

ASEAN Students' Interest in Learning the Indonesian Language: A Descriptive Study from the Perspective of SEAMEO ASEAN

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Abstract

Language plays a crucial role in the educational environment, whether in schools or universities. Besides the national language, students are also exposed to regional and foreign languages to enhance their language proficiency. Teaching foreign languages encompasses a wide range of options, such as English, Korean, Japanese, and Chinese. Moreover, languages affiliated with ASEAN countries, like Malay, Thai, and Indonesian, have gained popularity. This study employs a descriptive approach to elucidate the findings regarding the interest in learning Indonesian among students in ASEAN nations. Conducted by SEAMEO ASEAN, the research draws its primary data from questionnaires and presentations submitted in September 2022. Participating ASEAN countries in this SEAMEO initiative encompass Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, and

Vietnam and analyzed with descriptive statistical analysis. The study reveals a notable demand for Indonesian language learning among students from ASEAN countries. Indonesian is pursued for various purposes, including professional, socio-cultural, and personal development. Recognizing the interest in Indonesian among ASEAN students provides a foundation for the implementation of Indonesian as a foreign language through the BIPA program. There has not been much research on the interest of Indonesian language among students at the ASEAN level, therefore this research is included in the initial research on Indonesian language internationalization policies starting from the ASEAN level.

Keywords: ASEAN; Indonesian language; language internationalization

Introduction

According to experts, learning a language essentially aims to develop communication skills both orally and in writing for humans, which in this case are students (Dallimore, Hertenstein & Platt, 2008; Hardini & Sitohang, 2019; Abduh & Rosmaladewi, 2018). Not only that, if a language is learned more deeply, it will be able to introduce and foster understanding of an intellectual work which is often referred to as literature (Ashirbaeva, 2020). Literature also studies the culture of a particular country which will later shape the identity and intellectual property of that country. In addition, language learning aims to make a person able to communicate using a language effectively, efficiently, properly and correctly according to the ethics and politeness that apply in a country (Marwanto, 2022).

In practice, there are three types of languages introduced in the school curriculum, namely mother tongue, national language, and foreign language. First, learning the mother tongue. Mother tongue learning must invite students to explore the broad horizons of the physical, social, cultural and spiritual background of the community. Mother tongue learning is developed as a natural activity that constructively utilizes the language skills students bring from their respective homes. When the mother tongue is already established, students need to learn the national language. Learning the national language must be in the form of expanding self-expression and exploration of the surrounding environment in addition to strengthening the function of language to unify a nation. By learning the national language, students can feel how good it is to be able to mingle, communicate, and exchange ideas with members of other ethnic groups in a country. Next, foreign languages. Foreign languages should be taught in the form of creating self-advantage and introducing international competition as well as collaboration. Thus, foreign language learning should be intended to further strengthen the intellectual, social, cultural, and spiritual development of students. Learning a foreign language should be done to help students master the texts they need to carry out all the necessary acts of communication in their personal, social, academic, and professional lives. They are expected to be able to access information effectively, communicate harmoniously, as well as learn and work splendidly (Suherdi, 2012; Wello, Nur & Azis, 2017).

There is an old saying, use Latin to talk to God, use German to talk to the military, use Arabic and Greek to talk to merchants, use Italian to talk to musicians, use Chinese to talk to cooks, use English to speak to sailors and technicians, use Russian to speak to artists, use Spanish to speak to friends, use Dutch and Hungarian to speak to enemies, use French to speak to lovers, use Japanese to speak to your wife (Nick, 2001). By looking at this proverb, the language of a country can be used as an identity and characteristic for its speakers. Identity is a characteristic, disposition or character that exists in a person or group of people and can differentiate that person or group from other groups. There is a motto that says "language shows nation". This motto shows that language can be a symbol of a nation's identity. A language can be used as the identity of a nation because it can differentiate one country from another. Indonesia is a country that has a lot of

diversity. Language diversity is the impact of various tribes, races, ethnicities, groups that can be united by Indonesian.

The Indonesian language is a tool that is proven to be able to strengthen national unity. We, the Indonesian people, have a language that has been proven to be able to unite around 1,128 ethnic groups with 746 regional languages (Aziz, 2014) spread throughout Indonesia. Indonesian has been designated as the national language as well as the state language in Article 36 of the 1945 Constitution. This means that Indonesian is placed as a symbol of national pride and identity as well as the official state language. Seeing this simple fact, it is only natural for the Indonesian people to be proud and grateful for having this language. Compared to other countries, Indonesia shelters hundreds of millions of people with thousands of different cultural backgrounds..

