

ENHANCING COMMUNITY LITERACY THROUGH CONTEXTUAL INDONESIAN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis efektivitas pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia berbasis konteks dalam meningkatkan kemampuan literasi masyarakat Kampung Kokoda, Papua. Latar belakang penelitian ini didasarkan pada rendahnya tingkat literasi masyarakat yang dipengaruhi oleh dominasi bahasa daerah, keterbatasan akses pendidikan, serta minimnya pembelajaran yang relevan dengan konteks kehidupan sehari-hari. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan partisipatif berbasis komunitas (Community-Based Learning). Desain penelitian menggunakan one group pre-test–post-test dengan melibatkan 45 peserta dari berbagai kelompok usia. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes literasi, observasi, wawancara reflektif, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis secara deskriptif dan inferensial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan literasi awal peserta berada pada kategori rendah dengan rata-rata skor 48,0. Setelah intervensi, terjadi peningkatan signifikan dengan rata-rata skor menjadi 72,7. Peningkatan ini didukung oleh hasil uji statistik paired sample t-test yang menunjukkan nilai $t = 12,45$ dengan signifikansi $p < 0,05$. Selain itu, tingkat partisipasi peserta selama pembelajaran tergolong tinggi, yang menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan berbasis konteks mampu meningkatkan keterlibatan dan motivasi belajar. Dengan demikian, pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia berbasis konteks terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan literasi serta dapat direkomendasikan sebagai strategi dalam pemberantasan buta aksara dan penguatan literasi masyarakat.

Kata kunci: pembelajaran berbasis konteks, literasi, masyarakat lokal, buta aksara, Kampung Kokoda

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of context-based Indonesian language learning in improving the literacy skills of the Kokoda community in Papua. The study is motivated by the low literacy levels influenced by the dominance of local languages, limited access to education, and the lack of learning approaches relevant to daily life contexts. This research employed a descriptive quantitative method combined with a community-based participatory approach (Community-Based Learning). The research design used a one-group pre-test–post-test model involving 45 participants from various age groups. Data were collected through literacy tests, observations, reflective interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results show that the initial literacy level of participants was categorized as low, with a mean score of 48.0. After the intervention, a significant improvement was observed, with the mean score increasing to 72.7. This improvement is supported by the paired sample t-test result ($t = 12.45$; $p < 0.05$), indicating statistical significance. In addition, participant engagement during the learning process was high, suggesting that the context-based approach effectively enhances motivation and participation. Therefore, context-based Indonesian language learning is proven to be effective in improving literacy skills and can be recommended as a strategic approach for literacy eradication and sustainable literacy development in local communities.

Keywords: context-based learning, literacy, local community, illiteracy, Kokoda Village

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian plays a strategic role as both a national identity and a unifying language within Indonesia's multicultural society. In the context of education, Indonesian serves as a fundamental foundation for basic literacy skills, including reading, writing, and speaking. Literacy is not merely a technical linguistic ability but also a key factor enabling individuals to access information, participate in social life, and improve their quality of life (Leung, 2010; Mtika & Abbott, 2025; Barton et al., 2012; Rassool, 1999; Benavot, 2015). However, literacy achievement in Indonesia remains relatively low. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018 ranked Indonesia 74th out of 79 countries in reading literacy, while data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2020 reported an illiteracy rate of 1.71%, with the highest concentration found in Papua and West Papua (Ritonga et al., 2023; Ulfah & Machmud, 2024; Indrani & Sarma, 2024).

This condition is also evident in Kokoda Village, Sorong Regency, which represents one of the areas facing serious literacy challenges. The low proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking Indonesian limits the community's access to education, public services, and economic opportunities (Sukmayadi & Yahya, 2020). Furthermore, the dominance of local languages in daily communication causes Indonesian to be perceived as a formal language that is disconnected from the lived experiences of the community. As a result, learning processes often become less meaningful and less relevant, leading to suboptimal outcomes in literacy eradication programs.

The literacy problem in Kokoda Village is not solely related to limited access to formal education but is also influenced by socio-cultural factors. Strong oral traditions, limited learning resources, and the lack of facilitators who understand the local cultural context contribute to

the persistence of low literacy levels. On the other hand, government initiatives such as the National The National Literacy Movement (GLN) and the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum have promoted adaptive and context-based learning approaches (Liando & Zein, 2025; Kurniadi et al., 2024). However, their implementation in remote and underdeveloped (3T) areas continues to face significant challenges, including limited infrastructure, shortages of qualified educators, and the mismatch between instructional approaches and local cultural characteristics.

In response to these challenges, there is a need for a learning approach that bridges the gap between formal language use and the lived experiences of the community. Context-based Indonesian language learning offers a relevant solution, as it integrates instructional materials with everyday life, local culture, and the social experiences of learners (Leech Morejon, 2025; Arfiansyah et al., 2024; Sitepu et al., 2025; Muhria et al., 2026). This approach is expected to enhance learner engagement, facilitate comprehension, and create a more meaningful and sustainable learning process.

