



# Revitalization of Regional Language Education An Effort in Maintaining the Existence of Sundanese Culture

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## ABSTRACT

This paper was written based on the restlessness of my mind and the anxiety of my heart, in seeing the reality of Sundanese culture which is increasingly being reduced due to the enormity of globalization which has had a significant impact on multidimensional life, especially in the dimension of Sundanese culture. This condition is further exacerbated by the less optimal role and function of education today which has not been able to be oriented in creating educated people who have self-identity as cultural beings but still understand their role in life as citizens of the world community, so it is possible to bring the culture into the world, especially Sundanese which is now at the lowest point of its existence. This understanding implies a meaning about attitudes in facing globalization in a positive paradigm to make globalization a great opportunity to elevate existence by globalizing our culture as a manifestation of the robustness and resilience of our culture. Therefore, this paper seeks to explain how to revitalize local language education: an effort to maintain the existence of the nation's culture.

**Keywords:** *Cultural existence, Education revitalization, Local language.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is accompanied by the dynamic and progressive development of science and technology. It is a necessity that has a significant impact on various aspects of the constellation of life. This is a challenge as well as an opportunity for civilization and the existence of the life of the Indonesian nation. Society will be increasingly dragged and drowned by the current waves of development in the 21st Century. This implies that in the era of globalization there is a tendency for Indonesian people to adopt global culture as an absolute value system that will be used as a foothold in life, resulting in the loss of national identity.

Nations that have a strong national identity, culture and personality can take advantage of the situation presented by globalization in a meaningful way. On the other hand, a nation that lacks self-confidence has a weak personality and is experiencing a crisis of cultural identity, both at the individual, community and national levels, does not have the ability to fortify itself from exposure to other cultural influences that are increasingly being brought in by the mass media and electronics and the internet. This paper attempts to explain how to revitalize local language education: an effort to maintain the existence of the nation's culture.

## 2. METHOD

This article is a literature study as the approach. Literature study helps the author to review books, literature, and scientific articles related to this paper. The results of empirical research are used by the author as secondary data where the data will strengthen the arguments which will later be synthesized to become unified in presenting the information.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### ***3.1. Globalization: Threats, Challenges, and Opportunities for Sundanese Culture***

The 21st century as a century of globalization that brings a wave of universal civilization in the form of homogenization, uniformity, westernization, and cultural hegemony must be handled wisely. Therefore, it is necessary to take preventive, substantive, and curative efforts by further strengthening the robustness of the nation's internal logic that is based on culture. This needs to be fully understood in order to build a fundamental paradigm of culture, as an internal force in building a civilized life, because culture is an essential element that does not only concern human existence in life, but also as

a manifestation of the identity of a society. Cultural preservation is an activity that is carried out continuously, directed, integrated as an effort to realize certain goals that reflect something that is permanent, eternal, dynamic, flexible and selective (Mantri, 2021, p. 24).

Culture can be interpreted according to the times and society (Anshori, 2018, p. 31). This is in accordance with the formulation of culture based on Raymond's perspective which reveals that culture implies (1) Culture as an intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic process of an individual; (2) culture as a way of life; (3) culture as a result of intellectual work and practice, especially in the artistic field; and (4) culture as a significant system, through which social order is communicated. Culture is an essential element that does not only concern human existence in life, but also as a manifestation of the identity of a society that lives in its community/group.

In correlation with was stated above, Indonesia is a country that has cultural diversity. Cultural plurality shows that the Indonesian nation has a very complex cultural wealth. Each culture has essential characteristics that differ from one another. One of these cultures is Sundanese culture. Sundanese culture is manifested in belief systems, livelihoods, arts, kinship, language, science, technology, systems of customs (Sardin, 2021, p. 94). Based on research of Aulia, Dhynar, Arofah, and Duanaputri (2021, p. 36) Generation Z has started to forget 80% of Sundanese culture, due to the influence of the rapid development of technology and cultural exchange with Western culture (influenced native culture).