Based on the development of languages in the world, especially in the Southeast Asia Region, Indonesian is starting to get a place in the hearts of non-Indonesians. Currently, according to officials from the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there are 45 countries that teach Indonesian in their schools. For example, the United States, Canada, and Vietnam. In fact, there are about 500 schools plus several universities in Australia that have been teaching Indonesian. This is a natural thing for native Indonesian speakers to be proud of (Aziz, 2014). One of the challenges in learning Indonesian is that Indonesian is known as a language that is difficult to learn. Research at the London School of Science and Technology once discussed audio recordings to guess the language someone uses. One thing that was concluded was that the quality of the audio recording could influence guessing estimates for up to 78 languages being played. The results of this research showed that Indonesian was ranked 10th as the most difficult language to recognize via audio recordings. One reason is because Indonesian seems to have no rhythm and its pronunciation tends to be straight. The other nine languages that are also difficult to recognize are Canadian, Fijian, Shona, Dinka, Hausa, Tigrinya, South Efate, Dari, and Maltese.

Currently, the official language used in ASEAN activities is English (Kirkpatrick, 2012a; Shobikah, 2017). English is also the subject that is introduced in the world of education in schools in the ASEAN region (Kam, 2002; Kirkpatrick, 2012b, Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2017; Sukanto, et al, 2021; Damanik, 2022). English in South East Asia region is seen as a means of embracing globalization and a medium of seizing international politics, economics, education, and trade opportunities (Diyati & Madya, 2021). However, several previous researchers have argued that Indonesian or Malay have the potential to be used as one of the languages of instruction in activities at the ASEAN level, even internationally (Lopez, 2019). Zulfikar's research (2013) states that Indonesian has a great opportunity to become an ASEAN language embryo in order to welcome the ASEAN community. This is based on Indonesia's sufficient national strength in the Southeast Asian region, especially the abundant elements of both natural and human resources. This national strength will become Indonesia's capital to carry out language diplomacy intensively and effectively in order to achieve the goals of the ASEAN community (Zulfikar, 2013).

Research on language use policies and surveys on the use of Indonesian as a foreign language at the ASEAN level have been carried out previously, with the title "Trends in Language Preferences: A Survey Study of the ASEAN Youths". In conclusion, this study offers insightful information about the preferred languages of ASEAN youth, with a special emphasis on English's continued dominance and the expanding use of Korean and Japanese, and Thai, Indonesian, and Malay. The research highlights how culture, globalization, cross-border communication, and identity influence language decisions. It is clear that language preferences go beyond simple communication; they are a reflection of societal identities and the constantly changing nature of the global environment. Research on language policy at the ASEAN level was conducted with the

title "Foreign Language Education Policy in ASEAN Countries" with the following results. First, language policy is a matter of choice at the central government level and foreign languages taught support previous research that foreign languages taught in ASEAN countries are also those closely connected to industry, job, academic life. Secondly, the study also reveal that foreign language has a strong position in language education and the assumption that the earlier the better in learning a foreign language is strong. This can be seen from the fact that all countries teach a foreign language from primary school year 1 to tertiary education. Finally, the study recommends further study to dig deeper some issues regarding the reasons for the learning a foreign language, the benefits the participants found from learning a foreign language, the connection between English and other foreign languages to economic development.

Looking at previous research, Indonesian is a language that is in demand by many groups, including students. Especially in the ASEAN region which incidentally has almost the same language as Malay. Students who have the obligation to choose a foreign language other than the national language in their respective countries have an impact on the large opportunities for Indonesian to be introduced in schools. Moreover, this is accompanied by the Indonesian language internationalization policy launched by the government of the Republic of Indonesia. The introduction of Indonesian to foreign students can be done through formal and informal activities, both at school and outside of school. However, to start a program like this, of course we need to know the current condition of ASEAN students. Is Indonesian enough popular and well-known among ASEAN students to increase their desire to learn it?

The perspective of students as language learning subjects certainly needs to know their tendencies of interest or desire to learn language. Each student's desire to learn a foreign language is certainly different. Therefore, a survey was carried out to be able to find out what languages are of interest to students, especially in the ASEAN region, so that it can then be followed up as a precursor to foreign language learning in countries in ASEAN. From the explanation of several problems and research gaps that have been described, this article aims to answer the question "How are students in the ASEAN region interested in learning Indonesian language as a foreign language?" As well as "What are the reasons underlying ASEAN students' interest in Indonesian language?".

