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Principles of Indonesian Language Learning in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah and Elementary Schools

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Abstract: *The principles of Indonesian language instruction in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) and Elementary Schools (SD) serve as a crucial foundation for the comprehensive development of students' language skills. Indonesian language instruction is implemented in a student-centered, communicative, contextual, integrative, and continuous manner. The communicative principle emphasizes the use of language as a tool for communication in real-life situations, while the contextual principle links learning materials to students' experiences and living environments. Additionally, Indonesian language instruction integrates the four language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a cohesive manner. The learning process also takes into account the differences in students' characteristics, abilities, and needs, thereby creating a learning environment that is active, creative, effective, and enjoyable. By applying these principles, Indonesian language instruction in MI/SD is expected to enhance language proficiency, critical thinking skills, and foster an appreciation for the Indonesian language as a means of communication and a symbol of national identity.*

Keywords: *principles, learning, language, Indonesian, elementary school*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian language learning at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) and Elementary School (SD) levels plays a fundamental role in developing students' basic literacy skills. The Indonesian language is not merely a school subject; it also serves as the primary medium through which students develop their thinking abilities, communication skills, and understanding of national culture. Through language, students learn to express ideas, interpret information, interact with others, and construct knowledge. Therefore, the principles underlying Indonesian language instruction must be systematically designed to foster students' learning motivation while simultaneously improving their language competencies in a meaningful and sustainable manner.

In the context of primary education, language learning functions as the foundation for mastering other fields of knowledge. Most learning activities in schools require students to understand instructions, read texts, communicate ideas, and write responses, all of which depend on language proficiency. Children at the MI/SD level are in a crucial stage of cognitive, social, and emotional development, requiring learning approaches that are enjoyable, interactive, and suited to their developmental characteristics. Consequently, Indonesian language instruction should emphasize the integration of the four core language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing so that students can acquire language competence comprehensively rather than in isolated components.

Furthermore, the communicative principle constitutes an essential aspect of effective language learning. Indonesian should not be taught solely as a collection of grammatical rules and linguistic structures; rather, it should be presented as a living tool of communication that is relevant to students' daily experiences. Through communicative learning activities such as discussions, storytelling, role-playing, presentations, and collaborative projects, students are encouraged to use language actively and meaningfully. This approach enables learners to connect classroom learning with real-life situations encountered at home, in school, and within their communities, thereby making the learning process more engaging and effective.

Another important principle is the contextual approach. Teachers should relate language learning materials to authentic situations, local cultural values, and social realities familiar to students. Contextual learning helps learners understand the practical functions of language in everyday life while also strengthening their appreciation of cultural diversity and national identity. By incorporating local stories, traditions, and community experiences into language lessons, teachers can create learning environments that are both relevant and meaningful. Such an approach also encourages students to recognize Indonesian as a unifying language that bridges diverse cultural backgrounds across the nation.

In addition, student-centered learning should be emphasized in Indonesian language instruction. Students should be given opportunities to explore, create, and express their ideas independently while teachers act as facilitators who guide and support the learning process. Through active participation, students become more confident in using language and develop critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. The learning process should accommodate individual differences

among students, including their interests, abilities, and learning styles, to ensure that all learners can achieve optimal outcomes.

Moreover, the use of varied learning media and technology can enhance the effectiveness of Indonesian language instruction. Digital resources, educational videos, interactive applications, and multimedia-based learning activities can increase students' engagement and motivation. The integration of technology also helps students develop digital literacy skills, which are increasingly important in the twenty-first century educational landscape. Therefore, teachers should be encouraged to utilize innovative instructional strategies that combine traditional and digital learning resources.

Ultimately, Indonesian language learning at the MI/SD level should be grounded in the integration of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Students should not only acquire linguistic knowledge and skills but also develop positive attitudes toward the Indonesian language as a symbol of national unity and cultural identity. Through a holistic and comprehensive approach, language learning can contribute to the formation of intelligent, communicative, responsible, and morally grounded individuals. Such an educational approach aligns with the broader objectives of national education, which seek to develop well-rounded citizens capable of contributing positively to society and the nation.

METHODS

The research method employed in this study on the principles of Indonesian language learning in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) and Elementary Schools (SD) is a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach was selected because it is appropriate for providing an in-depth description of the language learning process that takes place in the classroom, including teachers' instructional strategies, student interactions, and the implementation of language learning principles.

The study was conducted through direct classroom observations, enabling the researcher to examine how teachers applied communicative, contextual, and integrated learning principles during teaching and learning activities. These observations were supported by systematic field notes to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the collected data and to facilitate comprehensive analysis.

