

Linguistic Sustainability in The Malay-Speaking Nations of The Historical Nusantara: Comparative Approaches to Minority And Indigenous Language Preservation

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ABSTRACT: The survival of minority languages faces critical threats amid accelerating globalisation and cultural homogenisation. This article presents a comparative analysis of linguistic sustainability strategies in three Malay-speaking nations of the historical Nusantara—Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam—each shaped by distinct colonial histories, governance structures, and sociolinguistic ecologies. Drawing on academic literature, official policy documents, and institutional reports, the study evaluates national approaches to the preservation of minority and indigenous languages across legal, educational, cultural, and technological domains. Indonesia, with over 700 living languages, adopts a comprehensive, decentralised strategy anchored in constitutional mandates and operationalised through initiatives such as the *Revitalisasi Bahasa Daerah* (Regional Language Revitalization) programme. This policy integrates endangered languages into curricula, trains local educators, and supports regional linguistic documentation. The expansion into digital media—via online dictionaries, apps, and content platforms—further broadens accessibility and youth engagement. However, regional disparities in infrastructure and implementation capacity challenge consistent outcomes. Malaysia's approach is comparatively focused and regionally responsive. In Peninsular Malaysia, Chinese and Tamil vernacular schools operate alongside Malay-medium institutions, reflecting a federal commitment to ethnolinguistic pluralism. In Sabah and Sarawak, indigenous languages such as Iban and Kadazandusun receive targeted support through the *Pupil's Own Language* (POL) programme and regional broadcasting. Cultural festivals and grassroots associations bolster intergenerational transmission, while institutions like the Language and Literature Bureau of Malaysia and collaborative digital projects (e.g. Wiktionary) contribute to documentation and language modernisation. Brunei Darussalam, by contrast, has adopted a preservationist and academic model in response to its concentrated linguistic ecology. While Malay and English dominate official domains, minority languages such as Tutong, Kedayan, and Dusun are sustained through limited but strategic documentation efforts. The Language and Literature Bureau of Brunei has produced bilingual lexicons, and Universiti Brunei Darussalam offers language courses and supports research on endangered local tongues. Although modest in scale, these initiatives reflect a state-led commitment to heritage preservation. The study concludes that linguistic sustainability must be pursued through context-sensitive, adaptive strategies. Indonesia's expansive multilevel engagement, Malaysia's differentiated and community-integrated model, and Brunei's institutional focus each offer lessons for multilingual societies. Ultimately, a combination of legal recognition, mother-tongue education, cultural visibility, and technological innovation provides viable pathways for safeguarding linguistic diversity in the region.

KEYWORDS: Linguistic Sustainability, Malay-speaking Nations, Minority and Indigenous Languages, Nusantara, Preservation of Endangered Languages

I. INTRODUCTION

The global erosion of linguistic diversity poses a significant threat to cultural heritage, knowledge systems, and the sustainability of marginalised communities. Of the approximately 7,000 languages spoken worldwide today, nearly 40% are considered endangered, with many facing the risk of extinction within this century if current trends persist (UNESCO, 2022). Language, far more than a medium of communication, constitutes a vehicle of identity, epistemology, and cultural continuity. The loss of a language entails not only the disappearance of unique worldviews and oral traditions but also the disruption of social cohesion and intergenerational knowledge transmission (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006; Harrison, 2007).

Against this backdrop, the concept of linguistic sustainability has emerged as a response to the imperative of maintaining linguistic diversity in an era marked by globalisation, urbanisation, and technological change (Romaine, 2007; Mufwene, 2008).

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As defined by Huszka, Stark, and Aini (2024), linguistic sustainability refers to “a broad set of state- and community-level policies and practices that ensure the long-term survival of minority and indigenous languages through culturally embedded, socially empowering, and often technologically mediated interventions” (p. 149). This paradigm shift—away from documenting language endangerment toward actively sustaining linguistic ecosystems—is central to contemporary language policy in multilingual societies.

The Malay-speaking nations of the historical Nusantara—Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam—provide compelling case studies in this regard. Each country exhibits a unique sociolinguistic landscape, shaped by distinct colonial legacies, post-independence nation-building ideologies, demographic profiles, and institutional capacities (Sneddon, 2003; Lauder, 2008). Indonesia, as the world’s most linguistically diverse country, recognises over 700 living languages (Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig, 2023). Malaysia, with a population composed of Malay, Chinese, Indian, and indigenous groups, supports a formally pluralistic education system that incorporates vernacular languages. Brunei, while comparatively smaller, is home to several endangered indigenous languages, including Tutong, Kedayan, and Belait, spoken by minority communities at risk of complete language shift within a generation (Deterding, 2020).

This study examines and compares how these three nations pursue linguistic sustainability in the context of regional multilingualism and shifting language ideologies. Specifically, it analyses their strategies across four key domains: (1) legal and policy frameworks, (2) educational programming, (3) cultural and media engagement, and (4) technological innovation. These pillars reflect the multidimensional nature of language preservation, which UNESCO (2021) identifies as requiring “coordinated action across institutions, communities, and generations” (p. 12). By exploring the interplay of top-down policies and grassroots initiatives, the study foregrounds both structural capacities and sociocultural dynamics in shaping language futures.