Literature review

Students' interest in language

Long before, foreign language learning in various ASEAN countries underwent an extensive process. Santoso (2014) cited the example of Indonesia, where during the colonial era, foreign languages (such as Dutch as the colonial language, as well as English and German) were taught in specific schools, particularly those for nobility and Dutch children. At that time, one's proficiency in a foreign language played a significant role in determining their social status. Over time, the demand for mastering foreign languages grew. It extended beyond just English, with several other foreign languages piquing the interest of both educational institutions and individuals within the community. In line with the viewpoints of Visiaty & Piantari (2019), it is emphasized that proficiency in foreign languages is vital for knowledge expansion. There is much to be learned from more advanced countries across various academic domains when one possesses a command of a foreign language. This includes fields like technology, culture, and more. A critical aspect of learning in any specific field is having a genuine interest in it, including foreign languages. Foreign language education data is provided through formal and non-formal education, both at school and university level (Abduh, A., Rosmaladewi, R., & Basri, M. (2018).

Reswari (2020) explains that our current multicultural world is characterized, among other things, by intensive encounters between people from different cultures, races, and nationalities. Without language as a connector, this diverse group of individuals cannot share and connect effectively. In line with this, Santoso (2014); Amirullah, Samad, & Rosmaladewi, (2022) asserts that foreign language learning in various countries is an effort to keep pace with global advancements in knowledge and technology, inevitably leading the respective countries into the global society. This has consequently led ASEAN nations to re-engage with a diverse array of foreign languages commonly studied by their populace.

The learners' interest in a particular language can often be observed through their habits. For instance, firstly, there is a tendency to watch foreign language films. Serious learners may even watch films without subtitles to immerse themselves fully. Secondly, there is an increased curiosity among learners about the meanings of foreign language songs they hear, and the meanings of foreign words around them. Thirdly, there is an increased access to content on social media related to a specific country, such as vlogs on YouTube, reels on Instagram, shorts on Facebook, and so forth. Learners are inclined to 'follow' social media influencers, engage with their daily updates, learn about their native cultures, and gradually begin studying the language they use to comprehend what is being conveyed.

On the other hand, Visiaty & Piantari (2019); Rohmani & Andriyanti (2022) indicated that some learners do not possess a specific interest in a foreign language. This may be due to various factors, such as: 1) learners not yet understanding the importance of language proficiency for their future and being unable to enjoy learning the foreign language. 2) A lack of motivation to learn a foreign language. Yet, as noted by Alizadeh (2016), motivation is a crucial factor in determining language learning success, as teenagers may not perceive or be aware of the benefits of that particular foreign language. 3) A lack of exposure that can inspire interest in a foreign language. Unlike children/teenagers from upper-middle-class backgrounds, those in ordinary schools have minimal exposure to foreign languages. 4) A lack of access/resources for learning a foreign language for some societal groups, particularly those in the lower-middle class. However, as we all know, smartphones are now easily accessible, even to less affluent communities. This should be reevaluated and maximized in its usage.

Research method

This study used a simple quantitative method, namely through descriptive statistical analysis. Descriptive statistical analysis is statistics used to analyze data by describing or illustrating the data that has been collected as it is without the intention of making general conclusions or generalizations (Levine & Stephan, 2022). This analysis is only an accumulation of basic data in the form of descriptions, meaning that it does not seek or explain relationships, test hypotheses, make predictions, or draw conclusions (Muhson, 2006; Hinton, 2014). A quantitative approach was used for data obtained through closed questionnaires. Apart from that, it also uses a qualitative approach to describe data in the form of sentences or statements contained in open questionnaires.

The primary data in the form of presentation slides/material by representatives of SEAMEO members in September 2022. There were 11 ASEAN countries participating in this activity. These countries are (1) Brunei Darussalam, 2) Cambodia, 3) Indonesia, 4) Laos, 5) Malaysia, 6) Myanmar, 7) Philippines, 8) Singapore, 9) Thailand, 10) Timor Leste, and 11) Vietnamese). Prior to the presentation, the country's representatives had conducted a survey regarding the language policy used in the country. The survey was given to students from various

levels, namely middle and high school levels, both public and private schools. The sample is made by randomly selecting the school used as the data source. However, the data that will be studied in this research is only limited to 10 slides, that from ASEAN countries other than Indonesia.

The questions in the questionnaire include students' interest in languages in ASEAN. So, this research uses a closed survey, where students can choose two languages from eleven languages in ASEAN countries. The two languages they choose are their favorite languages. The aim is for students to be able to show interest in foreign languages according to their own interests. Apart from closed questions, there are also open questions regarding the reasons behind students' interest in a particular language. The distribution of the number of survey participants can be seen in chart 1.