Sundanese culture is a culture that is in the area of West Java. Sundanese culture is known as a culture that upholds polite and religious values. Even in his research, Harasashani (2018, p. 51) explains that Sundanese culture is rich in teachings and philosophical values that are noble and obedient to norms, socio-cultural values (the results of customary decisions and deliberation according to Islam). This can be seen as in slogan *silih asah* (perfecting or improving each other--through education and various knowledges), *silih-asih* (love one another--prioritizing compassion), and *silih-upah* (protecting each other--keeping each other safe). Apart from that, the expression also contains the meaning of equality which educates in creating an orderly, peaceful, and authoritative society between everyone who is interconnected in realizing a just and prosperous society (Garna, 2008). However, in its development, current Sundanese culture has been reduced by globalization. As a result, there is a stigmatization of language accompanied by a lack of awareness of contextual language (Nurjanah, 2017). This can be seen from the changes that occur in the lifestyle and perspective of the Sundanese people. Not a few Sundanese people have abandoned the values of local wisdom of Sundanese culture because they are considered obsolete and not in

accordance with the times. This means that local cultural wisdom currently is no longer understood as an essential thing in a culture, even though the value of local wisdom philosophically has wisdom values derived from noble cultural values to regulate the social life of the community wisely.

This situation can be seen empirically in one example of the reluctance of the Sundanese people to use the Sundanese language to communicate in social life. In fact, if we are able to understand, that language is one of the essential elements of culture that has a vital function. Garna (2008) argues that "Sundanese is a regional language, which as a regional language has a function as (1) a symbol of regional pride; (2) regional identity symbols; (3) means of communication within the family and the local community". In line with the opinion above, Crystal (2000) argues that there are several objectives in maintaining and empowering mother tongue, among others; (1) realizing cultural diversity; (2) maintain ethnic identity; (3) enabling social adaptability; (4) increases a sense of security for students psychologically, and (5) increases sensitivity to reality". Based on the opinion above, efforts to maintain culture, especially language is a must that needs to be done by all elements of society in maintaining the existence of Sundanese culture. In this way, the vitality of the Sundanese people will be maintained and their language will not be threatened (Nurjanah, 2017).

Related to the statement above, in understanding the importance of the meaning of language, Setiawan (2002) argues that "*basa teh cicirén bangsa*", meaning that language is a characteristic of a nation. This means that the Sundanese language is one of the cultural treasures of the Indonesian nation as a multicultural nation, namely a nation that has cultural diversity. Based on this explanation, it is important to understand language, because language is a vital element in a culture, as the identity of an ethnic community. Furthermore, the effort to maintain the language means the effort to maintain the culture. In other words, the effort to maintain language is a form of manifestation of cultural awareness. However, efforts to maintain culture is something that is not easy to do in the dynamics of life which is no longer in local format. It is necessary that all elements of society begin to open their eyes and minds to reflect and act wisely on the implications of globalization which will have a significant impact on multidimensional life through the return of the role and function of education, especially regional language education in carrying out the function of conservation and cultural innovation.

### **3.2. Globalization: Threats, Challenges, and Opportunities for Sundanese Culture**

The complexity of life that accompanies changes in all fields, has had significant implications for the perspective of everyone who must look to the future and

adapt to these changes if they do not want to experience alienation. The phenomenon of globalization is a complex phenomenon that has caused problems regarding the identity of nations in the world. Therefore, through critical awareness, we should be part of the agents of change in maintaining and ensuring the existence of our culture through revitalizing education.

Based on the above conditions, we are faced with the reality of the opening of multidimensional life that can be both an opportunity and a challenge, so there is a need for a new format in building a space of life full of longing based on cultural values. Efforts to build a life full of longing can be done through the education sector as an effort to build a new civilization in the dynamics of an increasingly advanced life. Because education is a civilizing process, it means that building education is building culture, even though in reality, education as a civilizing process has experienced a shallow meaning. This is in line with the opinion (Herlambang, 2015) which reveals that: "Education in the civilizing process has been narrowly defined as a process of intellectualism that makes education a civilizing process which is only based on efforts to provide knowledge on certain elements of cultural values, and has neglected elements of other cultural values as fundamental things.

