provide a comprehensive picture of the implementation and impact of using Javanese in social studies learning.

Sri Rahayu, a grade IV teacher, emphasized the importance of using Javanese as an early foundation for students' understanding of social studies concepts. According to her, "The use of Javanese helps students connect the

subject matter with their daily experiences. For example, when discussing traditional markets, I use the terms *'bakul'* and *'blanja'*, which immediately makes students enthusiastic because they feel close to their lives." She also noted an increase in student participation in class discussions when using Javanese.

Sitatun Muharomah, a grade V teacher, adopts a more balanced approach. "In grade V, I start introducing more complex concepts, so I use a combination of Javanese and Indonesian," she explains. "Javanese is very effective for explaining social and moral values, such as *'tepa selira'* in the context of tolerance. However, for topics like globalization, I use more Indonesian." She observes that this approach helps students build a deeper and more contextualized understanding.

Darmawan Wibisono, a grade VI teacher, uses Javanese more selectively. "In grade VI, my focus is on preparing students for the next level of education. So, the use of Javanese is more directed towards critical analysis of local issues and strengthening cultural identity," he says. He adds that the use of Javanese proverbs and expressions in discussions about contemporary social issues helps students develop a unique perspective based on local wisdom.

Siti Aminah, head of the madrasah, sees the use of Javanese in social studies learning as part of the madrasah's vision of integrating Islamic values with local wisdom. "We believe that a strong understanding of one's own culture is key to understanding the wider world," she explains. She also highlights challenges in implementation, such as the need to improve teachers' competence in Javanese and balance its use with the demands of the national curriculum.

4. Analysis of Javanese Language Usage in Social Studies Learning

The results of the observations and interviews above show the implementation of Javanese language use in social studies learning, which is in line with Fishman's diglossia theory and Vygotsky's social constructivism. Observations in classes IV, V, and VI showed variations in the use of Javanese language tailored to the cognitive level of students, reflecting Fishman's diglossia concept. In class IV, Javanese was used more dominantly for basic concepts, while in class VI, Javanese was used more selectively for critical analysis of local issues. This shows the division of functions between Javanese (L variety) and Indonesian (H variety) in the context of learning, as well as efforts to preserve the Javanese language.

Interviews with teachers and the madrasah head revealed that the use of Javanese in social studies aims to connect the subject matter with students' daily experiences and strengthen their cultural identity. This is in line with Vygotsky's theory on the important role of social and cultural interaction in

learning. Teacher Sri Rahayu, for example, uses Javanese terms such as “*bakul*” and “*blanjan*” to explain the concept of a traditional market, which helps students construct an understanding based on their local knowledge. This approach reflects the application of Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development concept, where learning is facilitated through contexts that are familiar to students.

The use of Javanese in social studies learning, which includes the integration of Javanese language and cultural elements into the teaching and learning process, as well as efforts to preserve culture and instill local values, can be seen as a synthesis of these two theories. From Fishman’s perspective, this is a language preservation strategy that positions Javanese in the formal context of education. Meanwhile, from Vygotsky’s perspective, the use of Javanese as a mediation tool in social studies learning facilitates more meaningful and contextualized knowledge construction. The results of observations and interviews show that this approach not only improves students’ understanding of social studies materials but also strengthens their cultural identity, in accordance with the principles of both theories.

From the perspective of Fishman’s diglossia theory, the main visible impact is the preservation of the function of Javanese in the domain of formal education, which is usually dominated by the national language. The use of Javanese in social studies learning has created a space where the local language is not only recognized but also given equal value and function with Indonesian in certain contexts. This contributes to the preservation of the Javanese language, preventing it from the linguistic erosion that often results from the dominance of the national language in education. Furthermore, this practice helps students develop metalinguistic awareness - the ability to understand and use language contextually - which is essential in a multilingual society. As expressed by teachers in interviews, students become more able to switch between Javanese and Indonesian according to context, reflecting their understanding of the different social functions of the two languages.