In addition to observation, interviews were conducted to gather information from both teachers and students. Semi-structured interviews were utilized to allow flexibility while maintaining a clear focus on the research objectives. Through this method, the researcher was able to explore teachers' perceptions of language learning principles as well as students' experiences and responses to the learning process.

The research data were further strengthened through documentation, including lesson plans, textbooks, and students' learning records. These documents served as triangulation materials to verify and support the findings obtained from observations and interviews, thereby enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the research.

Data analysis was carried out through three stages: data reduction, data

display, and conclusion drawing. These processes were conducted continuously and iteratively to ensure that the findings accurately reflected the actual conditions in the field. Through this research method, it is expected that a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of Indonesian language learning principles in MI and SD settings can be obtained.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Principles of Indonesian Language Learning in Elementary Education

Learning and instruction are two interrelated aspects that cannot be separated within the educational process. Learning refers to the process through which individuals acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and experiences, while instruction is the systematic effort designed to facilitate and support that learning process. Both learning and instruction involve educational interactions aimed at achieving predetermined educational goals. In educational settings, learning occurs through dynamic interactions between students and their environment, whereas instruction serves as the organized framework that guides these interactions toward meaningful outcomes.

Learning can be understood as a process of behavioral change resulting from an individual's interaction with various environmental factors. These environmental factors include people, objects, events, and experiences that provide opportunities for acquiring new knowledge or revisiting previously learned concepts. Through repeated interactions with the environment, learners develop deeper understanding, strengthen existing knowledge, and construct new meanings based on their experiences. Therefore, learning is not merely the accumulation of information but a continuous process of adaptation and personal growth.

Instruction, on the other hand, is a carefully planned activity designed to create conditions that enable learning to occur effectively. It consists of several interconnected components, including teachers, students, objectives, learning materials, instructional media, teaching methods, and evaluation systems. These components function together as a unified system. The effectiveness of instruction depends on how well these elements are integrated and aligned with the intended learning objectives. Consequently, successful teaching requires comprehensive planning, implementation, and assessment.

Learning and instruction are goal-oriented activities characterized by the involvement of various interconnected components commonly referred to as instructional devices. These devices include lesson plans, teaching materials, learning resources, instructional media, assessment instruments, and evaluation procedures. The proper design and utilization of these components help create meaningful learning experiences and facilitate the achievement of educational goals. As both a process and a system, learning and instruction have attracted significant attention from educational scholars, resulting in the development of diverse theories and approaches that reflect different perspectives on how learning occurs and how teaching should be conducted.

According to the Indonesian Dictionary (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia), a

principle is defined as a fundamental truth, guideline, or foundation that serves as the basis for thinking and acting. In the educational context, learning principles provide the theoretical and practical foundations that guide instructional activities. Learning itself involves conscious and deliberate efforts undertaken by individuals to gain knowledge, improve skills, develop attitudes, and strengthen personal character. Through learning, individuals move from a state of not knowing to knowing, from limited understanding to broader comprehension, and from passive reception to active engagement with knowledge and experience.

Language learning occupies a unique position within education because language functions not only as a subject of study but also as a medium through which other knowledge is acquired. Indonesian language learning, therefore, plays a critical role in developing students' literacy, communication abilities, critical thinking skills, and cultural awareness. Effective language learning enables students to understand information, express ideas, participate in social interactions, and engage with academic content across disciplines.

The essence of Indonesian language learning is to equip students with the ability to use the language correctly, appropriately, and effectively according to its purposes and functions. According to Atmazaki, Indonesian language education aims to develop students' ability to communicate effectively and ethically in both spoken and written forms. Furthermore, it seeks to foster pride in Indonesian as the national and unifying language, enhance intellectual and emotional development, encourage appreciation of literary works, and strengthen students' understanding of Indonesian cultural values. Through language learning, students are expected to become competent communicators who can use language creatively and responsibly in various contexts.

The objectives of Indonesian language instruction extend beyond linguistic proficiency. Language learning should enable students to conduct inquiry, share information, express ideas, collaborate with others, and solve problems encountered in everyday life. In line with the objectives of the 2013 Curriculum, Indonesian language learning is text-based and emphasizes meaningful communication. Students are encouraged to understand, analyze, and produce various forms of texts that reflect real-life communication needs. Through these activities, learners develop not only language skills but also critical and analytical thinking abilities.