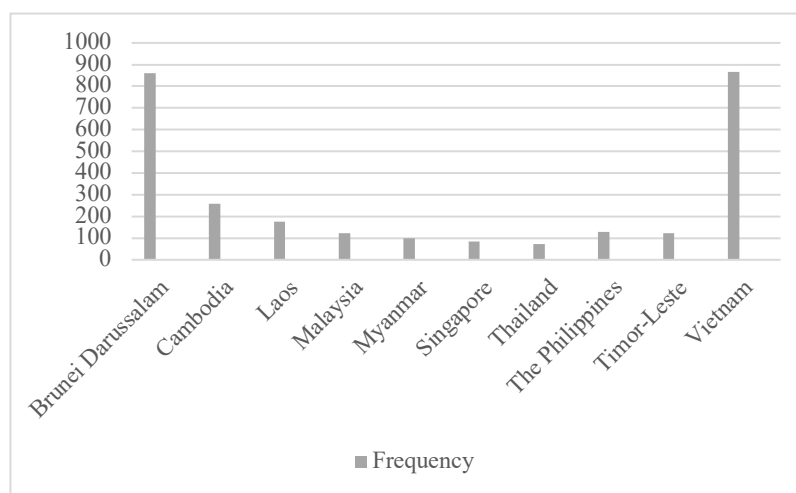


Chart 1. Survey respondents distribution

The representatives in each country decided where to distribute the survey with the characteristics of ages ranging from 15 to 25 years old with secondary and/or university level of education. In the procedure of survey distribution, some country representatives have greater distributions than others, which explains the unequal number of participants who completed the survey. Furthermore, this research is a follow-up research that focuses on the use of Indonesian as a foreign language for students in ASEAN countries. This study aims to describe the reasons why ASEAN students choose Indonesian as the language they want to learn.

Results

ASEAN students' interest in the Indonesian language

Students at various school levels, (junior high school and high school) apparently have an interest in learning Indonesian as a foreign language. They already have English or Mandarin as a subject that must be followed during their education. However, when the ASEAN language choices were raised in the survey, some students chose Indonesian as the language of choice. The selection of Indonesian as a foreign language is still limited to filling out surveys or questionnaires. Therefore, it has not been implemented as an ongoing learning in the school/educational institution. Apart from Indonesia, there are 10 ASEAN countries that are included in the survey for studying Indonesian as a foreign language. First, Brunei Darussalam. Based on the survey results, the following data was obtained.

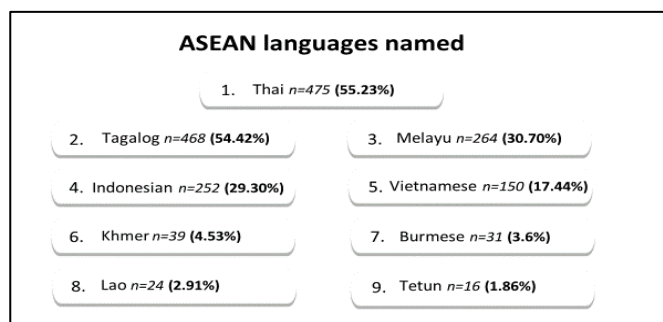


Figure 1. Brunei Darussalam students' interest in the Indonesian language
Source: Team Salindia of SEAMEO VOCTECH regional centre Brunei Darussalam

Based on above data, it can be seen that as many as 29.30% of Brunei Darussalam students have an interest in Indonesian. These students have several reasons. Among the first are professional reasons, such as undergoing advanced studies that use the Indonesian language of instruction, working in an Indonesian environment or with Indonesian language introduction, and expanding networks in the field of business or science with Indonesian citizens. The second reasons are socio-cultural reasons, namely to facilitate communication when they come to Indonesia for cultural reasons, holidays, or other entertainment events. The second reason is the most popular among the students. The last reasons are personal reasons, namely to enrich knowledge and language skills. In addition, because of special interest in foreign languages for some students.

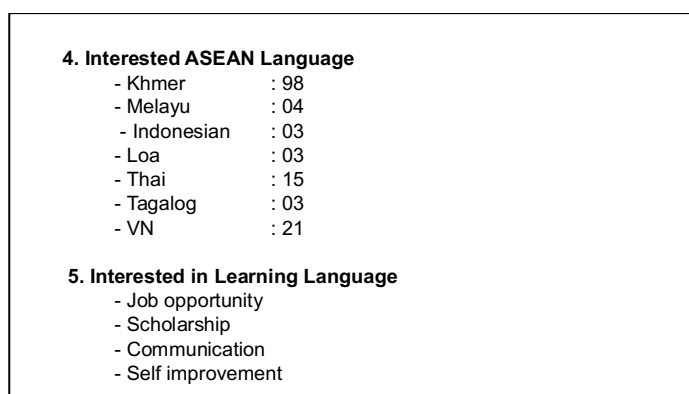


Figure 2. Cambodian students' interest in the Indonesian language
Source: Team Salindia of SEAMEO TED, Kingdom of Cambodia

Second, Cambodia. Based on the data above, it can be seen that only a small proportion of Cambodian students have an interest in Indonesian. The reasons the students have an interest in foreign languages include reasons for work, scholarships, communication, and also to increase their own capacity in the field of language.

