



Evaluating the Implementation of Sasak Language Revitalization Policy: Case Studies in Primary Schools in Lombok

Baiq Yunia Eka Diana Putri^{1*} and Mulyono Putra²

^{1,2} Language Center, Mataram University, 37 Pendidikan Street, Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

baikyuniaekaputri@gmail.com

Abstract

This study evaluates the implementation of the Sasak Language Revitalization Policy under the Merdeka Curriculum in elementary schools across Lombok, using a multiple case-study design. Data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with local language teachers, principals, and administrative staff from five primary schools representing each of the five districts in Lombok. The descriptive analysis reveals that Sasak language instruction as a local content subject received the highest mean score ($M = 70.00$), followed by participation in the Festival Tunas Bahasa Ibu ($M = 49.07$). The implementation of Sasak Language Days and extracurricular cultural activities yielded lower scores ($M = 38.87$; $M = 34.93$), while traditional dress days received the lowest mean score ($M = 30.07$). These results indicate uneven patterns of engagement across different policy components. Moreover, although most stakeholders acknowledged the existence of the revitalization policy, their understanding of its guiding principles and models remained limited. This highlights a gap between symbolic enactment and deeper conceptual comprehension. Thematic analysis of interview data identified four central challenges: the limited availability of textbooks and teaching materials, insufficient technical training for teachers, disparities in implementation between urban and rural schools, and inadequate access to information about external programs such as competitions and training opportunities. Guided by Hornberger's continua and implementational spaces, Spolsky's language management theory, and Fishman's GIDS framework, the study underscores the need for bridging top-down directives with grassroots realities. To ensure sustainable outcomes, it recommends targeted capacity-building initiatives, fair resource distribution, and inclusive communication strategies among stakeholders.

Keywords: Sasak language revitalization, multiple case study, language policy, Merdeka Curriculum

1 Introduction

Language revitalization has become a pressing global concern as many indigenous and minority languages face endangerment or extinction due to globalization, migration, and the dominance of national and international languages. UNESCO reports that

nearly 40% of the world's 7,000 languages are endangered, with one language disappearing approximately every two weeks [23]. In response, many countries and communities have developed diverse strategies to strengthen intergenerational transmission, community-based learning, and integration of local languages into formal education [4]. For example, Māori language revitalization in New Zealand through Kōhanga Reo (language nests) and immersion schools demonstrates the effectiveness of grassroots and school-based programs [3]. Similarly, the revitalization of Hawaiian in the United States highlights the role of education, family, and policy support in reversing language decline [24]. These global cases illustrate that while language revitalization faces complex challenges, schools and communities remain central in sustaining endangered languages.

Reflecting this global concern, Indonesia is currently facing the loss of many local languages. According to Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, out of 718 languages, 506 are in critical condition, 14 are already extinct [18]. The main reason for the extinction is that native speakers no longer use and pass down the language to the next generation [17]. As a measure to protect and preserve the language, the government launched “Merdeka Belajar” episode 17, which is mainly aimed at revitalizing the local languages targeting 38 languages across 12 provinces, namely North Sumatra, Central Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, West Java, Central Java, Bali, South Sulawesi, West Nusa Tenggara, East Nusa Tenggara, Maluku, North Maluku, and Papua. The government cooperates with all school stakeholders, including students, teachers, policymakers, and language communities across Indonesian provinces with endangered languages, to run the program. Various efforts are underway to preserve local languages, including teaching them in schools, organizing extracurricular activities, community-based learning, family-based language education, and holding cultural events like the Mother Language festival.

Language revitalization refers to efforts aimed at preventing the decline of a language by increasing its number of speakers and expanding the contexts in which it is used [8]. These initiatives encompass a wide range of informal activities and formal programs, incorporating both top-down and grassroots strategies, with varying objectives [25]. Educational institutions, particularly schools, are seen as effective in this process, offering comprehensive benefits by linking home, school, and community in collaborative language preservation efforts that address colonialism as a key factor in language endangerment [20]. As a result, many nations leverage schools at different levels to combat language endangerment.

The Indonesian government has introduced three models for language revitalization: Model A, Model B, and Model C, with the first two being implemented in schools. Elementary and junior high school students are required to learn their local language through the Muatan Lokal (local content) subject and participate in extracurricular activities. Schools are also mandated to take part in the 'Festival Tunas Bahasa Ibu,' which includes competitions such as storytelling, speeches, reading and writing in the local language, poetry, short stories, Tembang (Pupuh, Geguritan, or Macapat), stand-up comedy for teachers, Cerdas Cermat (Calakan Telik), and more, depending on the language's richness. The Sasak language, spoken in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, is classified under Model B, which includes both school-based and community-based

learning approaches. In this model, Sasak is taught through the Muatan Lokal subject, extracurriculars, local language days, wearing traditional attire, and other school-specific activities. However, Indonesia is relatively new to implementing this policy, and there is very limited research evaluating its effectiveness, particularly in the context of the Sasak language. This study is the first to examine how Sasak language revitalization is being carried out in schools and the challenges they face during implementation, focusing specifically on primary schools in Lombok.