Education and culture are actually two things that are complementary and integrated, so that education can be a means of building a civilization based on the cultural values of the Indonesian nation. This is in line with the opinion of Muchtar (2001) which revealed that "Placing education as an aspect of culture and looking for alternative solutions on the basis of cultural analytical thinking, is a must, in response to the demands of the intrinsic value of education as part of culture". Based on this opinion, education is essentially philosophical and has idealistic values, and is not superficially understood as a mechanistic-pragmatic thing. Education has a great purpose in inheriting culture to maintain the noble values of a culture. It is important to understand the socio-cultural aspect as part of the principle of educational development which must always be based on cultural values. This is in accordance with the opinion of Dewantara (2011) which reveals that "culture cannot be separated from education, even culture is the foundation or basis of education". In other words, education is interpreted as a human effort to foster his personality in accordance with the values in society and culture (Hasbullah, 2008).

Based on the explanation above, in welcoming quality and dignified regional language education, the revitalization of regional language education must be developed with transformative power, meaning that education is not only oriented with the aim of giving birth to cultured educational people through internalization of the noble values of local culture, but also with 21st century competence. Trilling and Fadel (2009) revealed

that in the 21st century education must be oriented towards efforts to provide 21st century competencies which include life and career skills, learning and innovation skills, and information, media and technology skills. Apart from the opinion of Trilling and Fadel (2009) suggested that there are ten skills that must be possessed in the 21st century which are classified into four competencies. These skills are: critical thinking skills, creative thinking, metacognitive thinking, communication, collaboration, information literacy, ICT literacy, citizenship, work and career, as well as individual and social responsibility skills. These ten skills are an essential basis for a person to exist in life in this century.

Based on the statement above, efforts to create educated people who are cultured and have 21st century competence should no longer be a utopian thing, but become a major agenda in regional language education, as a manifestation of the mandate of the constitution. 1945. Therefore, this has become a new paradigm in regional language education to lead to quality and dignified regional language education.

### ***3.3. Regional Language Education in a Technology Approach: A Paradigm of Change***

Quality and dignified regional language education is a necessity that needs to be fully understood. This implies that regional language education needs to be oriented towards efforts to equip students with 21st century competencies, and to build educational people with character and self-identity. The implementation of achievement-oriented education can be done through the development of technology-based regional language education.

Related to the statement above, in the development of science today, technological progress is a necessity that no one is able to deny. Even the development of technology in the perspective of some people or groups has become a polemic, especially in the struggle for influencing with culture. This certainly cannot be justified, because technological developments are the result and part of a culture. Technological developments have been able to give new colors in various aspects of the constellation of life, especially in creating the sensibility of the younger generation of Indonesia who always make technological developments in digital media as an inseparable main element in life. Therefore, digital media will become a new trend for the younger generation, so the development of education needs to be wrapped in technology in an effort to achieve the expected educational goals. If digital media is used positively for education to introduce Sundanese language and culture, packaged in an attractive way, it will have a very good impact on the preservation of Sundanese language and culture (Aulia, et al., 2021, p. 136).

Technology integration in education refers to the use of computational-based communication that is incorporated into the learning process (Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2015). This is because technology is able to provide a dynamic and proactive teaching and learning environment (Arnseth & Hatlevik, 2012). The application of technology in education is a vital and urgent thing that needs to be done in an effort to build Digital Citizenship that has critical, creative, futuristic, and powerful character without losing its identity as a cultured being. In addition, it aims to build the adaptive capacity of educational people so that they can live life in global competition, and not create people who are mute without critical power and tend to be passive-receptive and culturally stutter. Therefore, the application of technology in education is a necessity in today's education system, which is focused on achieving the development of abilities and skills of education personnel through an interdisciplinary, multi-context, multimedia, and multicultural approach, so that it can meaningfully equip educational people to be able to live alive in his era. This is an effort to maintain and guarantee the existence of culture. This effort has a meaning that implicitly invites us to be more open to see the reality of life in multidimensional and make fundamental changes and improvements systematically in the context of education, especially regional language education.