From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the development of community-based literacy research, particularly in multilingual and culturally grounded communities such as Kokoda. Previous studies have predominantly focused on literacy within formal educational settings, while research examining context-based literacy learning in non-formal community environments remains limited (Sichula, 2018). Therefore, this study offers novelty by developing a context-based Indonesian language learning model that incorporates local cultural elements, involves community facilitators, and positions community members as active participants in the learning process.

Practically, this study is expected to contribute to improving the literacy skills of the Kokoda community while supporting illiteracy

eradication efforts. It also aims to enhance access to information, public services, and economic opportunities. The sustainability of literacy programs will be strengthened through the establishment of community-based learning spaces such as the Kokoda Reading Corner (PojoK Baca Kokoda). Thus, this study is not only academically relevant but also strategically aligned with human resource development and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in ensuring inclusive and quality education.

2. METHOD

This study employed a descriptive quantitative method combined with a community-based participatory approach, namely Community-Based Learning (CBL). This methodological combination was selected to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the community's literacy condition while implementing an intervention that is culturally relevant and contextually grounded in Kokoda Village. The research design used a one-group pre-test–post-test model to measure changes in participants' literacy skills, including reading, writing, and speaking, before and after the implementation of context-based Indonesian language learning.

The participants of this study consisted of 45 community members from Kokoda Village, Sorong Regency, representing various age groups, including adults, adolescents, and youth. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their active involvement and willingness to participate in literacy activities. Data were collected through literacy tests, observations, reflective interviews, and documentation. The literacy test was designed based on participants' daily life contexts, while observations were conducted to assess engagement and interaction during the learning process. Reflective interviews were used to explore participants' experiences, challenges, and

perceptions of the program, and documentation in the form of photographs, videos, and field notes was used to support data validity.

The research procedure consisted of four main stages: preparation, planning, implementation, and evaluation. In the preparation stage, initial surveys, coordination with community leaders, and pre-test assessments were conducted to identify baseline literacy conditions. The planning stage involved developing context-based learning modules and training local facilitators. The implementation stage included Indonesian language learning activities conducted three times a week over a six-week period, utilizing culturally relevant strategies such as storytelling, language games, and group discussions. The evaluation stage involved post-test assessments and reflective interviews to measure learning outcomes. Data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis to compare pre-test and post-test results, supported by qualitative analysis of observational and interview data. Data triangulation was applied to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are presented based on the analysis of initial literacy conditions, the implementation of context-based learning, and changes in literacy skills after the intervention.

Initial Literacy Condition

To provide a clearer overview of the initial literacy condition of the Kokoda community, the pre-test data are presented in a graphical form. This visualization aims to illustrate the comparison of mean scores across the three literacy aspects—reading, writing, and speaking—thereby facilitating a more comprehensive interpretation of participants' baseline literacy skills prior to the implementation of context-based learning.

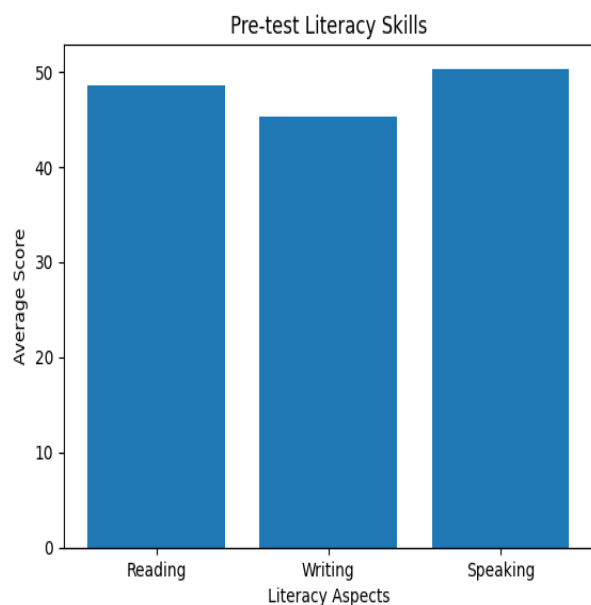


Figure: Initial Literacy Condition

As shown in Figure 1, all literacy aspects fall within the low category. Speaking demonstrates the highest mean score (50.3), followed by reading (48.6) and writing (45.2). However, the differences among these aspects are not substantial, and overall, participants remain at a basic literacy level. The low score in writing indicates difficulties in constructing structured sentences, while reading challenges are associated with limited fluency and comprehension of simple texts.

