



Voices of the Past, Tools of the Future: Teaching Local Languages with Digital Media

Nur Ainun

Department of English Language Education, Universitas Riau Kepulauan, Indonesia
nurainuno4@gmail.com

Chintya Sandra Mutiara

Department of English Language Education, Universitas Riau Kepulauan, Indonesia
sandrachintya90@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Local language preservation is extremely difficult in an era of globalization where the use of dominant languages is valued more highly. “Voices of the Past, Tools of the Future” describes an endeavor to bridge the gap between the past and present through technological advancements. The strategic use of digital media to preserve and teach regional languages to the next generation is examined in this article. Through technology-based techniques like social media, podcasts, video platforms, and interactive learning apps, local languages can be taught effectively and made relevant in everyday life. The study also examines the potential use of “tools of the future” by communities, educators, and content producers to reactivate the “voices of the past”. By integrating traditional teaching methods with digital technologies, it is thought that local languages may flourish and transform into an active part of people's cultural identities that change with the times. **Keywords:** digital media, local language, Bahasa Indonesia, Bahasa Minang, community-based learning, technology integration in education

Introduction

To improve accessibility and participation, it's critical to actively integrate contemporary technological tools with traditional language proficiency when integrating digital media into local language instruction. Classroom settings may be updated with interactive platforms, audiovisual aids, and language learning software to make them more dynamic and culturally appropriate for students (Yang Yang, 2024). These resources encourage group learning, expose students to more real-world language usage, and

- support oral traditions, which are frequently in danger of vanishing (Lanunochit Pongen, 2024). Infrastructural problems including digital literacy and fair access to devices and internet connectivity, however, must be addressed during the implementation process (Djalilova Zarnigor Obidovna, 2024). Teachers are essential and should be taught how to use multimedia tools creatively to create context-specific curriculum that fosters creativity while maintaining linguistic uniqueness (Meng Xiang, 2022).

There are many challenges and exciting possibilities for educators who use digital media to maintain regional languages. The lack of linguistic data for many endangered languages is an important challenge that restricts the use of AI techniques and the creation of instructional materials (Tatiana Ermolova, 2024). Additionally, efforts to maintain inclusive languages are challenged by differences in digital literacy, internet infrastructure, and access to technology, particularly in underserved populations (Yunhuan Tan, 2024). Digital interventions are made more difficult by ethical issues related to consent, data ownership, and the industrialization of indigenous knowledge (Yusuf Ajani, 2024). However, scalable and captivating ways to record and revive linguistic heritage are provided by digital technologies such as generative AI, language applications, and media storytelling platforms (Vincent Koc, 2025). These materials facilitate generational knowledge sharing, community involvement, and the production of culturally suitable material. Teachers can use multimedia to promote young involvement in language learning and pride in linguistic identity. However, cooperation between linguists, technologists, and native speakers is necessary for success, as is consistent financing and policy support. In conclusion, combining ancient knowledge with newly developed digital media has enormous potential for conserving historical voices using modern technologies. Therefore, the present study attempted to address the following research questions:

1. How can digital media be effectively integrated into local language education to enhance student engagement, cultural identity, and language preservation?
2. What challenges and opportunities arise for educators and communities in utilizing digital tools to teach and sustain endangered local languages such as Bahasa Minang and Bahasa Melayu?

Methods

Using the right methodology is crucial to solving the difficulties and further analyzing the data. The research design, research tool, data source, data collecting, and data analysis were all covered by this technique.

Research Design

A qualitative descriptive method is used in this study. This indicates that the researcher's goal is to clarify and explain the ways in which digital media—such as websites, apps, and videos—are applied to teach local languages. The objective is

- to gather knowledge from teachers' and students' actual experiences rather than to test a theory.

Research Location and Participant

The study carried out in a number of chosen schools or community learning centers where local language (such Minangkabau, Melayu, etc.) are provided by teacher using digital resources

The following participant take part in this study :

1. Teachers who use digital media to teach local languages
2. Participants in digitally based local language teaching
3. Curriculum developers or educators who encourage this type of learning

Purposive sampling was used to pick the participants, meaning that they were specifically chosen because they have an immediate interest in the subject under investigation. There were about ten to fifteen people engaged.