Indonesia’s approach is grounded in constitutional recognition of regional languages and operationalised through decentralised policy mechanisms. Article 32(2) of the 1945 Constitution mandates that “the State shall respect and maintain regional languages as part of national cultural wealth” (Republic of Indonesia, 1945/2002). This legal principle supports expansive programmes such as *Revitalisasi Bahasa Daerah* (Regional Language Revitalisation), which fund curriculum development, teacher training, and community workshops in local languages (Huszka et al., 2024; Zein, 2019). Additionally, Indonesia has pioneered the use of digital platforms to revitalise languages, including the award-winning BASAbali Wiki, a community-driven Balinese language portal integrating dictionaries, forums, and civic education (UNESCO, 2019).

Malaysia, by contrast, adopts a regionally differentiated model. Article 152 of its Federal Constitution affirms Malay as the national language, while explicitly allowing for the continued use of other languages for educational and cultural purposes (Government of Malaysia, 1957/2010). This has enabled the parallel operation of Chinese- and Tamil-medium schools, which are publicly funded and governed by national curriculum standards (Tan & Santhiram, 2010). In Sabah and Sarawak, the Ministry of Education has implemented the *Pupil’s Own Language* (POL) programme, permitting elective instruction in indigenous languages such as Iban and Kadazandusun (Antau & Jamaludin, 2023). Complementary efforts by Language and Literature Bureau, state cultural agencies, and civil society organisations contribute to media production, folklore preservation, and digital lexicography (Sarawak Tribune, 2025; Akwugo, 2024).

Brunei Darussalam’s strategy is more archival in character. While Malay and English dominate the formal domains of governance and education, minority languages are primarily supported through academic initiatives and documentation projects. Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) has developed elective courses and digital dictionaries for endangered languages such as Tutong and Belait, in collaboration with the Language and Literature Bureau (Deterding, 2020). These efforts are vital, yet they remain modest in scope due to limited institutional bandwidth and the small size of Brunei’s minority language communities. As Deterding (2020) notes, “most of these languages are not being passed on to the next generation, and their future is precarious” (p. 166).

Through a literature-based, qualitative comparison, this article identifies both convergences and divergences in how these countries operationalise linguistic sustainability. Indonesia illustrates a model of decentralised expansion, Malaysia exemplifies a community-responsive and constitutionally pluralistic system, and Brunei represents a preservationist stance rooted in institutional archiving. Each model reflects different capacities, constraints, and commitments. By contextualising these cases within global frameworks—such as UNESCO’s International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032)—the study contributes to broader discussions on how multilingual states can equitably and effectively safeguard linguistic heritage.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theoretical Framework: Linguistic Sustainability and Language Endangerment

Linguistic sustainability is an evolving conceptual framework that links language preservation to broader concerns about cultural diversity, human rights, and sustainable development. Originating from ecological models of diversity conservation, the concept of linguistic sustainability calls for the maintenance of the world’s linguistic diversity through coordinated sociopolitical and

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educational mechanisms (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Romaine, 2007). It views languages not merely as communication tools, but as integral components of social ecosystems, repositories of cultural knowledge, and identity markers (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006; Nettle & Romaine, 2000).

UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage recognises languages as carriers of intangible cultural heritage and calls for their protection and transmission (UNESCO, 2003). More recently, the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL 2022–2032) and the World Atlas of Languages initiative represent international efforts to coordinate data collection, language mapping, and preservation strategies (UNESCO, 2022). These frameworks call for collaborative strategies involving state institutions, educational stakeholders, and local communities to revitalise and sustain endangered languages.

According to the 2023 edition of *Ethnologue*, over 3,000 languages are currently endangered, with Southeast Asia ranked among the regions with the highest linguistic diversity and risk (Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig, 2023). In this context, the idea of linguistic sustainability functions as a normative guide for national policy and community practice, encouraging inclusive language ideologies that balance national integration with cultural pluralism (Zein, 2019).

B. Language Policy in Nusantara

Southeast Asia presents a complex terrain for language policy due to its extensive multilingualism, colonial legacies, and postcolonial nation-building efforts. As Kaplan and Baldauf (2003) argue, language planning in postcolonial states often oscillates between the goals of national unification and the preservation of ethnolinguistic diversity. In Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei, the dominant use of standardised Malay varieties for national cohesion has sometimes been at odds with the objective of safeguarding minority languages.

Indonesia's language policy is founded upon the principle of Unity in Diversity (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*), with Bahasa Indonesia functioning as both the national and official language (Huszka, Stark, Aini, & Annisa, 2024). Although Bahasa Indonesia was deliberately selected as a lingua franca to unify the archipelago's many ethnic groups, the Indonesian Constitution also recognises regional languages as part of the nation's cultural heritage (Republic of Indonesia, 2002). Kohler (2019) describes Indonesia's policy as a balancing act between linguistic unification and cultural preservation, particularly in the education system. This balance is increasingly supported by decentralised initiatives such as *Revitalisasi Bahasa Daerah*, which fund local language education and documentation (Huszka, Stark, & Aini, 2024).

