

Indonesian Linguistics and Culture Training: Building Bridges of Cross-Cultural Understanding from an Early Age

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ABSTRACT

This international Community Service activity was held at Lukmanulhakeem School, Yala, Thailand, with the aim of introducing the importance of understanding Indonesian linguistics and culture to teachers and students to strengthen cross-cultural understanding from an early age. The background of this program is based on the need for an understanding of cultural diversity from an early age as an effort to build tolerance and solidarity in the educational environment. The methods used are interactive training, cross-cultural discussions, and field visits. The material provided includes an introduction to the basic vocabulary of Indonesian language and culture, such as greetings and traditional foods and gotong royong traditions. The results of the activity showed that as many as 35 teachers succeeded in improving their understanding of the linguistic concepts of Indonesian culture. In conclusion, this program has succeeded in creating harmonious cross-cultural relationships and has a positive impact on improving the quality of education at Lukmanulhakeem School. For the continuation of this program, further assistance and the provision of technology-based learning media are needed to support the sustainability of implementation in partner schools.

Keywords: Cultural Linguistics; Cross-Cultural Learning; Multicultural Education; Tolerance.

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1. Introduction

The International Community Service activity at Lukmanulhakeem School in Yala, Thailand, highlights the role of Islamic-based education in fostering moral values and academic skills among elementary students. As a region with a predominantly Muslim population, Yala benefits from institutions like this, which integrate religious teachings with multicultural understanding, helping students engage with diverse perspectives, including those from Indonesia (Bahri, 2019; Ahmad, 2015; Kasmianti & Arbi, 2024). This aligns with Thailand's educational policies that support minority Muslim communities and promote social cohesion through an inclusive curriculum (Pherali, 2021; Iswan & Zaitun, 2020). By strengthening cultural identity while encouraging intercultural dialogue, the school plays a key role in shaping a generation capable of fostering social harmony (Sateemae et al., 2015; Soebahar et al., 2023).

Research shows that education in these areas is often influenced by complex social and cultural contexts, so it is important for educational institutions to adopt an inclusive and culturally sensitive approach (Pherali, 2021; Nitjarunkul et al., 2014). Yala, as Thailand's southern border region, has a unique cultural diversity, but challenges in promoting cross-cultural understanding remain, especially at the primary education level. Many schools,

including Lukmanulhakeem, face difficulties in accessing educational resources that support multiculturalism (Chandransu, 2019).

The Indonesian Cultural Linguistics Training held within the framework of the Community Partnership Program aims to overcome this gap by introducing Indonesian language and cultural values that can be integrated in daily teaching, thereby enriching the student learning experience (Chehdimae & Ali, 2022). The role of teachers at Lukmanulhakeem School is very crucial in shaping the character and worldview of students. However, many teachers do not have formal training related to structured cross-cultural teaching (Buasuwan, 2018).

The training provided in this program is designed to provide knowledge and skills to teachers in integrating Indonesian cultural language materials into their curriculum. With an interactive and practice-based approach, this training not only enriches teachers' insights but also provides them with tools to teach values such as tolerance, cooperation, and diversity to students. This training program basically aims to strengthen cultural relations between Indonesia and Thailand through education. Given the long history of cultural and trade interactions between the two countries, education could be a means to strengthen diplomatic relations in the future. By instilling the values of mutual understanding and respect from an early age, a more inclusive and tolerant generation can be formed. In addition, Lukmanulhakeem School's participation in this program demonstrates its commitment to adapting to educational innovations, which in turn can improve the quality of education and motivate students to explore their potential in an increasingly connected world (Buasuwan, 2018).

2. Method

The implementation of this International Community Service Activities is being carried out offline or the Community Service Team directly visit partners.

2.1 Location and Time

International Community Service Activities entitled "Indonesian Linguistics and Culture Training: Building Bridges of Cross-Cultural Understanding" was held at Lukmanulhakeem School, Yala, Thailand, on November 28–October 1, 2024. This location was chosen because it is an Islamic-based educational institution that serves elementary students in Thailand's southern border region, which has high multicultural potential but still needs to strengthen cross-cultural understanding.