7. Choose two languages from the ASEAN countries that you are interested in learning.

175 responses

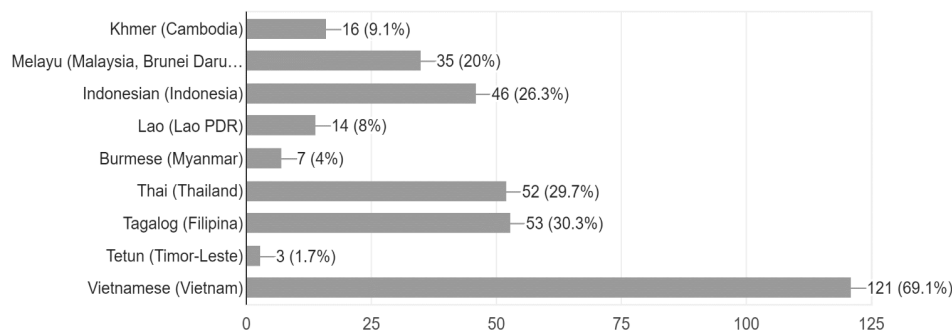


Figure 3. Cambodian students' interest in the Indonesian language

Source: Team Salindia of SEAMEO CED, LAO PDR

Third, Laos. Based on data on the interest of Laotian students in Indonesian, it can be seen that 26.3% of respondents expressed interest in Indonesian. Some of the underlying reasons include professional reasons, that all ASEAN countries are neighbors so they must have good relations, including in the realm of language learning. The students hope to be able to communicate well with citizens of other countries using their language. One of them is Indonesian.

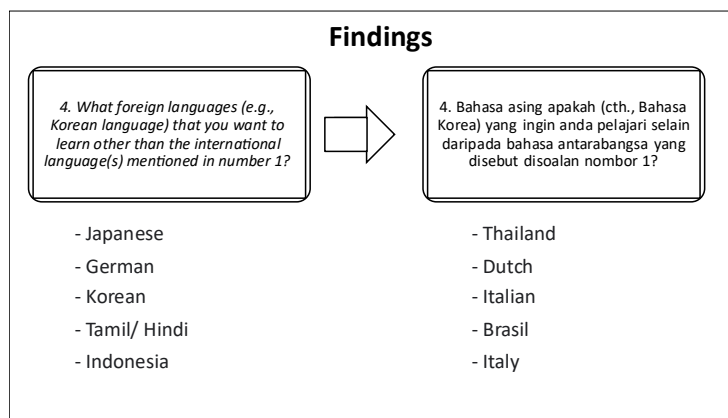


Figure 4. Malaysian students' interest in the Indonesian Language

Source: Salindia SEAMEO QITEP in Language

By: Dr. Mohd Haizzan Yahaya, USM, Malaysia

Fourth, Malaysia. Based on the results above, Malaysian students also have an interest in Indonesian, even though Malaysia's mother tongue is Malay. The purpose of learning a foreign language for Malaysian students is to facilitate communication when students visit another country. Indonesia is also a destination country for studying or working so that they are interested in learning Indonesian.

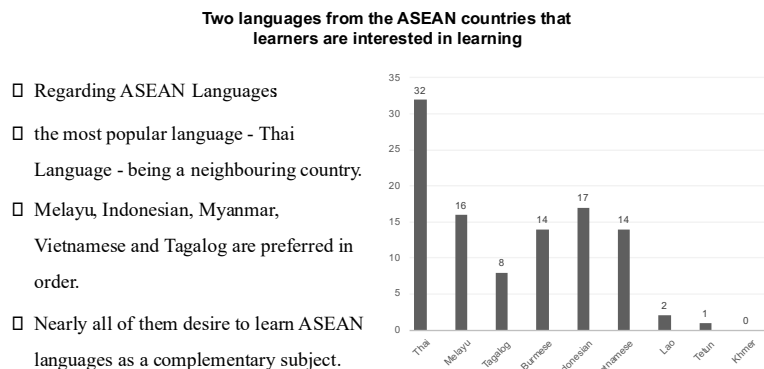


Figure 5. Myanmar students' interest in the Indonesian language
Source: Team SEAMEO Myanmar

Fifth, Myanmar. Although there are not too many of them, Indonesian remains the choice and interest of some Myanmar students. They consider that Indonesian, Malay, Tagalog and other languages in ASEAN have similarities so that they have a considerable impact when learned. Foreign languages are elective subjects that can be used as an alternative to mastering the language for some Myanmar students.