Malaysia's linguistic landscape is similarly layered. While Bahasa Malaysia holds national language status under Article 152 of the Federal Constitution, Chinese and Tamil vernacular schools operate under state sponsorship. These arrangements are a legacy of British colonial governance, which institutionalised education along ethnic lines (Gill, 2005). Current policies maintain this structure, and vernacular schools remain popular among non-Malay communities (Tan & Santhiram, 2010). However, the position of indigenous languages in East Malaysia (e.g. Iban, Bidayuh, Kadazandusun) is less secure, and their inclusion in state curricula depends largely on regional advocacy and ministry initiatives such as the Pupil's Own Language (POL) programme (Antau & Jamaludin, 2023).

Brunei Darussalam presents a more constrained model. Malay is the official language, and English functions as a strong second language, especially in education and administration (Sharbawi, Deterding, & Mohamad, 2023; Huszka et al., 2021). While minority languages such as Tutong and Belait are spoken by indigenous groups, they are largely excluded from national language policy. However, the Language and Literature Bureau and Universiti Brunei Darussalam have made efforts to document and teach these languages in academic settings (Deterding, 2020). This preservationist model, while useful for archival purposes, has limited reach in terms of community revitalisation or everyday language use.

C. Strategies for Language Revitalisation

Scholarly work identifies four main pillars for sustainable language maintenance: legal frameworks, educational policies, cultural integration, and technological innovation (Hornberger & King, 2001; Grenoble & Whaley, 2006). Among these, mother-tongue education is frequently cited as the most effective strategy for intergenerational language transmission (UNESCO, 2016). Studies from diverse contexts, including Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, suggest that early education in the native language improves both linguistic retention and overall academic performance (Ball, 2010).

In Indonesia, local language instruction is often implemented through the *Muatan Lokal* (Local Content) policy, which allows schools to introduce regional languages as part of the official curriculum (Lauder, 2008). Indonesia's decentralised education system provides room for provinces to develop their own language strategies, although this can result in uneven implementation across regions (Zein, 2019). Malaysia's support for Chinese and Tamil schools represents a rare case of state-funded vernacular education within a pluralist system, while its support for indigenous languages remains more fragmented (Tan & Santhiram, 2010; David & Naji, 2000).

Brunei's reliance on academic instruction and dictionary compilation illustrates a different approach—archival preservation rather than active revitalisation (Deterding, 2020). While such initiatives ensure that linguistic records exist, they do not always

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address the social factors contributing to language shift, such as prestige, domain shrinkage, or lack of institutional use (Brenzinger, 2007). Scholars argue that revitalisation efforts must include community-based media, social incentives, and spaces for language use in everyday life to be effective (Hinton et al., 2018).

Technology has also emerged as a crucial tool for preservation and engagement. Projects like BASAbali Wiki, which won the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy in 2019, demonstrate how digital platforms can connect language users, educators, and local governments (UNESCO, 2019). In Malaysia, initiatives such as WikiKata and the development of Kadazandusun entries on Wiktionary illustrate how online collaboration can support language learning and documentation (Akwugo, 2024). These tools are particularly important for younger speakers, who are more likely to engage with digital rather than print or oral modes of communication.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Conceptual Approach and Design

This study adopts a qualitative, literature-based comparative methodology to analyse linguistic sustainability practices in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam. Rather than conducting empirical fieldwork, it synthesises and interprets existing research, legal documents, policy statements, and secondary data sources to evaluate the conceptual and practical frameworks that underpin minority language preservation in these countries. This approach aligns with established practices in language policy research, where documentary analysis serves as a valid means of uncovering ideologies, institutional commitments, and policy trajectories (Johnson, 2013; Ricento, 2006).

A comparative design was selected to identify both convergent strategies and contextual divergences in national responses to linguistic endangerment. The unit of comparison is each nation-state, assessed in terms of four interrelated dimensions: (1) legal and policy frameworks, (2) language-in-education planning, (3) cultural and media support, and (4) technology-enhanced revitalisation. These domains are consistent with UNESCO's four-pronged approach to linguistic sustainability, as detailed in its Global Action Plan for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032) (UNESCO, 2021).

By drawing on documentary and scholarly sources, this study aims to understand the contextual factors that inform language policy development. It considers how historical, institutional, and demographic elements contribute to the ways in which minority languages are supported within national frameworks. The analysis focuses on describing and comparing policy approaches in a balanced manner, recognising that each country operates within its own set of priorities, resources, and sociolinguistic circumstances (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

The use of verified and traceable sources reflects a commitment to scholarly rigour and transparency. All materials referenced in this study—including legal documents, academic publications, and institutional reports—have been selected based on their credibility and relevance. Care has been taken to distinguish between formally enacted policies and those that are proposed or no longer in effect, in order to ensure that the analysis reflects current and practically implemented measures.

This comparative literature-based approach enables a comprehensive yet critically engaged understanding of linguistic sustainability in the Malay-speaking nations of the historical Nusantara. It balances national-level analysis with sensitivity to local complexities, making it suitable for studies in language planning, sociolinguistics, and applied linguistics.

B. Data Sources and Selection

This study draws on a range of secondary sources, including peer-reviewed academic literature, national policy documents, and reports published by international organisations. Materials were retrieved from major academic databases such as ResearchGate, JSTOR, and ScienceDirect, as well as from the official websites of national language institutions, including Indonesia's *Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa* (Agency for Language Development and Cultivation), Malaysia's *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka*, and Brunei's *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka* (Language and Literature Bureau). Intergovernmental sources, such as UNESCO's World Atlas of Languages and the Global Action Plan for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032), provided additional frameworks for understanding policy directions and international benchmarks.

