

Opportunity to Learn Indonesian Language through Nonformal Education for The Children of Indonesian Migrant Workers in Sabah-Malaysia: Case Study at the Pontian Fico Community Learning Center

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ABSTRACT

The existence of children of Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah-Malaysia has had an impact in many ways. In the linguistic context, children of Indonesian migrant workers who were born and raised in Sabah-Malaysia use the Malaysian language as their first language. The most important problem in this context is that children of Indonesian migrant workers have an identity crisis because they tend to follow the social and cultural environment they live in, but do not know much about their country of origin. Therefore, this research was conducted with the aim of describing opportunities to learn Indonesian for children of Indonesian migrant workers through non-formal schools in Sabah-Malaysia. The method used in this research was qualitative, with a case study approach. This research was conducted at the Pontian Fico Community Learning Center non-formal school, Sabah-Malaysia. The data for this research are documentation and interview results, while the data sources were obtained from Indonesian school teachers who teach in non-formal schools. The results and discussion described are opportunities to learn Indonesian through the curriculum, teachers, and school literacy programs. The findings of this study are that the CLC Pontian Fico non-formal school provides opportunities to learn Indonesian for the children of Indonesian migrant workers as part of strengthening self-identity, supporting educational equality, and realizing quality education. The conclusion of this study is that non-formal schools use soft diplomacy to introduce Indonesians to Indonesian children who live in areas where their parents work.

Keywords: *learning opportunities, Indonesian language, children of Indonesian migrant workers, non-formal schools*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian as a unified language is important for all Indonesian citizens to learn. This view is based on the essence of the Indonesian language, which is positioned as the language of unity. Based on the 1928 Youth Pledge, Indonesian was pledged as the language of unity, and Indonesian youth were obliged to uphold the Indonesian language. If traced more deeply, the position of Indonesian is divided into two: the state language and the national language (Saputra, 2016). From the position and brief history of the Indonesian language, Indonesian citizens are obliged to learn and uphold the Indonesian language as part of national identity.

Learning Indonesian is important for all Indonesian citizens. In a more complex context, especially for the children of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia, the Indonesian language is needed as a part of self-identity. The children of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia face problems of self-identity because they live in a multinational and multicultural society. Therefore, efforts to spread Indonesian beyond Indonesia's geographical boundaries are urgently required to strengthen the identity of the Indonesian nation.

In general, it is very important to raise the education of the children of Indonesian migrant workers and to obtain educational services (Anita, 2021). The issue of the education of children of migrant workers is very important to raise and then examine in relation to the Indonesian Government's priorities in providing educational services for Indonesian children who are in Sabah-Malaysia who have difficulty accessing education. Recalling the mandate for the opening of the 1945 Constitution, the Indonesian government is obliged to educate the nation's life. One way that can be done is to provide educational facilities to Indonesian children living at home and abroad (Christie, 2016).

Based on the phenomena described above, the urgency of this study is based on several aspects. First, Indonesians need to be learned by all Indonesian people at home and abroad. Second, the issue of the education of children of Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah, Malaysia needs special attention because it is outside Indonesia's geography. Third, up-to-date research is needed regarding the children of Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah, Malaysia. The purpose of this study is to describe the efforts of the Indonesian government in providing educational services for the children of Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah, Malaysia. Specifically, this study describes opportunities for Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah- Malaysia to learn Indonesian through a community learning center (CLC) non-formal education program.

Research on Indonesian nonformal schools in Malaysia has been conducted from various perspectives. The first is program management (CLC) in Kinabalu Sabah Malaysia (Wahyudin, 2020). Second is the efforts of the Indonesian government to cooperate with the Malaysian government to protect the educational rights of the children of Indonesian migrant workers (Yuvanti, 2021). Third is Islamic religious education services for the children of Indonesian migrant workers in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. Fourth, the human rights of the children of Indonesian migrant workers in oil palm plantations in the Sabah-Malaysia region (Sholina, 2022). Fifth, there is the role of non-governmental organizations in the education of children of migrant workers in Sabah, Malaysia (Muslihudin, 2023). Of the five studies, no significant effort has been made to describe the role of non-formal schools in preserving the Indonesian language in the context of the education of children of Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah, Malaysia. Therefore, this study is important.