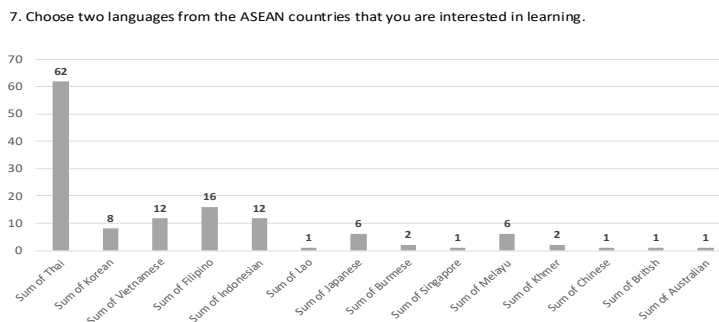


Figure 6. Filipino students' interest in the Indonesian language
Source: Team Salindia SEAMEO Philippines

Sixth, Philippines. Some of the students have an interest in Indonesian for several reasons, one of which is that Indonesian is considered to have similarities with Filipino so that the students feel that Filipino and Indonesian citizens are siblings. Furthermore, some students have a strong interest in other languages that have their own level of difficulty and uniqueness. By mastering a foreign language, the students feel more confident and have sufficient capital to be able to communicate between nations. Filipino students also have an interest in culture, especially Indonesian culture. They said they wanted to learn Indonesian so they could follow the film series made by Indonesia.

7. Choose two languages from the ASEAN countries that you are interested in learning: TOP 5

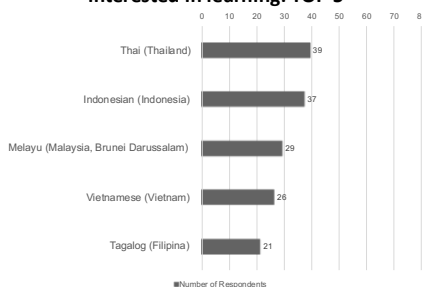


Figure 7. Singaporean students' interest in the Indonesian language
Source: Team Salindia SEAMEO Singapore

Seventh, Singapore. Singaporean students' interest in Indonesian is in the top five. The students have various motivations in their interest in Indonesian. At least, there are five reasons, namely Indonesian is a language with a high number of speakers. The students feel that Indonesian is often encountered so that it makes them want to learn Indonesian. Furthermore, Indonesia and Singapore are adjacent so that the students feel the need to have Indonesian language skills to establish good relationships. Cultural reasons are also a reinforcement for Singaporean students to study Indonesian. The students hope to be able to communicate properly and correctly with Indonesian citizens to strengthen relationships and facilitate business implementation.

Choose two languages from the ASEAN countries that you are interested in learning.

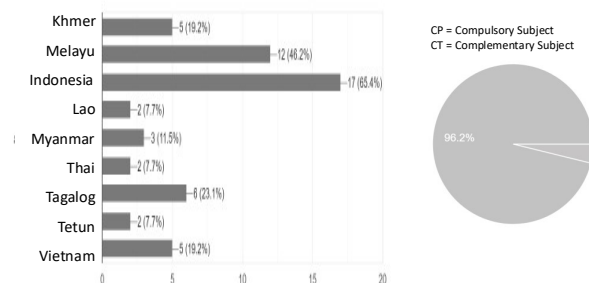


Figure 8. Thai students' interest in the Indonesian language
Source: Team Salindia SEAMEO Thailand

Eighth, Thailand. Most Thai learners have a strong interest in Indonesian. The main reason behind this interest is the use of Indonesian which has been widely practiced in Thailand. In addition, the distance between Indonesia and Thailand is quite close which also makes Thai students want to learn Indonesian. They also have an interest in authentic Indonesian culture and want to visit Indonesia. With good knowledge of the language, they will be able to communicate optimally with native Indonesians. In addition, they also think that mastering a foreign language (Indonesian) will be very useful for their future careers.

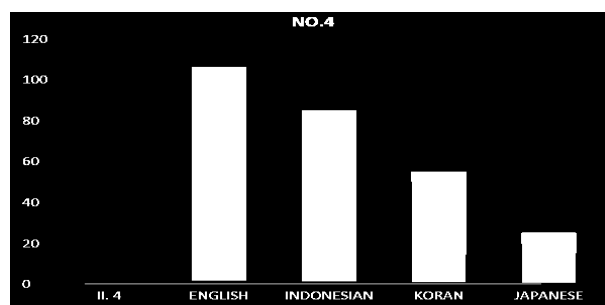


Figure 9. Timorese students' interest in the Indonesian language
Source: Team Salindia SEAMEO Timor Leste

Ninth, Timor Leste. Based on the above data, the students who have an interest in learning Indonesian are quite high, or the second most after English. The main reasons are for further study, work, and tours in Indonesia. These reasons show that students in Timor Leste have hopes of further study and employment in Indonesia as part of their future. Therefore, learning Indonesian is very important and of great interest to Timorese students in addition to learning English as the international language of instruction.