The principles of Indonesian language learning serve as guidelines for organizing and implementing effective instruction. According to educational scholars such as Khair and Rosyidah, several fundamental principles underpin Indonesian language learning. First, language should be viewed as text rather than merely a collection of words or grammatical rules. This perspective emphasizes that language functions as a meaningful unit of communication within specific contexts. Second, language use involves selecting appropriate linguistic forms to express intended meanings. Third, language is functional and inseparable from social, cultural, and situational contexts. Finally, language serves as a tool for developing human thought and cognitive processes.

Based on these principles, Indonesian language instruction should be delivered systematically and comprehensively to ensure that students develop

balanced language competencies. Effective language learning should support students in learning to know, learning to learn, learning to do, learning to solve problems, learning to live together, and learning to become productive members of society. To achieve these goals, teachers must understand and apply various instructional principles that guide language teaching practices.

Contextual Principle

The contextual principle emphasizes connecting learning materials with students' real-life experiences. Contextual learning occurs when teachers relate classroom content to authentic situations encountered by students in their daily lives. Through this approach, students are encouraged to establish meaningful relationships between prior knowledge and new information. Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) is a holistic educational approach that helps learners understand the relevance of academic content by linking it to personal, social, and cultural contexts.

In Indonesian language learning, contextual instruction may involve using local stories, community issues, family experiences, or cultural traditions as learning materials. Such activities enable students to recognize the practical value of language in communication and social interaction. As a result, learning becomes more meaningful, engaging, and applicable to real-world situations.

Integrative Principle

Language is fundamentally a system composed of interconnected subsystems, including phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. These components function together in communication and cannot be separated in actual language use. Consequently, Indonesian language instruction should adopt an integrative approach that combines various language components and skills.

For example, speaking activities require learners to pronounce words accurately (phonology), use appropriate vocabulary (morphology), construct meaningful sentences (syntax), and convey intended meanings effectively (semantics). Similarly, listening, reading, and writing skills are interconnected and should be developed simultaneously. An integrative approach enables students to acquire language competence holistically rather than learning isolated language elements.

Functional Principle

The functional principle emphasizes that language learning should be directly related to the practical functions of language in everyday life. The primary goal of language instruction is to enable students to communicate effectively and appropriately in various situations. Therefore, language activities should reflect authentic communication purposes rather than focusing solely on grammatical accuracy.

This principle aligns closely with the communicative approach to language teaching, which views language as a tool for interaction and meaning-making. Within this framework, teachers act as facilitators who create opportunities for meaningful communication rather than merely transmitting information. Learning resources are drawn from multiple sources, and students actively participate in constructing knowledge through interaction.

Appreciative Principle

The appreciative principle highlights the importance of creating enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences. The term appreciation refers to recognition, enjoyment, and positive evaluation. In language education, this principle encourages teachers to foster students' interest and enthusiasm for learning.

An appreciative learning environment supports the development of all language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Literary works such as poems, stories, and dramas can be integrated into language instruction to enhance students' enjoyment while simultaneously developing linguistic competence and cultural awareness. When students experience learning as enjoyable and rewarding, their motivation and participation increase significantly.

Humanistic Principle

The humanistic principle is derived from humanistic psychology, which emphasizes the development of the whole person. Humanistic education focuses on students' cognitive, emotional, and social needs. It seeks to create learning experiences that support self-actualization, self-confidence, and personal growth.

Humanistic language instruction is organized around learners' interests, goals, and needs. Students are encouraged to express themselves freely, make independent decisions, and take responsibility for their learning. Teachers create supportive environments characterized by respect, empathy, and understanding. Through this approach, students develop not only language proficiency but also interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, and positive self-concepts.

Progressivism Principle

The progressivism principle emphasizes creativity, problem-solving, and continuous development. Knowledge and skills are not acquired mechanically but through active exploration and innovation. Learning should prepare students to address real-world challenges by encouraging critical thinking and adaptability.

In Indonesian language learning, progressivism promotes activities that require students to analyze texts, solve communication problems, generate original ideas, and participate in collaborative projects. Such experiences help learners develop independence, creativity, and lifelong learning skills that are essential in contemporary society.

Constructivism Principle

Constructivism views learning as a process through which individuals actively construct knowledge based on their experiences and prior understanding. Students are not passive recipients of information but active participants who create meaning through interaction and reflection.

Within a constructivist classroom, mistakes are considered natural and valuable components of learning. Teachers guide students in exploring ideas, questioning assumptions, and discovering solutions rather than simply providing answers. This approach encourages deeper understanding, critical thinking, and meaningful knowledge construction. Furthermore, teachers themselves are viewed as lifelong learners who continuously adapt their instructional practices to meet students' needs and learning contexts.