Therefore, this study attempts to answer these questions:

1. How do different stakeholders (such as teachers, headmaster, administration staff) in schools perceive and understand the Sasak language revitalization policy?
2. How has the Sasak language revitalization policy been implemented across different aspects of school operations?
3. To what extent has the Sasak language revitalization policy been successfully implemented according to the intended goals?
4. What challenges have schools encountered during the implementation of the Sasak language revitalization policy?

2 Literature Review

Schools have been categorized as one of the best means to revitalize endangered languages. Micro-level language planning, such as in schools, often plays a more critical role than macro-level policies in shaping actual practices [1]. The literature on school-based language revitalization efforts has centred around the idea of balancing ideology or beliefs, practices and good management to achieve successful language revitalization endeavors.

According to Spolsky's concept, language beliefs or ideology refers to the values and attitudes attached to specific languages, while language practices refer to the habitual use of languages in a community [21]. Language management, in turn, encompasses explicit efforts by institutions or authorities to influence language use [9, 10]. Hornberger support this theory arguing that revitalization succeeds when supportive ideologies are matched with concrete, sustainable actions [11, 12, 13]. These concepts emphasize that without considering local ideologies and community practices, top-down policies tend to have limited success [16, 19]. For example, government or school policy maker such as headmaster should have go hand in hand and seek for the response of the teachers, staff, and students to run the revitalization.

According to [5] Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) also provides a diagnostic tool for assessing the vitality of endangered languages and strategies for reversing language shift. The GIDS ranges from Stage 8, where only a few elderly speakers remain, to Stage 1, where a language is fully institutionalized in higher education and government. Specifically, Stage 8 represents critically endangered languages with very limited speakers; Stage 7 involves adult speakers but little to no intergenerational transmission; Stage 6 is when the language is still transmitted within the home and community; Stage 5 involves written use in local contexts such as newspapers; Stage 4 includes compulsory education in the language; Stage 3 refers to use in workplaces and

lower governmental functions; Stage 2 involves regional mass media and local government; and Stage 1 represents the highest vitality, where the language functions in national government and higher education. According to [5] successful revitalization must prioritize intergenerational transmission within families and communities (Stages 6–8) before institutionalizing language use in schools or official domains (Stages 1–5). His model highlights that without strong home and community use, institutional support alone is insufficient. However, this study limits its scope by analyzing the language revitalization efforts only in school communities.

Drawing on Hornberger's framework of language-in-education policy [9], challenges in school-based language revitalization are often rooted in the disjuncture between policy, practice, and language ideology. It is argued that while national or regional policies may formally recognize local languages, their implementation in schools frequently remains symbolic due to, for example, limited instructional time, inadequate teacher preparation, and insufficient teaching materials [14, 15]. This policy–practice gap is further compounded by dominant language ideologies that position national or global languages as more valuable for social and economic mobility, thereby marginalizing local languages within formal education settings. In response to these challenges, research on school-based revitalization emphasizes strategies that align with Hornberger's continua of biliteracy, including moving beyond isolated language subjects toward integrative approaches that embed local languages across the curriculum, empower teachers as active policy agents, and strengthen links between schools and local communities [6]. Such approaches not only enhance institutional support for minority languages but also challenge hegemonic language ideologies, thereby creating more sustainable conditions for language revitalization in educational contexts.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study utilized a multiple case study design with questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as the data collection strategies. A multiple case study involves examining two or more bounded cases, analyzed both individually and comparatively, to identify similarities, differences, or patterns across contexts [22, 26].

This methodology is considered appropriate because it allows for comparisons of findings across different contexts of primary schools in various districts of Lombok. It is expected to produce more compelling evidence, making the study more robust than a single-case study [26]. Furthermore, this study employed purposive sampling by considering geographical variation (schools in urban and rural areas) as well as school accessibility. Of the five districts on Lombok Island, four schools represented rural areas and one school represented the urban area (Mataram City). The selection of schools also took into account ease of access (convenience) to facilitate cross-district comparisons.

3.2 Participants

A total of 15 participants from five different schools in five districts of Lombok took part in this study. They comprised headmasters, local content (Mulok) teachers, and administrative staff, with four participants from village schools and one from an urban school. The participants were purposively selected based on their knowledge and experience with the Sasak language revitalization policy enacted by the Ministry of Education and Culture, as well as their accessibility. This purposive criterion sampling was therefore expected to provide information that was both detailed (depth) and generalizable (breadth), making them information-rich cases [7].