2. Survey data analysis

Question 2.4 What foreign languages (e.g., Korean language) that you want to learn other than the international language(s) mentioned in number 1?

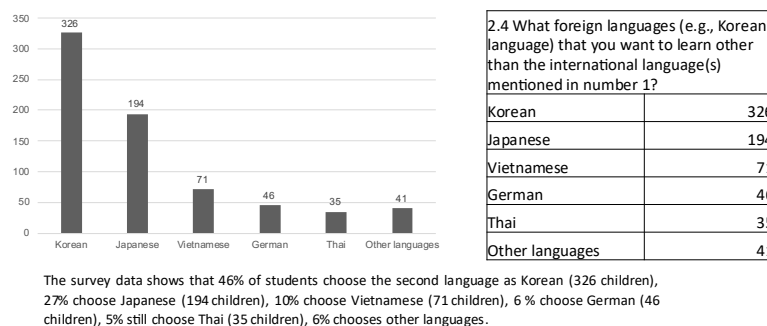


Figure 10. Vietnamese students' interest in the Indonesian language
Source: Team Salindia SEAMEO Vietnam

Tenth, Vietnam. Based on the above data, Vietnamese students who have an interest in Indonesian are very limited in terms of quantity. International languages that are in demand in Vietnam include Korean, Japanese, and Thai. Other languages besides these languages have a limited number of respondents. The reason for choosing the languages is based on the interests of further study, relationships, work and travel reasons.

Discussion

Indonesian as a foreign language for the ASEAN community

In the theory of international relations, each country has a language which is used as their national language. However, there are several languages that are used as international languages and studied almost all over the world, such as English. Language has an important role in the life of countries and nations, including in interactions between countries in the international world

(Salmani-Nodoushan, 2020). Language is a communication tool between countries that have backgrounds and identities with each other so that it will create a sense of mutual understanding that occurs between countries. The national language of a country that is used as an international language can attract other countries to learn about the culture of the concerned country. It can also be used as a means to introduce and promote a country in the international arena.

Language shows the identity of a nation in the international world which can be used as a means to show superiority in the field of culture compared to other countries and also for recognition from other nations (Thomas & Wareing, 2007). Culturally, the existence of a national language which is used as an international language can elevate the civilization of a nation in the form of local wisdom which is the main attraction of a country in the international world and can be used as a means of diplomacy to fulfill its national interests in the field of culture. International language is a language that is widely used by every country and has the largest number of speakers. It is the language that can be used in international relations both formal and informal after the national language owned by each country.

The Indonesian language continues to develop overseas and spread widely to foreign countries through Indonesian citizens who work, live abroad and Indonesian language teaching institutions established by the government as well as Indonesian citizens abroad and foreign nationals making Indonesian more and more popular in foreign countries. This has an impact on increasing the number of Indonesian speakers abroad. Indonesian has 240 million native speakers spread abroad, making Indonesian the fifth most used language and ranks 1st in Southeast Asia with the largest number of speakers. Indonesian has a great opportunity to become an international language in the Southeast Asia region where Indonesian is eventually learned and becomes one of the languages used by all countries in the Southeast Asian region. Uplifting Indonesian to become an international language will have a positive impact on Indonesia, especially in international relations which can show the sovereignty of the Indonesian nation as a developed nation, especially in the field of culture which will make Indonesian more famous in the eyes of foreign countries and increase Indonesia's bargaining power and position in foreign countries. It can also have a positive impact on Indonesia in meeting its national needs in the international world (Aprilyansyah, 2018).

Indonesian as the language of introduction to ASEAN

One of the functions of language is as a communication tool. To understand each other in the communication process requires a shared understanding of the language used. Apart from that, language is also seen as a symbol of the identity of a community or country. Therefore, the existence of a language is very important. Likewise, ASEAN, as a community of Southeast Asian countries, certainly needs a language that can be used as a means of communication as well as acting as an organizational identity (Harmoko, 2015). Indonesian as a foreign language can be introduced to ASEAN students through various school and extramural activities. Indonesian as one of the foreign language options that students can choose at school is one concrete example of what can be done. Through the BIPA program, Indonesian can be studied and then used as one of the students' preparations for participating in various programs at the ASEAN level. Preparing students' language skills from now on can be used as a provision for them to follow global trends in the future, where Indonesia is expected to become one of the developed countries in the Asian region.