To ensure relevance and comparability, materials were selected according to three criteria: (1) they address minority or indigenous language issues in Indonesia, Malaysia, or Brunei; (2) they pertain to formal language policy, education, or revitalisation efforts; and (3) they were published within the last 15 years, unless constituting foundational legal or institutional texts. Combining academic research with official institutional publications enables a well-rounded understanding of both policy formulations and scholarly interpretations. Government initiatives such as *Revitalisasi Bahasa Daerah* in Indonesia and the Pupil's Own Language (POL) programme in Malaysia were examined in relation to academic assessments of their aims and implementation (e.g., Cohn & Ravindranath, 2014; Antau & Jamaludin, 2023).

C. Scope and Limitations

This study is limited in scope to three Malay-speaking nations of the historical Nusantara: Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam. These countries were selected due to their shared historical, cultural, and linguistic heritage, and because each

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exhibits a distinctive approach to language planning and the treatment of minority and indigenous languages. The study does not attempt to generalise findings to the wider Southeast Asian region, nor does it examine other member states of the ASEAN bloc, where the sociolinguistic dynamics may differ substantially.

Within each country, the focus is restricted to publicly documented national and subnational policies, legal frameworks, and institutional initiatives that explicitly address the status, teaching, or revitalisation of minority languages. The research does not incorporate fieldwork or direct community-level observation, which are often employed in ethnographic or participatory studies of language vitality (Hinton, Huss, & Roche, 2018). As such, the study does not claim to capture the full complexity of language use in daily life or intra-community perspectives, but rather aims to assess how linguistic diversity is framed and addressed in state-supported planning and documentation.

Another limitation relates to the availability and consistency of data across countries. While some governments provide extensive access to language planning documents and programme evaluations, others may offer less transparency or may not maintain a systematic public archive of linguistic policies. In addition, terminological variations—such as differing definitions of “indigenous language” or “minority language” across contexts—may pose interpretive challenges when comparing policy frameworks (May, 2012). These limitations are acknowledged and addressed through the use of standardised thematic categories and carefully triangulated sources.

Despite these constraints, the study contributes to the understanding of how language sustainability is conceptualised in national policy discourse and institutional planning. By examining the structural conditions and stated commitments of each country, it provides a useful foundation for future empirical studies, particularly those that explore local implementation or community-based perspectives on language maintenance. It also offers comparative insights that may inform broader discussions on linguistic rights, cultural diversity, and educational policy in multilingual states.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Legal and Policy Frameworks: Foundations of Linguistic Sustainability

The legal and policy frameworks governing language use play a critical role in shaping the prospects for linguistic sustainability in multilingual nations. In the context of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam, language laws and constitutional provisions reveal both shared historical foundations and nationally specific approaches to managing diversity. This section examines how these states legally define and operationalise language hierarchies, including the formal recognition of minority and indigenous languages.

Indonesia: In Indonesia, the 1945 Constitution, as amended, establishes Bahasa Indonesia as the national language (Article 36) while explicitly recognising the preservation and promotion of regional languages as part of cultural heritage (Article 32, Paragraph 2) (Republic of Indonesia, 2002). This dual commitment is also reflected in Law No. 24/2009 on the Flag, Language, State Symbol, and National Anthem, which mandates the use of Bahasa Indonesia in formal domains while allowing local languages to be developed and used within their communities. More recently, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (*Kemendikbudristek*) has launched the *Revitalisasi Bahasa Daerah* (RBD) programme to fund local initiatives for language preservation, teacher training, and curriculum development. According to official sources, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology planned to revitalize 59 regional languages across 22 provinces in 2023 (Habibah, 2023).

While these legal instruments suggest a robust framework, some scholars argue that the centralised implementation of language policy in Indonesia can result in unequal attention to less prominent languages (Cohn & Ravindranath, 2014). Moreover, the use of Bahasa Indonesia as the sole medium of instruction in most public education reinforces its dominance and might limit the practical implementation of protection for local languages (Zein, 2019).

Malaysia: In Malaysia, Article 152 of the Federal Constitution declares Malay as the national language, while also guaranteeing the right to teach and learn other languages (Government of Malaysia, 2006). This provision has enabled the institutionalisation of vernacular education through Chinese-medium and Tamil-medium national-type schools, which continue to receive state funding. However, support for indigenous languages—particularly in East Malaysia—remains more fragmented. The Iban, Bidayuh, and Kadazandusun languages are taught under the Pupil’s Own Language (POL) programme in selected primary schools, but implementation is regionally uneven and often dependent on available resources and community advocacy (Antau & Jamaludin, 2023).

Malaysia’s policy framework is thus distinctive for its formal support of vernacular schools within a pluralist structure, a legacy of its colonial past and negotiated postcolonial governance (Gill, 2005; David & Naji, 2000). Nonetheless, minority indigenous languages that fall outside the ethnic triad of Malay, Chinese, and Indian communities often lack institutional visibility. Scholars have noted that while there is no legal restriction on indigenous language use, there is also limited systemic support for their intergenerational transmission or inclusion in mainstream schooling (David & Naji, 2000).