Data Collection Methods

To collect information, the researcher used several ways:

1. Interviews : Teachers and staff were asked open-ended questions by the researcher regarding their usage of digital technologies, issues they encounter, and advantages they observe.
2. Classroom Observation: The researcher watched how teachers and students use digital media during lessons.
3. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Students participate in small groups to discuss their motivations, feelings, and experiences when using digital tools to learn local languages.
4. Document Analysis: The researcher examined instructional resources, films, applications, and other digital content used in classrooms.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis, involving:

- Carefully going over the observation and interview notes
- focusing on and categorizing important data
- Putting related concepts together to form themes
- Analyzing the themes to clarify how digital resources support Bahasa Melayu instruction

Some of the potential themes are:

- Digital tool types
- Participation and motivation of students
- The creative thinking of teachers in creating resources
- Difficulties in Digital Learning
- Technology's contribution to the preservation of regional languages and cultures

Findings and Discussion

The results of the study show that the integration of digital media, such as presentations, audio recordings, mobile applications, and videos, has significantly improved the teaching and learning of Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Minang. Students responded well to the usage of digital technologies in language discussions, using improved inspiration, engagement, and enjoyment.

Table 1. Types of Digital Media Used in Local Language Teaching

No.	Type of Digital Media	Melayu	Minang	Example or Notes
1.	Video storytelling	Yes	Yes	Folktales on YouTube
2.	Mobile learning apps	Yes	No	Duolingo (Malay), no Minang app found
3.	Audio recordings (elders)	No	Yes	Local elders recorded telling stories
4.	Google slides/ PPTs	Yes	Yes	Custom lessons made by teachers
5.	Short-form videos (TikTok)	Yes	Yes	Students created short Minang/Melayu skits

Many digital resources, including structured YouTube video and language study applications, are already available for Bahasa Melayu. Because Bahasa Minang lacks easily accessed digital resources, teachers are forced to produce their own content by recording local stories and engaging the help of native speakers. even these challenges, students demonstrated an intense desire to learn a native language, especially when digital content included well-known voices or culturally relevant stories.

Particularly powerful emotional and cultural effects were produced by digital media. Students' sense of identification with their linguistic identity increased when they had access to traditional songs, stories, and spoken phrases. In particular, hearing elders' voices helped Bahasa Minang learners feel proud and like they belonged, which helped them speak the language more confidently.

However, some difficulties have been identified. The efficient use of digital tools was frequently hampered by poor internet connectivity, especially in rural areas. Furthermore, a lot of teachers lack the technical know-how required to create multimedia

content of a high caliber. The development of interactive learning resources was hampered by time constraints and a lack of training.

Table 2. Table of Challenge

No.	Learning aspect	Melayu	Minang	Summary
1.	Interest and Motivation	High	High	Digital media made lessons more engaging
2.	Speaking Confidence	Medium	High	Minang improved through repeated listening
3.	Cultural Awareness	Medium	Very High	Minang stories boosted pride in heritage
4.	Access to Learning Materials	Easy	Limited	Malay content widely available online

The necessity of community involvement was another significant finding. Spoken materials, songs, and stories from local parents, elders, and cultural practitioners were used to create teaching aids. Students felt more connected and in control of their education thanks to this partnership, which also preserved cultural authenticity.

To sum up, digital media has demonstrated a great deal of promise for improving the teaching of local languages and the preservation of local culture. Bahasa Minang presents exciting opportunities through community-driven content development, while Bahasa Melayu enjoys the benefits of the existing internet infrastructure. Long-term success requires investments in infrastructure, training, and the creation of specialized digital resources in addition to continuous cooperation between educators, communities, and politicians.

Conclusion

The study's findings demonstrate the effectiveness of teaching and learning local languages—particularly Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Minang—through digital media. Using recorded audio, movies, and digital storytelling in the classroom increased student enthusiasm and engagement. More than 80% of students thought that using digital media enhanced their educational experience, according to informal interviews and observations made in the classroom.

- They asserted that it was easier to understand thanks to resources like animated folk tales and recorded speech. In conclusion, digital media can be a useful tool for teaching and conserving regional languages if it is utilized properly and supported by the right infrastructure and teacher preparation. Learning their native tongue not only helps students become more proficient in the language but also improves their emotional connections with their culture. Although Bahasa Melayu currently has an extensive number of digital resources at its finger tips, Bahasa Minang still requires more community-led digital content generation. If communities, educators, and the government continue to encourage local languages, they may be able to survive in the modern digital environment.

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