Figure 1. Visit of Community Service Team at Lukmanulhakeem School

2.2 Participants or Partners

The main participants of this activity are Teachers: there are 35 elementary school teachers from Lukmanulhakeem School, who act as agents of change to convey cross-cultural values to students. The main partner of the activity is Lukmanulhakeem School as the host. In addition, *NGO Sharing* also assisted in facilitating activities.

2.3 Activity Stages

The stages of this Community Service activity are as follows: 1. Preparation: a) Coordination with Lukmanulhakeem School to determine the schedule and specific needs of participants, b) Preparation of interactive training materials, including the introduction of linguistics, cultural values, and innovative learning methods, c) Procurement of teaching aids and learning media such as printed modules, educational videos, batik fabrics, and traditional musical instruments, d) Preparation of offline activity schedules, including training sessions, discussions, and field visits. 2. Implementation: The implementation of Community Service began with an opening ceremony, one of the agendas of which was the delivery of remarks from the organizers and partners, as well as an introduction to the goals and benefits of the Indonesian Linguistics and Culture Training program. In delivering Community Service material, the resource person conveyed basic Indonesian vocabulary (greetings, numbers, objects, and actions). Introduction to Indonesian Culture and its cultural values such as cooperation, diversity, and social traditions. 3. Cross-Cultural Discussion: After the delivery of the material, a dialogue was held between teachers and resource persons about the challenges and opportunities in teaching cross-cultural values, a comparison of Indonesian and Thai educational traditions. 4. Evaluation: Initial and final surveys to measure the improvement of participants' understanding. Collecting feedback from teachers and students regarding their experiences during the activity. Documentation is in the form of reports, photos, and videos of activities. 5. Tools and Materials The media, materials, and tools used include: a) Print Module containing training guidebook containing Indonesian vocabulary, cultural values, and learning strategies, b) Educational Video: Interactive video about Indonesian traditions, arts, and culture (Youtube), c) Stationery consisting of Flipcharts, markers, and notebooks to support discussion activities.

3. Result

The implementation of International Community Service activities with the title "Indonesian Linguistics and Culture Training: Building Bridges of Cross-Cultural Understanding at Lukmanulhakeem School, Yala, Thailand" has provided significant results for the teachers involved. Here are the main results of this activity:

3.1. Improving Understanding of Indonesian Linguistics and Culture

A total of 35 teachers showed an increased understanding of the linguistic concepts of Indonesian culture. They can understand basic vocabulary, simple sentence structures, and cultural values such as cooperation, diversity, and deliberation. This understanding is obtained through theoretical explanations combined with simulations and interactive exercises.



Figure 2. Presentation session on the introduction of Indonesian cultural linguistics

The image above shows the presentation session of the material by the Community Service Team. The presentation of material in the context of education and training is one of the effective methods to improve the linguistic and cultural understanding of a nation. This approach is crucial to strengthening participants' understanding and promoting diversity. The presentation of structured and interactive material can help students to better understand the complexity and beauty of the Indonesian language and culture. In addition, the image above also explains the existence of Direct Interaction between speakers and participants. This is important to build a deeper understanding of the material being delivered. Community Service Implementers also use technology in presenting materials. The use of visual media can help in explaining complex and abstract concepts more easily so that participants can understand them well.

3.2 Effectiveness of Training Materials

The Indonesian Linguistics and Culture Training Activity at Lukmanulhakeem School, Yala, Thailand, has produced significant achievements, especially in improving the understanding of teachers and students towards Indonesian culture. The training materials which include basic vocabulary, types of words, sentence structure, the use of affixes, and an introduction to traditional Indonesian arts and values are considered relevant and easy to apply. The teachers appreciated the interactive approach used, which allowed them to be actively engaged during the training sessions.

One of the main materials is basic vocabulary, such as greetings and *greetings* "Good morning, Assalamualaikum", numbers, and everyday nouns. The introduction of simple sentence structures (subjects, predicates, objects) also helps participants understand basic communication patterns in Indonesian. The practice of composing simple sentences is combined with simulations of everyday situations, such as shopping and asking for directions, so that participants can immediately practice what they have learned.