Brunei: Brunei Darussalam adopts a more unitary language policy. Malay, is the official language as per Article 82 of the 1959 Constitution, and is used in education, governance, and media. English also plays a significant role as a co-medium in

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secondary and higher education, but indigenous languages such as Tutong, Belait, and Dusun are largely absent from formal state discourse and policy. While there are no legal barriers to their use, they receive minimal official support beyond limited documentation efforts conducted by the Language and Literature Bureau.

Unlike Indonesia and Malaysia, Brunei does not have a national framework for the revitalisation or formal education of minority languages. Scholars have highlighted this as a point of concern, noting that smaller indigenous languages in Brunei face a higher risk of attrition without targeted policy interventions (Deterding, 2020). Nevertheless, academic institutions such as Universiti Brunei Darussalam have initiated research and linguistic surveys that may serve as a basis for future policy development.

Across the three countries, the constitutional and legislative landscape reflects varying degrees of engagement with linguistic diversity. Indonesia provides constitutional recognition and structured revitalisation policies, Malaysia protects vernacular education through legislative provisions while offering support for indigenous languages, and Brunei maintains a largely monolingual policy environment with limited recognition of indigenous linguistic communities. These differences illustrate how legal frameworks can either enable or constrain linguistic sustainability depending on aims, historical legacies, and institutional capacity.

While each country operates within its own sociopolitical context, all three face the shared challenge of balancing national cohesion with cultural and linguistic pluralism. Recognising minority and indigenous languages in law is a foundational step, but sustained investment, policy consistency, and community involvement are essential to ensure that these legal commitments translate into meaningful outcomes on the ground.

B. Language-in-Education Policies: Medium, Access, and Equity

Education systems play a pivotal role in shaping language practices and intergenerational transmission. In multilingual nations like Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam, the implementation of language-in-education policies reveals insights into the management of linguistic diversity. This section delves into how educational planning integrates—or overlooks—minority and indigenous languages, emphasizing curriculum design, teacher training, and pedagogical resources.

Indonesia: Indonesia's language-in-education policies reflect the nation's commitment to unity through Bahasa Indonesia, while also recognising the country's vast linguistic diversity. In practice, however, the balance between national integration and local language maintenance remains complex. Bahasa Indonesia is the primary medium of instruction across all levels of education, a policy rooted in post-independence efforts to unify the archipelago under a shared linguistic identity (Lauder, 2008). Yet, beneath this unifying principle, regional disparities in the implementation and sustainability of local language education persist.

Since the 1990s, the *Muatan Lokal* (Local Content) curriculum has been the principal vehicle for including indigenous languages in primary education. Under this framework, provinces are authorised to include regional language instruction based on local needs. Despite this flexibility, the practical implementation of the curriculum is uneven across regions. In many provinces, particularly those with strong ethno-linguistic identities such as Central Java or West Sumatra, local languages like Javanese or Minangkabau are taught as discrete subjects. However, these are often limited to one or two hours per week, insufficient to support comprehensive literacy or fluency (Young, 2019).

Young's (2019) classroom study in Banten province revealed several barriers undermining the effectiveness of local content implementation. Among the most significant challenges were insufficient teacher training, inadequate curriculum design, and a lack of pedagogical materials tailored to regional linguistic needs. Teachers often relied on improvised materials or lacked the linguistic competence to teach the local language, particularly in communities where intergenerational transmission has weakened.

Further research by Azzizah (2015) highlights structural inequalities affecting education more broadly across Indonesia. Provinces in the eastern regions, such as Papua and Maluku, exhibit significantly lower educational attainment rates and suffer from limited infrastructure, teacher shortages, and lower public investment. These socio-economic disparities compound the difficulty of implementing local language education in already disadvantaged communities.

In addition to local implementation gaps, national-level coordination remains a challenge. While decentralisation has granted districts more authority over curriculum matters, this shift has not always been matched by capacity-building support. According to a study by Afkar et al. (2020), variations in district-level governance quality have led to inconsistent application of national policy guidelines. Districts with higher institutional capacity tend to allocate resources more efficiently and maintain better educational outcomes, while those with weaker governance structures struggle with curriculum delivery and teacher recruitment, particularly in areas involving local languages.

Indonesia's recent *Revitalisasi Bahasa Daerah* programme has attempted to address some of these longstanding gaps. The programme includes initiatives for teacher training, language documentation, and the development of reading materials in local languages. However, as Zein (2019) notes, the success of such revitalisation efforts depends heavily on sustained political will and effective cross-sectoral coordination between central authorities and regional education offices.

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While progress is evident in some provinces, the overarching issue lies in the integration of local languages into the mainstream education system in a way that ensures sustainability and cultural transmission. Without a more robust framework for monitoring, evaluation, and support, the educational inclusion of regional languages risks remaining symbolic rather than functional.

Malaysia: Malaysia's language-in-education policy operates within the framework of a multiethnic and multilingual society. The system reflects a delicate balance between fostering national unity through Bahasa Malaysia, promoting English proficiency for global competitiveness, and supporting linguistic diversity through indigenous mother tongue education.

Unlike many multilingual countries, Malaysia maintains government-funded vernacular schools, a legacy of its colonial-era plural education system. These *Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan* (SJK or national-type schools), which use Mandarin (SJK(C)) or Tamil (SJK(T)) as their medium of instruction, are formally part of the national school system and follow the national curriculum. Bahasa Malaysia and English are compulsory subjects within these schools, ensuring alignment with national education goals while allowing for the preservation of community languages (Tan & Santhiram, 2010; David & Naji, 2000).