3.3 Data Collection

Before data collection, participant information sheets and informed consent forms were distributed to the participants. Approval to conduct the research was obtained from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Mataram. Afterward, the participants completed a questionnaire that assessed their knowledge of the Local Language Revitalization Policy in Merdeka Belajar Episode 17 and its implementation at their schools. The questionnaire consisted of three sections.

The first section contained ten multiple-choice items designed to assess respondents' knowledge and understanding of the regional language revitalization policy in the Merdeka Curriculum Episode 17, including its principles, models and types, objectives, and other key aspects. The second section comprised closed-ended questions using a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) to capture the attitudes and perceptions of school stakeholders toward the implementation of the Sasak language revitalization policy. The third section included three open-ended questions that asked about (1) challenges faced by schools, (2) recommendations for improvement, and (3) other language- and culture-related competitions attended besides FTBI.

Subsequently, participants took part in a 10–15-minute interview session with the researchers. Different questions were posed depending on the participants' roles and contributions to language revitalization efforts in their schools.

3.4 Data Analysis

The three sections of the questionnaire were analyzed using different approaches based on their nature. The multiple-choice items in the first section were analyzed descriptively by calculating the number of correct answers for each participant to indicate their level of knowledge and understanding of the regional language revitalization policy. The second section, which consisted of Likert-scale statements (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree), was analyzed using mean scores to capture overall tendencies in stakeholders' attitudes and perceptions, as well as to identify the strategies most frequently employed by the schools. The third section contained three open-ended questions on (1) the challenges faced by schools, (2) recommendations for improvement, and (3) other language- and culture-related competitions attended besides FTBI.

The responses to these questions were transcribed verbatim, categorized according to the three topics, and summarized in tables, with illustrative examples provided to highlight recurring patterns.

The interview data were analyzed using Thematic Analysis [2]. This technique was chosen to identify patterns, categories, and key themes that emerged from the respondents' narratives, thereby providing a deeper understanding of the implementation of the Sasak language revitalization policy in primary schools. The interview data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using the NVivo software application.

The interviews were carried out in Indonesian and later translated into English. To begin the analysis, the researchers engaged in a thorough review of the transcripts to become familiar with the data and to identify initial insights. A combination of deductive and inductive approaches was applied to generate themes. The deductive analysis was guided by established frameworks, namely Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) [5], Spolsky's Language Management Theory [21], and Hornberger's Ideological and Implementational Spaces Theory [9]. These frameworks were used to examine stakeholders' knowledge and attitudes toward the policy, explore how the Sasak language revitalization policy was implemented in schools, assess its effectiveness, and identify potential challenges in its application. In parallel, inductive coding allowed for the identification of additional, emerging themes to ensure a more comprehensive and nuanced interpretation of the findings. NVivo software was employed to organize and refine the coding process, with codes being reviewed, compared, and adjusted iteratively. Data segments were then categorized under the theoretical frameworks or classified into new themes and subthemes relevant to the four research questions. Final themes were determined based on their frequency and significance, ensuring they accurately represented the research questions.

The coding process was carried out until data saturation was reached, ensuring that no additional codes or categories emerged. To enhance validity, triangulation was applied by cross-referencing the interview data, which strengthened the coherence and consistency of the themes. The researchers repeatedly refined and reviewed the themes to ensure they aligned with the research objectives.

4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 How do different stakeholders (such as teachers, headmasters, and administration staff) in schools perceive and understand the Sasak language revitalization policy?

Thematic analysis identify six major themes: (1) Perceptions and Attitudes toward the Policy; (2) Policy Implementation in Schools; (3) Challenges; (4) Support and Collaboration; (5) Government Support; and (6) Suggestions for Improvement. These findings suggest that all school stakeholders expressed positive views and support for the policy, as reflected in Theme 1 (Perceptions and Attitudes toward the Policy), as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Interview excerpts from teachers illustrating perceptions and attitudes toward the Sasak Language Revitalization Policy.

Participant Code	Themes	Interview Excerpts
T1	Theme 1: perception and attitude towards the policy	<p>“Ok, this is a good program that can revive the use of the Sasak language in schools, which has been neglected for so long.”</p> <p>“Well, regarding the materials, we happen to have a handbook in the form of a textbook that was, of course, agreed upon in a meeting with its compilers. I think it is already appropriate for their age level. So, for grades 1, 2, 3 up to grade 6, the differences in the level of, uh, what is it called, the language used, can already be seen.”</p>
T5		<p>"Regarding revitalization, how important is it? It is very important, because Sasak is the everyday language used by children in their daily lives. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that the language does not become extinct or displaced, even though we also have the Indonesian language. Nowadays, most children, from an early age, are already taught Indonesian by their parents. However, the expectation is that through Sasak language lessons at school, students will also understand their culture and their language, so that it no longer feels like a foreign language to them, even though they use Indonesian. Our hope at school is that this language will continue to exist, that Sasak language lessons or local content subjects will always remain."</p>
P2		<p>"In my opinion, it will have a big impact, because language really shows a nation and reflects ethnic identity. You know, when people see the dance, hear the language, the accent, right away we can tell whether someone is Sasak or Bima. That's actually what we want to highlight. So, we really hope that with your research, you can help connect us with the government office, so we can get proper guidance on the Sasak alus materials that should be taught."</p>
P3		<p>"I think it's really important, because these days a lot of kids have kind of forgotten their</p>
AS2		