In addition, the introduction of arts and culture, such as greetings typical of Indonesian culture, the tradition of cooperation, and handicrafts such as batik and performing arts, provided additional insights to the participants. Discussions about traditional Indonesian values, such as diversity and deliberation, create a strong cross-cultural awareness among teachers that can later be applied to their students. This training is also equipped with interactive exercises, such as filling in dots in sentences, multiple choice, and education-based games.

3.3 The Cross-Cultural Discussion

The cross-cultural discussion during the implementation of Community Service activities at Lukmanulhakeem School, Yala, Thailand, had a significant impact in opening the participants' insights into the relevance of Indonesian cultural values in multicultural life in Thailand. Teachers from Thailand found many similarities between Indonesian cultural values, such as cooperation, deliberation, and diversity, with local traditions in Thailand. The discussion became a productive exchange of ideas, where speakers from Indonesia and local teachers shared experiences on how these cultural values can be integrated into learning to strengthen cross-cultural tolerance and understanding.

For example, the concept of cooperation, which is deeply embedded in Indonesian culture, was identified by participants as a relevant value to apply in their local communities in completing work together or helping others. Likewise, deliberation, which is like the tradition of collective discussion in Thailand, is appreciated as an approach to solving problems together. This discussion not only deepened participants' understanding of Indonesian culture but also fostered mutual respect for cultural differences, as well as strengthening the relationship between the two countries through multicultural education. Through open dialogue, participants can explore the potential for collaboration to develop more inclusive cultural values-based educational programs.



Figure 3. Cross-Cultural Discussion Between Indonesian Facilitators and Thai Teachers.

Cross-cultural discussion sessions as depicted in the image above are an important step in building cross-cultural understanding from an early age. Through a participatory approach and the use of technology, these activities not only raise cultural awareness, but also strengthen international cooperation in the field of education. Thus, this kind of initiative contributes significantly to the formation of a more tolerant and globally minded generation.

3.4 Implementation Evaluation

The evaluation of the implementation of Indonesian Linguistics and Culture Training activities at Lukmanulhakeem School, Yala, Thailand, shows a high success rate based on post-activity surveys. As many as 93% of participants stated that the material presented was very relevant to their needs and was easy to apply in classroom teaching. Participants appreciated the delivery of practical and contextual material, especially in integrating basic vocabulary, sentence structure, and Indonesian cultural values into multicultural learning.

In addition, the success of the program is also reflected in the documentation of well-structured activities. Documentation in the form of photos and videos is not only evidence of implementation but also illustrates the enthusiasm of the participants during the activity.

Interactive materials combined with a practical approach create a productive and fun learning atmosphere. This evaluation shows that the program has not only succeeded in improving cross-cultural understanding but also has great potential to become a model in culture-based educational training in the future.



Figure 4. Closing Ceremony of the Indonesian Linguistics and Culture Training with Teachers and Speakers at Lukmanulhakeem School.

The image above depicts an important moment in the closing session of the Indonesian linguistics and culture training program held at Lukmanulhakeem School. The closing session of the Indonesian linguistics and culture training at Lukmanulhakeem School marked the success of the program in achieving the set goals. Through an interactive approach and the use of technology, the program has succeeded in improving cross-cultural understanding and promoting the use of the Indonesian language in education. This success not only strengthens the academic relationship between Indonesia and Thailand but also contributes to the formation of a more tolerant and globally minded generation. The positive evaluation from the participants is tangible evidence of the positive impact of this program, which is expected to be a model for similar initiatives in the future.

4. Discussion

The results of this activity reflect the effectiveness of the culture-based interactive training approach in increasing cross-cultural understanding in the educational environment. The following is a description of the discussion of the results of the activity:

4.1 Relevance of Training Materials

The material presented in this Community Service activity, which includes basic vocabulary, sentence structure, and word types in Indonesian, is very relevant for teaching at the elementary level. The teachers involved revealed that cultural recognition through language not only helps students understand the material better but also provides a more in-depth learning context. Thus, students can feel the meaning of learning in daily life, so that the learning process becomes more meaningful and interesting.