Vernacular education in Malaysia, encompassing these Chinese and Tamil national-type schools, operates under distinct policies and funding mechanisms separate from the Pupil's Own Language (POL) programme. These schools are notable examples in Southeast Asia of state-supported education conducted in non-national languages and continue to be favoured, particularly among ethnic Chinese communities. Nonetheless, they are at the centre of ongoing discussions concerning national integration and equitable resource distribution (Selvadurai et al., 2015).

The Pupil's Own Language (POL) programme in Malaysia is designed to provide instruction in indigenous languages, especially in East Malaysia, where ethnic and linguistic diversity is most pronounced. Under this programme, students can receive education in their mother tongues—such as Kadazandusun, Iban, Bidayuh, and Semai—typically as non-core, elective subjects taught for limited hours per week. The implementation of POL depends on factors such as the availability of teaching materials, trained educators, and sufficient demand from students and parents. This initiative aims to protect minority languages threatened by declining use and intergenerational transmission (Smith, 2003).

Despite its progressive intent, the implementation of POL is inconsistent. David (2021) notes that challenges include a shortage of trained teachers, insufficient instructional materials, and limited institutional support. In some rural or under-resourced areas, local communities supplement instruction with para-teachers or rely on volunteer efforts, raising concerns about instructional quality and continuity.

Additionally, the effectiveness of POL depends on parental interest and school leadership. In some regions, uptake remains low due to perceptions that indigenous languages offer limited economic value compared to Bahasa Malaysia or English (David, 2021). Scholars argue that without robust policy backing and community mobilisation, the programme risks becoming tokenistic rather than transformative in sustaining linguistic heritage (Coluzzi, 2020).

The Dual Language Programme (DLP), launched in 2016, allows selected schools to teach Science and Mathematics in English as part of the broader MBMMBI policy (Upholding Bahasa Malaysia and Strengthening the English Language). The initiative aims to enhance English proficiency and prepare students for a globalised economy.

Studies show a generally positive reception among students and teachers, especially in urban areas where English exposure is higher. Suliman, Nor, and Yunus (2019) found that teacher preparedness, access to teaching resources, and student motivation are key factors influencing DLP's effectiveness. Nonetheless, the programme has also faced criticism for exacerbating rural–urban educational divides, as rural schools often lack adequately trained teachers and infrastructure to deliver DLP effectively (Suliman et al., 2019).

Although DLP is not directly linked to minority language instruction, some scholars raise concerns about its potential to marginalise indigenous and vernacular languages further by prioritising English over other local linguistic resources (David, 2021).

Brunei: Brunei Darussalam implements a bilingual education policy that formally designates Standard Malay (Bahasa Melayu) and English as the primary media of instruction. This framework, in place since 1985, is designed to promote national unity and religious identity while enhancing global competitiveness. However, the policy does not formally incorporate Brunei's indigenous minority languages, raising concerns about their long-term vitality.

Brunei's education system allocates different functions to each language: Malay is used for Islamic Studies, History, and Bahasa Melayu classes, whereas English is the medium for Mathematics, Science, and technical subjects. The SPN21 (*Sistem Pendidikan Negara Abad Ke-21* or National Education System for the 21st Century) reform, introduced in 2009, further intensified the role of English from early primary education onward, particularly for Science and Mathematics (Jones, 2015). This reflects Brunei's dual priorities of religious-cultural preservation and economic modernisation.

Rozaimie (2016) notes that most urban Bruneians achieve functional bilingualism, with frequent code-switching between Malay and English in informal contexts. However, rural populations may experience uneven outcomes due to resource disparities and teacher language proficiency, especially in English-medium subjects.

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Brunei is home to multiple indigenous language groups, including speakers of Tutong, Belait, Dusun, and Bisaya. These languages are spoken in rural districts but are not included in the national curriculum. While Malay and some of its regional varieties, such as Brunei Malay and Kedayan, naturally enjoy widespread recognition in public discourse, the use or teaching of indigenous minority languages such as Tutong, Belait, and Dusun has not yet been formally integrated into national school policy frameworks (McLellan et al., 2016).

This exclusion has contributed to a gradual language shift among younger speakers. As observed by Noor Azam Haji-Othman and Najib (2016), younger generations in Tutong and Belait communities increasingly favour Malay and English, with heritage languages often relegated to ceremonial or familial functions.

While absent from school curricula, indigenous languages have gained some visibility in higher education. Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) offers elective courses in Dusun, Belait, and Tutong, aiming to preserve these languages through academic engagement. Other initiatives have also led to the development of bilingual dictionaries, grammatical descriptions, and oral history projects supported by the Language and Literature Bureau of Brunei.

While these initiatives contribute to the documentation and recognition of indigenous languages, these activities remain primarily within academic and heritage-focused contexts. Expanding the presence of these languages into early education and broader public domains may enhance their sustainability over time.

Brunei's bilingual education model demonstrates how national and international languages can be accommodated within a structured and coherent policy framework. However, the limited integration of indigenous languages into formal education suggests that they have not yet been prioritised within the broader language planning agenda. Although no explicit legal or policy constraints prevent their inclusion, their absence from the national curriculum indicates that additional policy measures may be necessary to support a more inclusive and multilingual educational environment.