AS4

local language. Most of them speak Indonesian, or even English. That's why Sasak really needs to be preserved."

"Yeah, I'm involved in the management, because as admin staff we also help the teachers at school."

Several teachers expressed strong alignment with the goals of the policy, emphasizing their role in transmitting the Sasak language to younger generations through the use of relevant teaching materials. Similarly, principals demonstrated strong commitment, framing their support for the policy as both a personal and professional mission. Administrative staff also contributed to its implementation through their administrative responsibilities.

The qualitative results differed from the quantitative findings. Overall, the results indicate varying levels of knowledge across stakeholder groups. Teachers demonstrated a good level of knowledge ($M = 6.8$). In contrast, principals ($M = 5.4$) and administrative staff ($M = 5.2$) demonstrated a moderate level of knowledge. These findings suggest that while teachers are relatively well informed, other stakeholder groups may require further support to enhance their understanding. The descriptive statistics in Figure 1 illustrate these points.

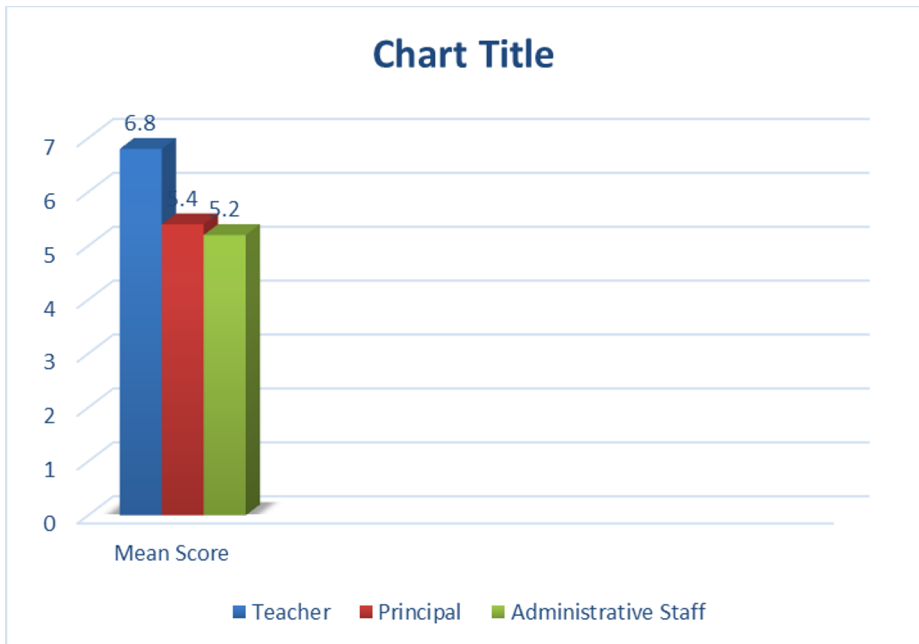


Fig. 1. Mean scores of teachers, principals, and administrative staff on knowledge and understanding of the Sasak Language Revitalization Policy.

Although all school stakeholders are familiar with the Merdeka Belajar Episode 17 local language revitalization policy, they lack detailed technical knowledge, particularly regarding the types of revitalization approaches, objectives, and guiding principles of the policy. Nevertheless, local content teachers possess the most practical understanding due to their direct involvement in teaching, which makes them more supportive of the policy's implementation. It is somewhat unexpected that principals, despite being the first recipients of policy information and the government's representatives at the school level, do not exhibit the highest level of knowledge of the policy. Likewise, the moderate score of administrative staff ($M = 5.2$) may reflect their indirect involvement in policy implementation, as their roles are primarily administrative rather than instructional or managerial.