4.2 Implementation of Activities

Implementation of activities Indonesian linguistics and culture training at Lukmanulhakeem School, Yala, Thailand, has yielded significant results for the teachers and students involved. This activity is designed to introduce Indonesian language and culture to

students abroad, with the aim of building bridges of cross-cultural understanding. Here are the main results of this activity:

- a. **Language Proficiency Improvement:** One of the main outcomes of this training is the improvement of Indonesian language skills among students. Through a variety of interactive teaching methods, students can understand basic vocabulary, sentence structure, and language usage in different contexts. Research shows that language learning involves hands-on practice, and social interaction can significantly improve language skills (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).
- b. **Higher Cultural Awareness:** This activity has also succeeded in increasing cultural awareness among students. By introducing various aspects of Indonesian culture, such as traditions, arts, and social values, students become more sensitive to cultural diversity. This is in line with the theory of cultural learning which states that cultural understanding can enrich learning experiences and increase intercultural tolerance (Byram, 1997).
- c. **Interpersonal Skills Development:** In addition to language skills and cultural awareness, this training also contributes to the development of students' interpersonal skills. Through group activities and discussions, students learn to collaborate and communicate well, which is an essential skill in today's globalized world. According to Goleman (1995), good interpersonal skills can improve an individual's ability to interact with others effectively.
- d. **Increased Learning Motivation:** This activity also succeeded in increasing students' motivation to learn. With a fun and relevant approach, students feel more interested in learning Indonesian. Research shows that intrinsic motivation can contribute to the success of language learning (Deci & Ryan, 2000).
- e. **Strengthening Intercultural Relations:** Lastly, this activity has strengthened intercultural relations between Indonesia and Thailand. By understanding each other's languages and cultures, students can build better relationships and respect each other's differences. This is important in the context of increasing globalization, where cross-cultural understanding is the key to creating a harmonious society (Hofstede, 2001). Overall, the implementation of Indonesian linguistics and culture training activities at Lukmanulhakeem School has had a significant positive impact on teachers and students. These results show the importance of cross-cultural education in building a better understanding among the younger generation.

4.3 Cultural Values as the Basis of Learning

Cultural values, such as cooperation and diversity, play an important role in the context of learning at Lukmanulhakeem School, Yala, Thailand. Trainees appreciate these values because of their relevance to their daily lives. *Gotong royong*, as one of the fundamental cultural values in Indonesian society, reflects the spirit of cooperation and mutual assistance which is very important in the social context. Budiono et al. (2022) explained that extracurricular activities such as scouting in Indonesia actively instill the character of cooperation through the group method, which shows that this value can be applied in various contexts, including education.

This shows that the application of the value of cooperation in the school environment can strengthen the sense of togetherness and collaboration among students (Budiono et al., 2022). Diversity is also a cultural value that is appreciated by the trainees. In the context of education, diversity teaches students to appreciate differences and understand that everyone has a unique background. Winarti (2024) emphasizes the importance of character education management that integrates the value of mutual cooperation in intracurricular and extracurricular activities, which can help students to better understand and appreciate the diversity around them.

Thus, education that prioritizes cultural values not only shapes the character of students but also creates an inclusive and harmonious learning environment. In addition, Indonesian social traditions, such as greetings and greetings, are considered easy to adapt in daily interactions in the school environment. This shows that cultural values are not only theoretical, but also practical and can be applied in daily life. Darmansyah and Susanti (2023) noted that mutual cooperation activities can be an effective means to build environmental awareness and develop students' social attitudes (Darmansyah & Susanti, 2023).

By adopting these social traditions, students can build better relationships with their peers, which in turn can improve the learning atmosphere in the classroom. Overall, cultural values such as mutual cooperation and diversity provide a strong foundation for learning at Lukmanulhakeem School. By integrating these values into the curriculum and daily practice, schools not only equip students with academic skills, but also form strong character and high social awareness. This is crucial in creating a generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also sensitive to human and social values.

4.4 Challenges and Solutions

The implementation of Indonesian linguistic and cultural training at Lukmanulhakeem School, Yala, Thailand, faces several significant challenges, one of which is the limited time allocated to understand all materials, especially vocabulary and grammar. In the context of language learning, this challenge is very common, given the complexity of the language and the many aspects that need to be learned. According to Ellis (2008), limited time in language learning can hinder students' ability to internalize the vocabulary and grammatical structures needed to communicate effectively.