Indonesian has a great opportunity to become an ASEAN language embryo in order to welcome the ASEAN Community. This is based on Indonesia's adequate national strength in the

Southeast Asian region, especially the abundant elements of natural resources (SDA) and population (HR). This national strength will become Indonesia's capital to carry out language diplomacy intensively and effectively in order to achieve their goals (Zulfikar, 2019). Indonesian now has the opportunity to "go international" with this ASEAN Community. ASEAN is a sufficient scope to attract the attention of the international community. This is because Indonesia has enough "bargaining position" or bargaining values in international relations. Indonesia's position is the largest country in ASEAN so its presence and ideas are taken into account by other member countries. The existence of similarity in the location of regions and similarities in culture is one of the determining factors in building a sense of trust which is one of the objectives of defense diplomacy. One of the Indonesian cultures that can be used as a unifying tool for ASEAN countries is the Indonesian language. Indonesian comes from the Malay language which was the native language of the people of Southeast Asia during the colonial era of Western countries. Based on this, the Indonesian language has the opportunity to be used as a defense diplomacy tool to build trust between ASEAN countries (Rambu, 2016).

Harmoko (2015) stated that a language is a good promotional medium for a country. Apart from showing its existence, another goal is to attract tourists and investors. They can also use it to learn more about a country, such as England, Spain, France, German, Japan, China and Korea where their languages are widely known and have been widely learned in various countries. Even in several countries, the languages mentioned above are used as official languages in international forums. Therefore, it can be concluded that language has a vital role in the efforts to promote a country.

As Indonesian citizens, the love of the Indonesian language movement needs to be encouraged again. Using good and correct Indonesian in daily life and instilling a love of language in the nation's generation as early as possible. Because language is habituation, the role of parents, teachers, and the media is very important. All parties must take their respective roles in advancing the Indonesian language, especially those who are directly related such as linguists, the national language agency, and the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Rondiyah, Wardani & Saddhono, 2017). In addition, Indonesian as a foreign language also needs to be strengthened and needs to be encouraged by fully supporting BIPA institutions that are already operating in ASEAN countries (Nugraheni. 2015; Sari & Suwandi, 2017).

The biggest reason for the interest of ASEAN citizens to learn Indonesian is in large part because of the economic opportunity to work with the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). Another opportunity is the opening of business investment to attract consumers from Indonesia's large population. Indonesia also has vast cultural wealth and biodiversity, which attract many foreign students to conduct direct research in Indonesia. Strengthening this language is one of the manifestations of a sense of defending the country and love for the motherland as well as an effort to increase national resilience (Rambu, 2016).

Another positive impact if Indonesian is used as the language of communication for the ASEAN community is to improve the domestic economy. Additional income can come from foreign investment, exports of domestic products, the large number of tourists who flock to tourist attractions, as well as the entertainment and cultural sectors which are starting to be in demand by foreign countries. Indonesia's gifts in the form of abundant natural resources and diverse cultures must be utilized as well as possible as the capital to become a developed country (Isti'anah, 2020). Being in an era where information and communication has become easy, a country cannot lock itself in and not interact with other countries. Therefore, with the large capital mentioned above

plus the widely known Indonesian language, it is hoped that foreigners can get to know and visit Indonesia (Yusra, Hanafi & Lestari, 2020; Wardhana, 2020).

Conclusion

Based on the results of a survey conducted by members of the SEAMEO Regional Center for Quality Improvement of Teachers and Education Personnel (QITEP) in Language (SEAQIL) in ASEAN countries, it was found that students have a specific interest in languages in ASEAN countries. Indonesian is one of the most popular languages. One of the reasons that is quite strong and fundamental is because students have discovered the use of Indonesian which is quite massive in their country. With speakers of more than 200 million and its closeness to the Malay language, Indonesian is easily accepted by ASEAN countries. The Ministry of Education and Culture already has a strategy to implement language strengthening by holding a selection of Indonesian Language teachers for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) and the creation of an Indonesian Language Proficiency Test (UKBI). In addition, Indonesian citizens also travel abroad quite often while still maintaining the use of the Indonesian language. In general, students need to learn Indonesian as a foreign language for three big reasons, namely 1) professional reasons (further study, work, relationships), 2) sociocultural reasons (tourism, culture, religion) and 3) personal reasons (to increase capacity in language). Indonesian as a language that is of interest to students in ASEAN countries can be used as a basis for implementing Indonesian as a foreign language through the BIPA program. This is one of the concrete forms that can be realized as an effort to internationalize Indonesian, where the hope is to be at the international level, especially at the ASEAN level.

Declaration of conflicting interest

Authors declare no conflict of interest for study.

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