4.2 How has the Sasak language revitalization policy been implemented across different aspects of school operations?

The implementation of the Sasak language revitalization policy occurs through several interconnected aspects of school operations. First, at the curriculum level, schools integrate Sasak as a compulsory local content subject (*Muatan Lokal*) taught one to two hours per week, supported by lesson plans and teaching modules provided by the local government. In teaching practices, teachers deliver vocabulary, basic conversation, and traditional expressions, although the depth of instruction varies depending on teacher expertise. In terms of school culture, most schools hold weekly or monthly activities such as Sasak Language Day or Traditional Dress Day to foster student engagement. Third is extracurricular programs, such as *tembang Sasak*, or cultural performance groups, are implemented in some schools, particularly those with active cultural instructors. Administratively, school leaders support the policy through internal regulations, scheduling, and coordination with the Education Office. The final implementation is participating in Mother Tongue Festival or Festival Tunas Bahasa Ibu which organized by the Indonesian government as part of the Local Language Revitalization programs. This is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Interview excerpts and open-ended questionnaire from teachers illustrating policy implementation at schools.

Participant Code	Themes	Interview Excerpts	Open-ended Responses
T2	Theme 2: Policy Implementation at Schools	"This is quite interesting, you know, because here a lot of our students come from modern housing areas where Sasak is rarely used. So, uh, we really need to put in extra effort, using different methods and media—like, you know, LCDs—to help students understand the language being taught."	
T5		"Yes, I can communicate with the students in proper Sasak language. And at the end of the lesson, we usually give a summative test."	

P4		Gendang-beleq Festival, Sasak Folk Song Competition, and Sasak Speech Competition
P2	<p>“We also hold what we call ‘Cultural Thursdays,’ where the children wear traditional costumes and perform Lombok dances, and we even have a karaoke competition for Sasak traditional songs.”</p> <p>“Yes, we do. Every Thursday we include a traditional dance extracurricular activity in the KUSB curriculum. I also monitor the program closely and keep reminding the teachers about it. I try to set an example by using the Sasak language myself.”</p>	Sasak Speech Competition, Sasak Traditional Attire Fashion Show
P3	<p>“Through what we call ‘Cultural Saturdays.’ As I mentioned earlier, even though many of our teachers and students come from non-Sasak backgrounds, on Saturdays everyone uses the Sasak language.”</p>	
P5	<p>“This year we held a Sasak speech competition, and to support it further we also organized a quiz contest.”</p>	
P1	<p>“I also take part in Cultural Saturdays by guiding and teaching the children out in the field.”</p>	
AS5		

Nevertheless, the results of the descriptive quantitative analysis highlight varying levels of implementation of the Sasak language revitalization program across schools. The highest mean score was found in the Mulok subject (70), reflecting its role as the primary and compulsory channel for revitalization efforts. Participation in the Mother Tongue Festival (FTBI) followed with a mean score of 48, showing moderate but uneven school involvement in government-initiated competitions. Other activities such as Sasak Language Day (38) and extracurricular programs (34) were implemented to a lesser extent, while the use of traditional attire (30) showed the lowest consistency across schools. These findings indicate that while curricular-based revitalization is relatively strong, community- and culture-based practices remain sporadic and less institutionalized, suggesting a need for more systematic integration of both curricular and extracurricular approaches. This is illustrated in Figure 2.

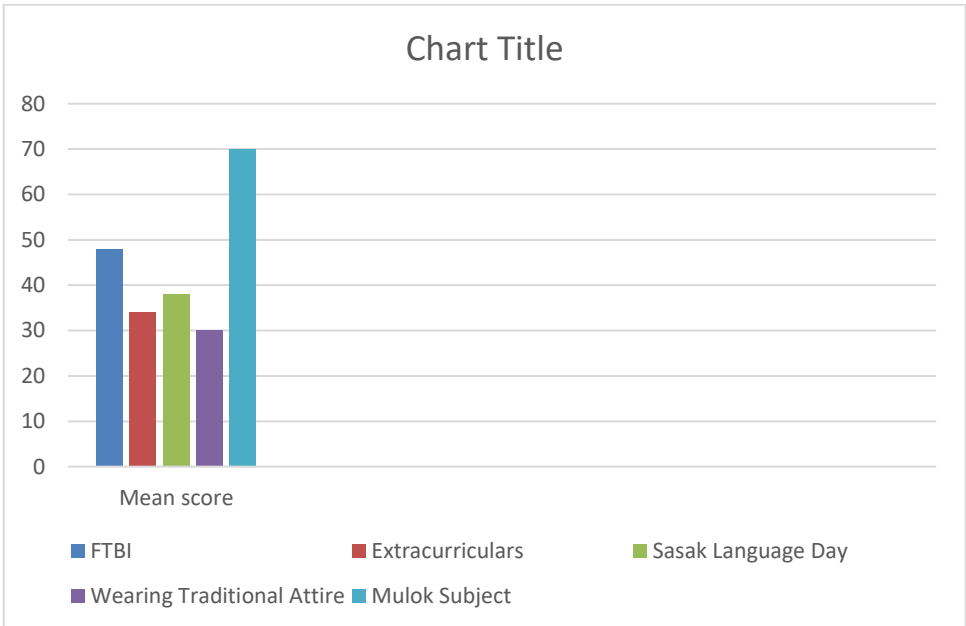


Fig. 2. Mean scores of program components in the implementation of the Sasak Language Revitalization Policy.