METHOD

The research method used was qualitative with a case study approach. This research was conducted in an Indonesian non-formal school, the Pontian Fico Community Learning Center (CLC), Sabah, Malaysia. Data collection was carried out through observations and interviews. Both techniques were performed in depth to determine the formulation of the problem. The research data analyzed were descriptions of observations and interview transcripts. The data analysis used an interactive analysis model from Miles et al. (2014), which consists of several stages. First, data condensation was performed by condensing data in the form of observations and field interviews. Second, data analysis was carried out by answering the research problem formulation related to the opportunity to learn Indonesian through non-formal schools for the children of Indonesian migrant workers. Third, conclusions were drawn based on the

results of the data analysis aimed at answering the research problems.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of observations made at the Indonesian Non-Formal School, CLC Pontian Fico, opportunities to learn Indonesian through curriculum, teaching materials, teachers, and school literacy movements were found, which are explained as follows.

A. Opportunities to Learn Indonesian through the Non-Formal School Curriculum

The CLC Pontian Fico is a non-formal Indonesian school established in Sabah, Malaysia. The school accommodates educational equality for children of Indonesian migrant workers born and raised in the area where their parents worked. CLC Pontian Fico is a non-formal school that provides educational opportunities for the children of Indonesian migrant workers at the elementary and junior high school levels. CLC, generally in Malaysia, refers to and induces the Indonesian Overseas School, the Kota Kinabalu Indonesian School. Therefore, all matters related to the school refer to the main school.

The curriculum used by the Indonesian School CLC Pontian Fico is based on the Indonesian curriculum. Currently, the curriculum used is independent. The Merdeka Curriculum provides flexibility for Indonesian teachers to explore intracurricular learning, which refers to a variety of interesting learning content. This was expected to make it easier for students to achieve their learning competencies. Therefore, learning based on the Merdeka Curriculum used in Indonesian non-formal schools in Sabah Malaysia refers to the curriculum used in Indonesia.

Opportunity to learn Indonesian for children of migrant workers in non-formal Indonesian schools based on the Merdeka Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum provides students with more flexible opportunities to learn Indonesian, because it is not limited. Teachers and students can explore Indonesians as required. The Merdeka curriculum provides opportunities for students to learn Indonesian, even though the school is outside Indonesia. This is a golden opportunity because there is a curriculum that strengthens the educational foundation for the children of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia.

The Merdeka Curriculum represents a variety of teaching materials for teachers. The teaching materials used by the teacher helped the development of the students' Indonesian language because they were adapted to the teacher's needs. Teaching materials used by teachers help students acquire standard Indonesian vocabulary. Through the teaching materials, students were indirectly taught to speak Indonesian. Learning in general also uses the Indonesian lingua franca. Thus, the representation of curricula and books in Indonesian non-formal schools in Sabah, Malaysia provides opportunities for children of migrant workers as students.

B. Opportunity to Learn Indonesian through Non-Formal School Teachers

Teachers on duty at the Indonesian non-formal school CLC Pontian Fico are foster teachers assigned by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology. In addition, private palm oil companies assign tutor teachers to assist

teachers. Four teachers with different backgrounds teach at CLC Pontian Fico. Teachers who work at CLC Pontian Fico have cultural and language differences from students. Bina teachers have an Indonesian cultural background, whereas students tend to adhere to Malaysian culture. One example of a difference between teachers and students is language. Teachers use Indonesian, while students tend to use the local language or Malay-Malaysia.

Indonesian teachers play an important role in providing opportunities to learn Indonesian for children of migrant workers who attend CLC Pontian Fico non-formal schools. Teachers are authentic learning resources that provide opportunities for migrant workers to learn Indonesian. For example, every teacher's lesson uses Indonesian in all subjects so that students as children of migrant workers have productive and receptive experiences of speaking Indonesian. Therefore, the teacher's role in every lesson at the CLC Pontian Fico Non-formal School provides greater opportunities for students to learn Indonesian in various contexts and situations.

C. Opportunity to Learn Indonesian through the School Literacy Movement

Another effort made to provide opportunities to learn Indonesian for the children of Pontian Fico CLC Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah, Malaysia is to provide literacy reinforcement. Strengthening literacy in CLC Pontian Fico non-formal schools includes reading books, writing, and so on. This includes basic literacy, but this is in line with the teacher's educational background outside Indonesian language education. Thus, strengthening literacy through reading and writing is natural in the context of informal education.