C. Cultural Initiatives and Technological Integration

Cultural and media initiatives represent a crucial interface between state-led language policies and grassroots practices of linguistic preservation. In Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam, such initiatives reveal both the creative energy of community actors and the structural limitations of institutional support. These efforts shape the visibility of minority and indigenous languages in the public sphere, influence language attitudes among younger generations, and create informal domains for linguistic transmission outside of formal education.

Indonesia: Indonesia's multifaceted approach to language preservation integrates cultural events, media broadcasting, digital platforms, and policy initiatives to sustain its rich linguistic diversity. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology has been instrumental in promoting the revitalization of regional languages through various programs. One notable initiative is the already mentioned *Revitalisasi Bahasa Daerah* (Regional Language Revitalisation) program, which aims to document and promote the use of local languages across the archipelago. This program collaborates with local communities, linguists, and cultural practitioners to develop educational materials and conduct workshops in indigenous languages (Poetri, 2025).

Media broadcasting also plays a crucial role in language preservation. State-owned broadcasters such as Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI) and Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) have regional stations that produce and air content in local languages. For instance, RRI's regional stations in East Java have been known to broadcast programs in Javanese and Madurese, thereby supporting the maintenance of these languages in daily communication. Additionally, community radio stations have emerged as vital platforms for promoting local languages and cultures. In East Java, stations like Radio Jodhipati FM and Radio Sritanjung FM feature programs that incorporate traditional music, storytelling, and discussions in regional languages, fostering a sense of identity and continuity among listeners (Wahyuningtyas et al., 2021).

Digital platforms have further expanded the reach of language preservation efforts. BASAbali Wiki, a community-driven digital platform, serves as an online encyclopaedia and dictionary for the Balinese language. It engages users in contributing content related to Balinese language and culture, thereby promoting active participation in language preservation. The platform has been recognized for its innovative approach to language revitalization, utilizing technology to bridge generational gaps and encourage the use of Balinese in various contexts (Suandi & Utama, 2020). Similar digital initiatives have been developed for other regional languages, such as the Lampung dictionary app and the *Nusantara in Your Hand* project for Javanese and Madurese, which leverage mobile technology to make language resources more accessible (Rifai, 2025).

In addition to institutional broadcasting and formal programming, regional theatre and traditional arts festivals have become key mediums for reinforcing the visibility of indigenous languages. Events such as *Festival Teater Berbahasa Daerah* (Regional Language Theatre Festival), held in provinces like West Sumatra, West Nusa Tenggara, and South Sulawesi, promote local languages through dramatizations of folktales, historical epics, and contemporary social narratives. These performances often use dialects such as Minangkabau, Sasak, or Bugis as the primary medium, embedding the language within embodied cultural expression. As Arka (2013) argues, such performative spaces enable communities to maintain linguistic forms in emotionally

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resonant and socially sanctioned contexts, while also supporting language use among younger generations. Theatre thus becomes both a repository and a revitalising force, anchoring language in aesthetic experience and moral pedagogy.

Complementing traditional modes of cultural transmission, digital platforms have emerged as powerful agents in expanding the reach of regional languages. Social media content creators—particularly on TikTok and YouTube—are increasingly producing humorous skits, language tutorials, and cultural commentary in languages such as Sundanese, Madurese, and Ambonese Malay. These informal and accessible formats are particularly effective in engaging youth audiences, who may otherwise have limited exposure to their ancestral tongues. For example, YouTube channels like *Sundain Yuk!* (Let's Learn Sundanese!) offer structured language lessons, while TikTok influencers use comedy and storytelling to revalorise everyday expressions in different indigenous tongues. As Putra (2018) observes, digital participation by younger speakers not only raises language prestige but also allows for interactivity and linguistic innovation, making heritage languages visible in new sociocultural domains.

At the local governance level, several provincial administrations have adopted inclusive linguistic practices in public communication and tourism. In Yogyakarta, for instance, public signage and government service materials often appear in both Bahasa Indonesia and Javanese, signalling institutional recognition of the region's linguistic identity. Similarly, in Bali and West Sumatra, regional languages are used in tourism brochures, cultural campaign slogans, and ceremonial announcements. These symbolic inclusions contribute to what Cohn and Ravindranath (2014) describe as "semiotic authority"—the legitimation of a language's presence in public space, which in turn shapes attitudes about its relevance and dignity. This visual and rhetorical presence reinforces regional pride and affirms the role of local languages in the civic and cultural life of the nation.

Malaysia: Malaysia is a linguistically diverse nation, home to over 130 living languages, including those of the Orang Asli (indigenous communities) in Peninsular Malaysia and various ethnic groups in Sarawak and Sabah (Eberhard & Simons, 2023). The preservation of these languages is crucial for maintaining the country's rich cultural heritage. Efforts to safeguard indigenous and minority languages encompass policy measures, educational initiatives, media representation, and community-driven projects.

Government policies play a pivotal role in language preservation. The National Language Policy emphasizes the importance of the Malay language while recognizing the need to protect and promote indigenous languages (Gill, 2013). In East Malaysia, state governments have implemented programs to support the use of local languages in education and administration. For instance, the Sarawak state government has introduced mother tongue education programs in Iban and Bidayuh languages at the primary school level (David, 2021).