Another significant finding concerns the persistent gap between rural and urban schools in accessing and implementing the Sasak Language Revitalization Policy. The urban school demonstrated a higher level of awareness and engagement with the policy, particularly in terms of access to information, training, and opportunities to participate in the Festival Tunas Bahasa Ibu (FTBI). In contrast, the four rural schools reported limited exposure to official policy socialization and capacity-building initiatives, resulting in a more fragmented and incidental form of implementation. As reflected in participants’ narratives, language revitalization activities in rural schools were largely confined to occasional cultural competitions, such as traditional dance, songs, poetry, and speech contests, conducted either within or outside the school. These practices suggest a tendency to interpret language revitalization in symbolic rather than substantive terms, focusing on cultural performance instead of sustained language use and pedagogical integration. These findings highlight the need for more equitable policy dissemination and targeted support for rural schools to ensure that language revitalization efforts extend beyond symbolic activities toward more sustainable and pedagogically grounded practices. This interpretation is grounded in recurring themes expressed by stakeholders across rural schools in the thematic analysis, as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. Stakeholders’ perceptions of the Sasak Language Revitalization Policy highlighting the rural–urban gap.

Participant Code	Themes	Interview Excerpts
------------------	--------	--------------------

T3 (Village School)	Theme 6: Suggestion for Improvement.	... “Especially when it comes to FTBI, there’s been no training or outreach from the education office. In fact, even our teachers don’t really understand what FTBI is.”...
T1 (Village School)		...“Because we hardly ever hear about it (FTBI), the ones we usually take part in are just the traditional dance and folklore storytelling competitions.”...
T5 (Urban School)	Theme 1: perception and attitude towards the policy	“The impact of this program has been very positive. The students’ enthusiasm is incredible, they are so happy whenever there are competitions like FTBI. The teachers also feel more motivated in their teaching.”

4.3 To what extent has the Sasak language revitalization policy been successfully implemented according to the intended goals?

Overall, the implementation of the Sasak language revitalization policy in primary schools across Lombok has been achieved to a moderate extent when evaluated against the four national goals of the Ministry of Education and Culture [17]. First, young speakers are expected to become active users of local languages, learning them with joy and enthusiasm through media and approaches that resonate with their interests. Second, the program seeks to ensure the survival of local languages and literatures by embedding them in daily and educational contexts. Third, it aims to create a space for creativity and freedom in which local language speakers can safeguard their linguistic heritage. Finally, the policy envisions identifying new functions and “new homes” for local languages and literatures, thus repositioning them as relevant in contemporary life. These goals reflect a comprehensive attempt to sustain intergenerational transmission while encouraging innovation in the use of regional languages.

In terms of the first goal, the policy has been partially achieved. The interview shows that Sasak is incorporated into weekly lessons and certain school activities, such as Sasak Language Day. However, activities that foster joy, creativity, and learner engagement such as storytelling, games, or multimedia use are limited and depend heavily on teacher initiative. Students are exposed to the language, but not consistently in ways that promote active and enthusiastic use. The second goal has also been moderately achieved. The Sasak local-content curriculum is implemented in most schools, and basic literacy practices are introduced. However, the use of Sasak in broader daily interactions (e.g., school announcements, informal communication, assemblies) is minimal. Literature components such as reading Sasak texts or writing in Sasak remain underdeveloped due to shortages of materials and teacher training. In contrast, the third goal has been achieved to a limited extent. Only a few schools provide extracurricular activities, such as traditional arts or cultural clubs, where students can express creativity in Sasak. Participation in FTBI competitions shows potential, but opportunities remain largely performance-oriented rather than fostering everyday creative expression.

Teachers note that they lack resources and institutional support to design creative activities beyond the mandatory curriculum. The final goal is the least achieved. Although schools participate in FTBI and occasionally use Sasak for ceremonies or cultural days, there is little effort to integrate Sasak into contemporary domains such as digital media, school campaigns, or student-led projects. Sasak remains positioned mostly as a cultural subject rather than a living language with evolving roles. Teachers and administrators’ express uncertainty about how to operationalize this objective without guidance from policymakers.

4.4 What challenges have schools encountered during the implementation of the Sasak language revitalization policy?

The thematic analysis identified four challenges in implementing Sasak language revitalization policy in Merdeka Belajar episode 17 in Lombok, namely: (1) limited availability of textbooks and learning resources; (2) lack of technical training for teachers; (3) disparity in implementation between urban and rural schools; and (4) inadequate access to information on external programs such as competitions and training. These findings are aligned with the result of open questionnaire. This point is discussed at Table 4 below.