These findings confirm that the initial literacy level of the community requires improvement through learning approaches that are more contextual and relevant to daily life. Therefore, the implementation of context-based learning is essential to bridge the gap between language competence and the social realities of the community.

Implementation of Context-Based Learning

To provide a more comprehensive overview of participants' engagement during the implementation of context-based learning, observational data are presented in graphical form. This visualization aims to illustrate

participants' attendance, participation in discussions, engagement in learning activities, and responses to the instructional materials.

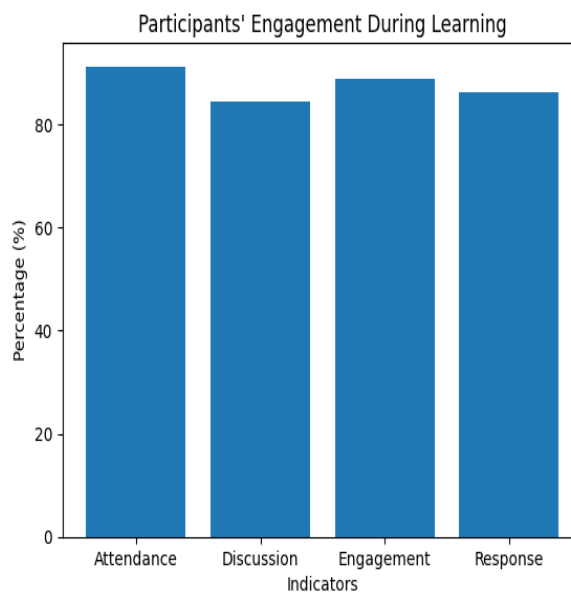


Figure 2. Participants' Engagement During the Implementation of Context-Based Learning

As shown in Figure 2, participants' engagement levels are categorized as high across all indicators. Attendance shows the highest percentage (91.2%), indicating strong commitment and motivation among participants. Engagement in learning activities is also high (88.7%), followed by responses to learning materials (86.3%) and participation in discussions (84.5%).

These findings indicate that context-based learning significantly enhances participant engagement. The high level of participation suggests that integrating local experiences and cultural elements into the learning process creates a more interactive, relevant, and meaningful learning environment. Furthermore, the involvement of local facilitators contributes to stronger social interaction and a more supportive learning atmosphere.

Improvement in Literacy Skills (Post-test Results)

Based on the post-test results involving 45 participants, a significant improvement was observed across all literacy aspects following the implementation of context-based learning. The overall mean literacy score increased from 48.0 to 72.7 (SD = 7.2), indicating a shift from low to moderate–high literacy levels.

Specifically, reading skills improved from 48.6 to 72.4 (SD = 7.5), demonstrating that participants were able to read simple texts more fluently and comprehend their content. Writing skills increased from 45.2 to 70.1 (SD = 7.0), indicating improvements in constructing more structured and meaningful sentences. Meanwhile, speaking skills improved from 50.3 to 75.6 (SD = 7.3), reflecting increased confidence and the ability to express ideas more clearly and coherently.

The distribution of literacy levels also changed significantly, with 25 participants (55.6%) categorized as high, 15 participants (33.3%) as moderate, and only 5 participants (11.1%) remaining in the low category.

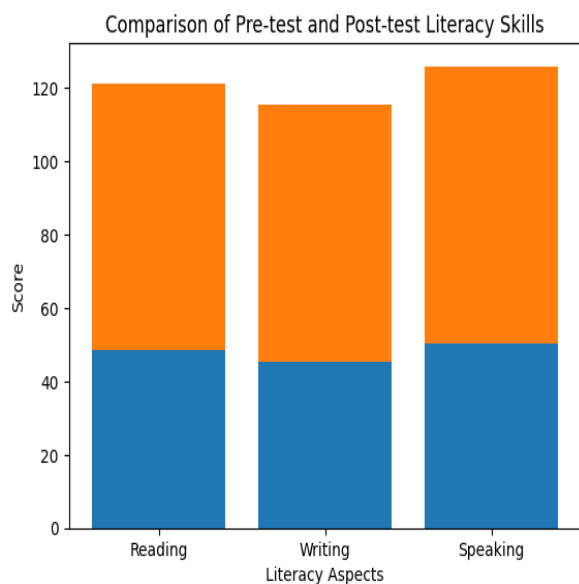


Figure 3. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Literacy Skills

The graph illustrates a clear improvement in literacy skills across all aspects after the implementation of context-based learning. Speaking shows the highest increase, followed by writing and reading. This consistent upward trend confirms that the intervention was effective in enhancing participants' literacy abilities.

Statistical Test (Paired Sample t-test)

The results of the paired sample t-test indicate a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores. The analysis yielded a t-value of 12.45 with a significance level of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$), demonstrating that the improvement in literacy skills is statistically significant. This finding suggests that the observed changes are not due to chance but are attributable to the implementation of the context-based learning intervention.