The Role of Teachers in Indonesian Language Learning

Teachers play a crucial role in determining the success of the teaching and

learning process. Educational experts have identified numerous teacher roles, including instructor, classroom leader, mentor, organizer, participant, planner, supervisor, motivator, facilitator, and counselor. Among these roles, several are particularly important in language education.

As demonstrators, teachers must possess comprehensive mastery of subject matter and continuously update their professional knowledge. Their expertise significantly influences students' learning outcomes and academic achievement.

As classroom managers, teachers are responsible for creating and maintaining learning environments that are safe, organized, stimulating, and conducive to learning. Effective classroom management promotes student engagement and supports the achievement of educational objectives.

As mediators and facilitators, teachers bridge the gap between students and learning resources. They utilize various instructional media, technologies, and communication strategies to enhance learning effectiveness. By fostering interaction and collaboration, teachers help students construct knowledge actively.

Finally, as evaluators, teachers assess students' learning progress and determine the extent to which instructional objectives have been achieved. Evaluation involves both testing and non-testing techniques and serves as a basis for improving instruction and supporting student development. Through continuous assessment, teachers can identify strengths, address weaknesses, and ensure that learning remains aligned with educational goals.

In conclusion, the principles of Indonesian language learning provide a comprehensive framework for organizing effective instruction. Contextual, integrative, functional, appreciative, humanistic, progressivist, and constructivist principles collectively contribute to the development of students' linguistic competence, critical thinking skills, social awareness, and personal growth. When these principles are implemented effectively, Indonesian language education can foster learners who are communicative, creative, culturally aware, and prepared to participate actively in society.

Contoh Implementasi Prinsip dalam Pembelajaran

Kegiatan Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia	Prinsip yang Digunakan
Menulis karangan pengalaman pribadi	Kreativitas, kontekstual
Membaca puisi dan mendeklamasikan nya	Keterlibatan aktif, menyenangkan
Diskusi kelompok memahami cerita bergambar	Berpusat pada siswa
Menulis laporan hasil pengamatan pada IPA	Keterpaduan
Mengidentifikasi struktur kalimat	Kognitif, terstruktur

CONCLUSION

The principles of Indonesian language learning at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) and Elementary School (SD) levels serve as essential guidelines for implementing effective, meaningful, and student-centered instructional practices. Indonesian language instruction should be designed to accommodate students' developmental characteristics, learning needs, interests, and abilities while promoting active participation throughout the learning process. Fundamental

principles such as communicative, contextual, integrative, functional, appreciative, humanistic, progressivist, and constructivist learning provide a comprehensive framework for developing students' language competencies in a holistic manner. Through the application of these principles, learners are not only expected to master the four fundamental language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—but also to utilize the Indonesian language appropriately, effectively, and ethically in various social and academic contexts.

Furthermore, effective Indonesian language learning should encourage students to become active constructors of knowledge rather than passive recipients of information. Learning activities must be designed to engage students in authentic communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and creative expression. By integrating real-life experiences, local culture, and meaningful contexts into classroom instruction, teachers can help students understand the practical relevance of language and strengthen their appreciation of Indonesian as both a national language and a symbol of national identity. Such an approach contributes significantly to the development of literacy skills, intellectual growth, and social competence among elementary school learners.

The success of Indonesian language instruction is largely determined by teachers' professional competence in selecting appropriate teaching strategies, instructional methods, learning media, and assessment techniques. Teachers play a crucial role as facilitators, motivators, mediators, classroom managers, and evaluators who create learning environments that are engaging, supportive, and conducive to meaningful learning. The effective utilization of diverse learning resources, educational technologies, and community-based experiences can enhance students' motivation and deepen their understanding of language concepts. Consequently, language learning should not be limited to theoretical knowledge but should also emphasize the practical application of language skills in authentic situations.

In addition, a high-quality Indonesian language learning process requires collaboration among all educational stakeholders, including teachers, school administrators, parents, and policymakers. Supportive educational policies, adequate learning facilities, relevant teaching materials, and continuous professional development opportunities for teachers are necessary to ensure the successful implementation of language learning principles. Such collaborative efforts contribute to creating an educational environment that nurtures students' linguistic, cognitive, emotional, and social development.

Ultimately, the consistent implementation of Indonesian language learning principles can foster students who possess strong literacy skills, critical and reflective thinking abilities, effective communication competence, and positive character values. These competencies serve as essential foundations for academic success at higher levels of education and for active participation in society. Therefore, improving the quality of Indonesian language instruction should remain a priority within primary education, as it plays a vital role in shaping knowledgeable, communicative, culturally aware, and responsible citizens who are prepared to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

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