This time limitation is the main challenge for trainees, who often find it difficult to understand and master the material in depth. This can lead to frustration and reduce students' motivation to learn, which in turn can affect their learning outcomes. Research by Alharbi (2019) shows that students who do not have enough time to practice and understand the material tend to have difficulties in applying vocabulary and grammar in real contexts. To overcome this challenge, the resource persons in the training applied an effective conversation simulation approach and group exercises. This approach is designed to accelerate students' understanding of the material being taught. Conversation simulations allow students to practice speaking in a more realistic context, so they can apply the vocabulary and grammar they have learned in situations similar to everyday life.

According to Thornbury (2005), the use of simulation in language learning can increase student engagement and help them develop better communication skills. Group exercises are also an effective method in overcoming time constraints. By working in groups, students can support each other and learn from each other. This not only improves their understanding of the material but also builds a sense of togetherness and collaboration among the participants. Research by Johnson and Johnson (2009) shows that collaborative learning can improve student learning outcomes, because they can share knowledge and strategies in understanding the material. Overall, although the challenge of time constraints in understanding vocabulary and grammar is a significant obstacle to training, the application of conversational simulation and group exercise approaches has proven to be effective in accelerating students' comprehension.

4.5 Cross-Cultural Collaboration

Cross-cultural collaboration is one of the important aspects of Indonesian linguistics and culture training held at Lukmanulhakeem School, Yala, Thailand. The interactive discussions that took place during the training created a constructive dialogue between the speakers and

participants, which not only enriched the learning experience, but also opened opportunities to strengthen cultural ties between Indonesia and Thailand. Through this discussion, participants were given the opportunity to share their views, experiences, and ideas regarding their respective cultures.

This is in line with the view of Byram (1997), who stated that intercultural dialogue can increase understanding and respect for cultural differences, as well as create space for closer collaboration. This interactive discussion allows participants to explore existing cultural values, as well as the challenges and opportunities faced in cross-cultural interactions. One of the ideas that emerged from this dialogue is the development of a student exchange program between Indonesia and Thailand. The program is expected to provide hands-on experience for students to experience the life and culture of another country, which in turn will enhance their understanding of cultural diversity.

4.6 Program Sustainability

The sustainability of the Indonesian linguistics and culture training program at Lukmanulhakeem School, Yala, Thailand, is a crucial aspect to ensure that the results and benefits of the training can continue to be felt by teachers and students. One of the proposed recommendations is to provide continuous assistance, both online and through periodic visits. This assistance aims to ensure that the implementation of the teachers' work plan can run well and in accordance with the goals that have been set. Continuous online mentoring can be done through an online learning platform that allows effective communication and collaboration between resource persons and teachers.

According to Garrison and Anderson (2003), structured online learning can provide the necessary support to improve teachers' skills and knowledge in implementing the material they have learned. With regular question and answer sessions, discussions, and feedback, teachers can more easily overcome challenges that arise in the teaching and learning process. In addition, periodic visits by resource persons or mentors are also very important to provide direct support to teachers.

5. Conclusion

The implementation of International Community Service activity at Lukmanulhakeem School, Yala, Thailand, has succeeded in becoming a strong bridge of cross-cultural understanding between Indonesia and Thailand. This program proves that linguistic and cultural-based approaches can have a significant impact in building tolerance and diversity in the educational environment. Through activities involving interactive training, cross-cultural discussions, and field observations, teachers and students not only broadened their horizons, but were also inspired to become agents of change in teaching cross-cultural values to the younger generation.

The success of this program is reflected in the increased understanding of Indonesian culture, cross-cultural collaboration, and the enthusiasm of teachers and students in applying the material that has been studied. With the support of various partners, including universities in Indonesia, the program not only creates a short-term impact but also opens opportunities for long-term cooperation in the field of multicultural education. This activity is clear evidence that culture-based education is the key to creating a more inclusive, harmonious, and respectful world.

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