Based on the facts above, efforts to produce educational people who have 21st century competence and culture have been carried out by me so far as a manifestation of academic responsibility and moral responsibility by developing several technology-based learning tools in the form of material application programs. Teaching Sundanese based on android and IOS. This is based on life in the digital era which has made technological progress an important part of culture. This effort is a form of innovation and cultural literacy program which is expected to be able to help the realization of quality regional language education to create educated people who are adaptive and have 21st century cultural competence. In addition, in the perspective of Sundanese culture, this is a manifestation in the effort to *ngigelan* and *ngigelkeun jaman*.

### **3.4. Reorientation of Regional Language Education: Efforts to Give Create a Cultured Futuristic Generation**

Regional language education must be the main means in producing educated people who are able to live in the midst of changing life in a global format. Therefore, local language educators need to reorient in today's life, by not only assuming responsibility in the conservation function which will actually make us trapped in the paradigm of life in the romanticism of past greatness, but also oriented towards the function of innovation that is transformative

towards multidimensional life. This is because we must be able to look to the future instead of looking to the past (*leuwih loba nyawang ka hareup batan nyoréang ka tukang*). Thus, it will be able to create generations with an insight into the future but still have their own identity.

Related to the statement above, the reorientation of regional language education needs to place the character development agenda as the main goal above other goals. Development in regional language education must be oriented to produce educated people who have an adaptive attitude to the times and understand their role in life as citizens of the world community with self-identity while upholding the ideals of local culture. In addition, developments in regional language education must aim to produce educated people with transformative qualities that have transformative power by relying on cultural and religious values and upholding human values. In this regard, Hasanudin (2012) revealed that there are manifestations of a leader which in his term is called the Five Noble Speeches of Sundanese leadership, which are as follows.

#### *1. Nyaur kudu diukur, nyabda kudu diunggang*

That is, the leader's words must be measurable and his words must be considered. This understanding means that a leader must have a wise attitude and be able to be a person who is critical and polite. A leader must think wisely every word he wants to convey to the public or the people. In addition, a leader must always consider everything carefully before making a decision.

#### *2. Nu lain kudu dilainkeun, nu enya kudu dienyakeun, nu ulah kudu diulahkeun*

This means that a leader must have an honest nature and be objective and firm in various situations. A leader must be able to uphold the value of truth above anything else. A leader must be brave and firm to say what is right is right and what is wrong is wrong. Thus, a leader must be able to keep his conscience pure and away from lying behavior.

#### *3. Sacangreud pageuh sagolék pangkék*

This means that a leader must be able to hold on to his position, and not break promises and be steady in thinking and deciding something. A leader must carry out promises wholeheartedly. He had to prove everything that he had promised and not just a small talk. In addition, leaders must have firm principles in fighting for the fate of their people.

#### *4. Henteu gedag bulu salambar*

This means that leaders are not afraid to face challenges. Leaders must have the courage to speak the truth no matter what. Leaders must have a brave attitude in any case and be willing to sacrifice for the sake of the people and their nation.

5. *Kudu nyanghulu ka hukum, nunjang ka nagara, mupakat ka balaréa*

This means that the leader must uphold the law, be based on the provisions of the state and agree with the provisions of the people. Leaders must be able to enforce the law and not indiscriminately. State provisions must be a reference and do not turn to foreign parties or any party. The interests of the state must be a top priority.

The five noble speeches have character values that must be possessed by a leader. The true leader has noble character values by always upholding the values of justice and civility. In addition, futuristic leaders are future-minded leaders who in each of their policies are always future-oriented. Even the ideas and policies of futuristic leaders will be able to become a frame of reference for future leadership.

The five noble speeches above have implications for regional language education which must be able to produce leaders through the internalization of cultural values in education. This is in accordance with Dwigama's opinion which reveals that education cannot be separated from a culture that exists in a society (Asmani, 2012). Education must be able to carry out a conservation function in maintaining and preserving the noble values of Sundanese culture through the internalization of Sundanese cultural values in education.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The 21st century is accompanied by the dynamic and progressive development of science and technology. Indonesia is a country that has cultural diversity. Each culture has essential characteristics that differ from one another. Cultural preservation is an activity that is carried out continuously, directed, and integrated as an effort to realize certain goals that reflect something permanent, eternal, dynamic, flexible and selective.

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