The existence of a school literacy movement to strengthen literacy for the children of Indonesian migrant workers who attend CLC Pontian Fico provides greater opportunities to speak Indonesian. It is based on the essence of literacy, which requires a person to be skilled in processing and using information in everyday life. Strengthening literacy has a significant impact on students in obtaining, processing, and using information in Indonesian in everyday life. This is important because students who are children of migrant workers live in a multinational and multicultural environment, so the Indonesian language is urgently needed.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the analysis conducted, the Indonesian non-formal school CLC Pontian Fico provides opportunities for Indonesian migrant workers to learn Indonesian from various perspectives. Providing the opportunity to learn Indonesian for the children of migrant workers is a wise step to consider the location of the school in Malaysia. Having opportunities to learn Indonesian from various directions can strengthen the identity of the children of Indonesian migrant workers who live in a multinational and multicultural society. Although Indonesia and Malaysia are related (Annisa and Nizar, 2022), the social and cultural conditions of Malaysia are more complex because many foreign nationals are migrant workers, so the changes are massive. Thus, the opportunity to learn Indonesian is part of the process of strengthening one's identity as an Indonesian citizen in a pluralistic society (Aswan, 2020). The opportunity to learn Indonesian for the children of Indonesian migrant workers in

Sabah-Malaysia through non-formal education is part of the manifestation of educational equality for all Indonesian citizens. Equality in education through non-formal education provides enormous opportunities for children of migrant workers, as children from marginal groups, to learn Indonesian. This is in line with Hermawan's statement (2012) that non-formal education is equality education that provides educational services for children who are not in school due to poverty, remoteness, and underdevelopment. For this reason, equality education is an important basis for all children in the nation to obtain educational services wherever they are and at any time. Thus, learning Indonesian is an example of a manifestation of educational equality for the children of migrant workers to strengthen their identity.

The opportunity to learn Indonesian for the children of Indonesian migrant workers can also support the quality of education. This is in line with several pillars and targets of the SDG's quality education. The first three targets are intended to ensure that all children and adults access quality education from the early years through primary and secondary schools to the technical and university levels. Education to improve work-related skills for youth and adults. The target relates to the distribution of access to education across various demographic that considers the needs of persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and vulnerable groups. Education aims to ensure literacy and numeracy for all youths and substantially reduce adult illiteracy. Targets related to educational content aim to develop knowledge and skills for sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, and a culture of peace and non-violence (Unterhalter 2019).

The results of this study are supported by the results of interviews with Indonesian teachers who teach in CLC Pontian Fico. The following describes the results of interviews with Indonesian schoolteachers in Malaysia.

“Anak-anak TKI (istilah lain dari pekerja migran Indonesia) di sini cenderung menggunakan bahasa Malayu-Malaysia, tapi hal itu bukanlah masalah besar karena Indonesia dan Malaysia memiliki banyak kesamaan. Meskipun Indonesia dan Malaysia banyak samanya, tetap saja memiliki banyak sekali perbedaan sehingga sekolah nonformal CLC ini memberikan akses pendidikan yang lebih kompleks sehingga memperluas pengetahuan mereka dalam berbagai hal, contohnya berbahasa Indonesia dengan baik.” Ujar salah satu guru pamong CLC Pontian Fico.

Indonesian teachers who teach in non-formal Indonesian schools in Sabah Malaysia reveal that children of Indonesian migrant workers tend to adhere to more Malaysian culture because they have lived within the scope of Malaysian society since they were born. This has an impact on the social culture of children of Indonesian migrant workers, who are more dominant in following their place of residence. Nonetheless, Indonesian non-formal schools established in Sabah-Malaysia provide access and education services for them. Particularly in language learning, non-formal schools facilitate Indonesian language learning for the children of Indonesian migrant workers in various contexts.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, the conclusion of this study is that Pontian Fico CLC non-formal education in Sabah-Malaysia provides opportunities for Indonesian migrant workers to learn Indonesian. Opportunities to learn Indonesians based on the curriculum, teachers, and literacy programs are conducted to provide more complex knowledge of Indonesians. This component supports the understanding of the Indonesian language of the children of Indonesian migrant workers so that they can strengthen their identity through access to equal and quality education. Therefore, CLC Pontian Fico's informal education is a soft diplomacy that provides access to learning Indonesian for the children of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia.

It is hoped that the findings of this research can become input for policymakers to pay attention to and improve the education of children of Indonesian migrant workers, especially in Sabah, Malaysia. It is hoped that the findings of this study will serve as a reference for the government to pay attention to aspects of Indonesian language education for children of Indonesian migrant workers in an effort to strengthen their identity in a multinational and multicultural society. In addition, future researchers can examine other aspects related to the Indonesian language, such as the influence of Malaysian culture on the development of the Indonesian language of children of Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah, Malaysia.

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