Therefore, it can be concluded that context-based Indonesian language learning has a significant and positive effect on enhancing participants' literacy skills across reading, writing, and speaking aspects.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the initial literacy level of the Kokoda community was relatively low, as reflected in the pre-test scores across reading, writing, and speaking skills. This condition is closely related to the socio-cultural context in which local languages dominate daily communication. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this situation reflects a mismatch between the formal language used in educational settings and the language used in everyday interactions (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2006; Gumperz, 2015). As a result, exposure to Indonesian as the primary language of literacy remains limited, leading to insufficient development of reading, writing, and speaking competencies.

Furthermore, the low literacy level is strongly associated with limited access to formal education and learning resources. Communities

in remote and underdeveloped (3T) areas, such as Kokoda Village, often face structural challenges, including inadequate educational facilities, a shortage of qualified teachers, and limited availability of contextually relevant reading materials. These findings suggest that literacy is influenced not only by individual abilities but also by broader social and environmental factors (Hayiou-Thomas, 2008). Therefore, efforts to improve literacy must consider contextual conditions and the actual needs of the community.

The implementation of context-based Indonesian language learning in this study demonstrated significant results in enhancing participant engagement. The high level of attendance and active participation indicates that this approach successfully creates a more engaging and relevant learning experience. This finding is consistent with contextual learning theory, which emphasizes that learning becomes more effective when it is connected to learners' real-life experiences. Consequently, learning is not merely a cognitive process but also involves affective and social dimensions that support knowledge internalization (Alias et al., 2014; Ringberg & Reihlen, 2008; Wipawayangkool & Teng, 2016).

The instructional strategies employed, such as storytelling, language games, and group discussions, proved effective in fostering interaction and participation. Storytelling, particularly through local folklore, serves not only as a language learning medium but also as a tool for preserving cultural heritage (Scroggie, 2009). Language games create an enjoyable learning atmosphere, reducing learners' anxiety in using Indonesian (Alwi et al., 2025). Meanwhile, group discussions provide opportunities for active communication practice, thereby enhancing confidence and speaking skills.

The role of local facilitators emerged as a crucial factor in the success of the program.

Facilitators from within the community possess a deeper understanding of participants' cultural background, language, and social context. This familiarity helps create a more inclusive and comfortable learning environment. From a community-based education perspective, the involvement of local actors strengthens program sustainability by fostering a sense of ownership among participants (Hacker et al., 2012). This indicates that the success of literacy interventions depends not only on instructional design but also on social and cultural engagement.

The significant improvement observed in post-test results demonstrates the effectiveness of context-based learning in enhancing literacy skills. This improvement is evident not only in the increase in mean scores but also in the shift of participants from low to moderate and high literacy categories. These findings suggest that learning approaches aligned with real-life contexts can effectively reduce learning barriers and accelerate language acquisition.

The statistical analysis further supports these findings, as the paired sample t-test results indicate a highly significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores. The high t-value and low significance level confirm that the observed improvements are not due to chance but are the direct result of the learning intervention. This provides strong empirical evidence that context-based learning is a highly effective approach for improving literacy skills in culturally diverse communities (Asrul & Meisuri, 2024; Tatal, 2023; Abu-Rasheed et al., 2023).

Overall, this study demonstrates that context-based Indonesian language learning has substantial potential in improving literacy levels, particularly in communities with limited access to formal education. This approach not only enhances language skills but also promotes literacy awareness and community participation. Additionally, integrating local cultural elements into the learning process contributes to both

cultural preservation and increased learning relevance.

The implications of this study are significant for educational policy development, particularly in remote and underdeveloped areas. Policymakers and stakeholders should consider adopting adaptive and contextually relevant learning approaches in designing literacy programs. Furthermore, involving local communities and developing culturally based learning resources are essential for ensuring program sustainability. Therefore, literacy development efforts should not only aim for short-term outcomes but also foster long-term impacts on community development.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that context-based Indonesian language learning is effective in improving the literacy skills of the Kokoda community, including reading, writing, and speaking abilities. This improvement is evidenced by the significant differences between pre-test and post-test results, as well as the high level of participant engagement throughout the learning process. The contextual approach, which integrates real-life experiences, local cultural elements, and diverse instructional strategies, successfully creates a learning environment that is meaningful, relevant, and responsive to community needs.

In addition to enhancing literacy skills, this study also demonstrates that context-based learning contributes to the development of literacy awareness, increased community participation, and program sustainability through the involvement of local facilitators and the establishment of community-based learning spaces. These findings have important implications for educational policy, particularly in remote and underdeveloped (3T) areas, emphasizing the importance of culturally responsive and contextually grounded learning approaches. Therefore, this model can be

recommended as an effective strategy for literacy eradication and sustainable literacy development within local communities.

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