Table 4. Stakeholders’ perceptions of the Sasak Language Revitalization Policy which illustrate common challenges

Participant Code	Themes	Interview Excerpts	Open-ended Responses
T2	Theme 3: Challenges Sub theme 1: limited availability of textbooks and learning resources	“The biggest challenge is the availability of materials, because we don’t have enough books. So, we are just guessing.”	
T1			Lack of teaching materials
AS1			the limitation of learning media and teaching aids about the Sasak language
P5			the local content curriculum for elementary schools is not yet available
T1	Sub theme 2: lack of technical training for teachers	“We have never received any training.”	
P2			there are no specialized local content teachers (graduates majoring in Sasak language local content)

P4			the lack of competent teachers who can speak Sasak
T3	Sub theme 3: disparity in implementation between urban and rural schools	“Sometimes we just teach Sasak from what we know, because there is no clear guideline from the government.”	
AS1			Lack of student facilities to participate in activities related to local culture and language constrained by the lack of competent tutors in this program
AS3	Sub theme 4: inadequate access to information on external programs such as competitions and training.	“We rarely hear about competitions or cultural programs. Usually only certain schools get the information.”	
AS2			the lack of information received by schools regarding FTBI
T1			the lack of competitions being held

Taken together, the findings indicate that the implementation of the Sasak language revitalization policy in primary schools reflects a partial and uneven alignment between language ideology, policy, and practice, as conceptualized by [10], [21], and [5]. Stakeholders’ consistently positive perceptions of the policy demonstrate a strong ideological commitment to Sasak as a symbol of cultural identity and linguistic heritage, aligning with Hornberger’s notion of ideological space as a prerequisite for revitalization. However, in line with Spolsky’s framework, this ideological support is not systematically translated into effective language practices or coherent management strategies. While the compulsory local content subject (Muatan Lokal) represents the most institutionalized and consistently implemented component of the policy, other forms of practice such as extracurricular activities (e.g., *tembang Sasak* classes), symbolic school-based initiatives (e.g., wearing traditional attire and Sasak Language Day or Cultural Saturday), and competitive programs, remain sporadic and unevenly implemented. Participation in the Festival Tunas Bahasa Ibu (FTBI), in particular, is largely concentrated in urban schools that have greater access to information, institutional support, and preparatory resources, whereas rural schools tend to be excluded due to limited policy socialization and capacity-building opportunities.

From a Fishmanian perspective, this pattern suggests constrained progress toward sustained language maintenance, as Sasak is predominantly positioned within formal instructional and ceremonial contexts rather than integrated into routine communicative practices and contemporary school domains. Within Fishman’s framework, these findings are most consistent with revitalization efforts operating at Stages 4–5, where the

language is institutionalized through compulsory primary education and supported by school-based initiatives, while evidence of sustained intergenerational transmission beyond educational settings remains limited and beyond the direct scope of the present study. Moreover, persistent rural–urban disparities, combined with limited teacher training and insufficient pedagogical resources, continue to hinder the development of more sustainable and transformative revitalization strategies. Overall, the findings suggest that although the policy operates within a broadly supportive ideological environment, its effectiveness remains constrained by structural and institutional gaps that prevent the consistent realization of revitalization goals across school contexts.

This study could benefit from a broader inclusion of community perspectives, particularly those of students and parents, whose roles are central to language transmission within home and societal domains. The present analysis focuses on school-based stakeholders (teachers, principals, and administrative staff) to provide a focused examination of how designated agents within schools interpret and implement the Sasak language revitalization policy in line with their institutional responsibilities. Consequently, students' and parents' perspectives are represented only indirectly through the observations of local content teachers and other school stakeholders, which limits the extent to which reciprocal interactions between school-based initiatives and community language practices can be explored. In addition, the study could be further strengthened by a larger sample size. Drawing on a purposive sample of five primary schools, one from each district in Lombok and fifteen participants, the study prioritizes analytical depth and contextual comparison over statistical generalizability. As such, the findings should be understood as an in-depth evaluation of policy enactment within primary school settings rather than a comprehensive depiction of the broader sociolinguistic landscape of Sasak in Lombok. Future research would benefit from adopting a more holistic approach by incorporating students' and parents' voices, expanding the sample, and examining multiple domains of language use to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of language revitalization processes.