Meanwhile, from the perspective of Vygotsky’s social constructivism theory, the impact of using the Javanese language in social studies learning can be seen in the increased effectiveness of the knowledge construction process by students. The use of Javanese language and cultural concepts familiar to students has created cognitive scaffolding that helps them understand more complex social studies concepts. This was evident from classroom observations where students showed higher levels of participation and understanding when the material was presented using Javanese examples and terms. This process facilitates a deeper internalization of knowledge in accordance with Vygotsky’s concept of the transformation of interpersonal experience into intrapersonal understanding. Furthermore, the use of Javanese in class discussions and

analysis of local social issues, as reported by the grade VI teacher, has encouraged the development of critical thinking skills that are more contextualized and based on local wisdom.

Another significant impact, reflecting the synthesis of the two theories, is the strengthening of students' cultural identity along with their increased understanding of social studies materials. The use of Javanese not only maintains its sociolinguistic function (Fishman) but also becomes a powerful mediating tool in the learning process (Vygotsky). Students not only learn about social studies concepts but also develop a deeper appreciation of local culture and values. This creates holistic learning, where cognitive development goes hand in hand with the development of students' socio-cultural identity. The madrasah principal, Siti Aminah, emphasized that this approach is in line with the madrasah's vision to integrate Islamic values with local wisdom, showing how the integration of local languages in learning can support broader educational goals.

This research is worth publishing because it provides an in-depth analysis of how the use of the Javanese language in teaching Social Sciences (IPS) at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah Bulak can enhance students' cultural identity while also improving their understanding of the subject matter. By employing Fishman's (1972) sociolinguistic theory and Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism, the study offers a robust analytical framework to understand the dynamics and impacts of integrating regional languages in formal education contexts. The research demonstrates that the use of Javanese not only retains its sociolinguistic function but also serves as a powerful mediation tool in the learning process, enabling students to develop a deeper appreciation for local culture and values.

The findings of this study make an important contribution to broadening the academic discussion on the use of regional languages, particularly Javanese, in learning within the Islamic education environment in Indonesia. Most previous research related to the use of mother tongue in education tends to focus on the context of Western countries or the general use of regional languages in Indonesia without specifically examining the use of Javanese in Social Studies subjects in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. This study fills this gap by providing empirical evidence from a context that has not been extensively explored in the literature.

The translanguaging approach applied in this research provides a new understanding of how the use of the Javanese language can enrich the Social Studies learning process and enhance student engagement and comprehension. In contrast to the traditional view that sees the use of regional languages as a disturbance or obstacle in formal education, this study shows that Javanese can be an effective tool to bridge academic knowledge with students' local cultural and

environmental contexts. These findings are in line with the contemporary discourse in multilingual education that emphasizes the importance of utilizing the diverse languages of students as pedagogical resources.

Furthermore, this research provides concrete evidence regarding the potential for integrating the Javanese language into the curriculum and Social Studies learning in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. This study not only describes the practice of using Javanese but also reveals the perceptions and challenges faced by teachers and school principals. This information can be valuable input for policymakers and education practitioners in designing more effective interventions to support the development of local cultural literacy through learning in Islamic schools.

The significant benefit for readers after reading this research is gaining new insights into how the integration of regional languages in learning can support holistic educational innovation. This study highlights the importance of an approach that considers the local socio-cultural context in curriculum development and learning strategies. By understanding how the use of the Javanese language can enhance students' comprehension of Social Studies concepts and strengthen their cultural identity, readers, particularly educators, and education policymakers, can apply these findings to develop education programs that are more responsive to local needs and values. This approach is in line with the madrasah's vision to integrate Islamic values with local wisdom, demonstrating how the integration of regional languages in learning can support broader educational goals.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion of this study reveals that integrating the Javanese language into Social Science (IPS) education has a significant positive impact. This approach is effective in enhancing students' understanding of the subject matter, particularly concepts related to the local socio-cultural context. The use of Javanese, tailored to students' cognitive development and the complexity of the material, supports language preservation and strengthens students' cultural identity, which is in line with Fishman's diglossia theory. Additionally, this approach facilitates the construction of more meaningful and contextual knowledge, consistent with Vygotsky's social constructivism theory. Despite challenges such as balancing Javanese with Indonesian language use and the need to improve teachers' competencies, this strategy proves to create holistic learning that not only enhances academic understanding but also reinforces students' cultural identity. These findings have significant implications for curriculum development and teaching strategies that are responsive to local cultural contexts.

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