5 Conclusion

This study examined the implementation of the Sasak language revitalization policy in Lombok under Merdeka Belajar Episode 17 by analyzing school stakeholders' perceptions, policy enactment, outcomes, and challenges. It finds that while the Sasak language revitalization policy in Lombok primary schools is underpinned by strong ideological support from school-based stakeholders, its enactment remains uneven and only partially effective. Consistent with Hornberger's emphasis on ideological foundations, teachers, principals, and administrative staff largely value the policy's goals; however, as Spolsky's framework suggests, this support is not systematically translated into coherent management, sufficient resources, or sustained pedagogical practices. The compulsory local content subject (*Muatan Lokal*) constitutes the most institutionalized mode of implementation, whereas extracurricular initiatives, symbolic school practices, and participation in national programs such as the Festival Tunas Bahasa Ibu are frag-

mented and disproportionately accessible to urban schools. From a Fishmanian perspective, Sasak remains confined to formal instructional and ceremonial domains, limiting its role in fostering sustained language maintenance and intergenerational transmission. Overall, the findings underscore the need for more equitable policy dissemination, targeted capacity-building, and sustained institutional support to advance school-based language revitalization beyond symbolic maintenance toward more durable and pedagogically grounded outcomes.

Acknowledgments. Our gratitude goes to all school participants who generously shared their time and perspectives in this study. We also sincerely thank the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Mataram, for granting ethical approval and support in conducting this research.

Disclosure of Interests. The authors have no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

References

1. Baldauf, R.B.: Rearticulating the case for micro language planning in a language ecology context. *Current Issues in Language Planning* 7(2–3), 147–170 (2006). <https://doi.org/10.2167/cilp092.0>
2. Braun, V., Clarke, V.: Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3(2), 77–101 (2006). <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
3. Chrisp, S.: Māori intergenerational language transmission. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 2005(172), 149–181 (2005). <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.2005.2005.172.149>
4. Edwards, J.: Language diversity in the classroom. *Multilingual Matters* (2010)
5. Fishman, J.A.: Reversing language shift: Theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages. *Multilingual Matters* (1991)
6. García, O., Wei, L.: *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education*. Palgrave Macmillan (2014)
7. Gravetter, F.J., Wallnau, L.B.: *Statistics for the behavioral sciences*. 9th edn. Wadsworth (2014)
8. Grenoble, L.A., Whaley, L.J.: *Saving languages: An introduction to language revitalization*. Cambridge University Press (2006)
9. Hornberger, N.H.: Continua of biliteracy. *Review of Educational Research* 59(3), 271–296 (1989). <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543059003271>
10. Hornberger, N.H.: Multilingual language policies and the continua of biliteracy: An ecological approach. *Language Policy* 1(1), 27–51 (2002). <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1014548611951>
11. Hornberger, N.H.: Frameworks and models in language policy and planning. In: Ricento, T. (ed.) *An introduction to language policy: Theory and method*, pp. 24–41. Blackwell Publishing (2006)
12. Hornberger, N.H.: *Can schools save indigenous languages? Policy and practice on four continents*. Palgrave Macmillan (2008)

13. Hornberger, N.H., Johnson, D.C.: Slicing the onion ethnographically: Layers and spaces in multilingual language education policy and practice. *TESOL Quarterly* **41**(3), 509–532 (2007). <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1545-7249.2007.tb00083.x>
14. Hult, F.M., Johnson, D.C.: Research methods in language policy and planning: A systematic review. *Language Policy* **14**(1), 1–26 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-014-9339-x>
15. Johnson, D.C.: *Language policy*. Palgrave Macmillan (2013)
16. Kaplan, R.B., Baldauf, R.B.: *Language planning from practice to theory*. *Multilingual Matters* (1997)
17. Kemendikbud: *Revitalization of regional languages*. Ministry of Education and Culture (2022)
18. Kemendikbudristek: Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology launches “Merdeka Belajar 17: Revitalization of Regional Languages” (2024). <https://www.kemdikbud.go.id/>, last accessed 2024/10/10
19. King, K.A.: *Language revitalization processes and prospects: Quichua in the Ecuadorian Andes*. *Multilingual Matters* (2001)
20. McCarty, T.L.: The holistic benefits of education for indigenous language revitalization. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* **42**(10), 927–940 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2020.1827647>
21. Spolsky, B.: *Language policy*. Cambridge University Press (2004)
22. Stake, R.E.: *Multiple case study analysis*. Guilford Press (2005)
23. UNESCO: *World report of languages: Ensuring sustainable development for languages*. UNESCO Publishing (2021). <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379376>
24. Warner, S.L.N.: The movement to revitalize Hawaiian language and culture. In: Hinton, L., Hale, K. (eds.) *The green book of language revitalization in practice*, pp. 133–144. Academic Press (2001). https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004261723_014
25. Wiltshire, B., Bird, S., Hardwick, R.: Understanding how language revitalization works: A realist synthesis. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* **44**(3), 213–231 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2022.2134877>
26. Yin, R.K.: *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*. 6th edn. Sage Publications (2017)

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