Educational institutions contribute significantly to language preservation. Universiti Malaysia Sabah and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak offer courses and conduct research on indigenous languages, facilitating their documentation and study. Community-based education initiatives, such as language nests and immersion programs, have been established to encourage the intergenerational transmission of indigenous languages (Renganathan & Kral, 2016).

Media representation is another critical avenue for promoting linguistic diversity. Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) continues to air content in Iban, Bidayuh, Kadazandusun, and other local languages through its regional branches in Sabah and Sarawak. For example, RTM Sarawak's *Warna Warni Borneo* (Colourful Borneo) and *Segulai Sejalai* (Together with Each Other) programmes include cultural storytelling, interviews, and local news segments in Iban and Bidayuh, giving these languages a platform in everyday discourse. Similarly, Sabah's RTM stations regularly feature Kadazandusun language content, particularly around cultural festivals like *Tadau Kaamatan* (Harvest Festival). These broadcasts are often bilingual, pairing Malay with indigenous languages to reach wider audiences while preserving linguistic authenticity.

In addition to state broadcasters, community media initiatives have gained momentum. Radio Bario, a pioneering community radio station based in the highlands of Sarawak, broadcasts primarily in the Kelabit language. The station, launched with local and international support, was designed to address the communication needs of isolated communities while reinforcing cultural identity (Samani et al., 2013). Beyond its informative function, Radio Bario promotes traditional music, oral storytelling, and language-specific greetings, thereby normalising Kelabit in daily communication. The success of Radio Bario has inspired similar initiatives in Lun Bawang and Penan-speaking areas, although infrastructural and financial challenges limit expansion.

Digital innovation has further opened new spaces for language preservation. The WikiKata project, hosted by IIUM's RCE Greater Gombak and affiliated with the Wikimedia Foundation, documents indigenous words and expressions using open-source platforms. Contributors from Sarawak, Sabah, and Peninsular Orang Asli communities upload vocabulary entries, cultural explanations, and example usages, building a living repository of endangered languages (Akwugo, 2024). While modest in scale, these digital tools support grassroots participation and provide visibility to languages otherwise underrepresented in formal media or education.

Another notable development is the inclusion of Iban in Google Translate in 2024, a move that signals both technological recognition and increased digital presence of East Malaysian languages. The translation function was made possible through collaborative contributions from the Iban-speaking community and linguistic researchers. While not flawless, the feature encourages users to engage with the language online and facilitates its integration into new media contexts. As Cassels and Farr

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(2019) note, visibility in digital ecosystems is increasingly linked to a language's perceived legitimacy, especially among younger users.

Cultural festivals are key moments when indigenous languages are displayed in performative, communal settings. The *Tadau Kaamatan* in Sabah and *Gawai Dayak* (Dayak Festival) in Sarawak feature poetry recitations, storytelling competitions, and musical performances in Kadazan, Dusun, Iban, and Bidayuh. These festivals serve dual purposes: they preserve ceremonial vocabulary and traditional registers while also encouraging younger participants to rehearse and perform in their ancestral tongues. Schools often hold in-house language competitions in conjunction with these festivals, reinforcing classroom-community connections.

The Language and Literature Bureau of Malaysia (DBP) also plays a role, albeit indirectly, in cultural representation. While its main focus remains the standardisation and promotion of Malay, DBP has collaborated with state-level cultural agencies to produce bilingual dictionaries and anthologies featuring Iban, Kadazandusun, and Semai. For instance, the DBP Sabah branch has published terminology glossaries for use in primary education under the Pupil's Own Language (POL) programme (Antau & Jamaludin, 2023). In February 2024, DBP Sarawak was urged by local stakeholders to begin publishing Sarawak folktales in bilingual formats—combining native and Malay languages—as a means of promoting linguistic access and preserving the oral traditions of indigenous communities (Malay Mail, 2024).

Local NGOs and civil society groups contribute meaningfully to these preservation efforts. The Kadazandusun Cultural Association (KDCA) in Sabah has developed modules for traditional dance, music, and language instruction, while the Dayak Cultural Foundation in Sarawak has digitised oral epics and ritual texts. Some of these initiatives have received government recognition and funding, particularly those aligned with tourism or heritage conservation agendas. Yet, as Renganathan and Kral (2018) observe, many community efforts remain underfunded and rely heavily on volunteerism, making sustainability a persistent concern.

Despite these advancements, the long-term vitality of indigenous languages in Malaysia faces several challenges. Chief among them are urban migration, intermarriage, and the dominance of Bahasa Malaysia and English in educational and economic domains. Studies show that even within East Malaysian households, indigenous languages are increasingly being replaced by Malay as the language of daily interaction, particularly in mixed-ethnic urban settings (Coluzzi, 2020). The symbolic use of indigenous languages during festivals and media events, while important, must be complemented by their integration into more routine aspects of life—especially education, governance, and digital communication.

Nevertheless, Malaysia's cultural and media landscape demonstrates a notable willingness to recognise linguistic diversity, especially at the regional level. Through collaborative initiatives involving state broadcasters, digital platforms, community media, and cultural organisations, indigenous languages remain visible in the national imagination. The challenge moving forward lies in transforming this visibility into active language use across generations and domains, ensuring that linguistic heritage is not only commemorated but lived.

Brunei: Brunei Darussalam is home to several indigenous and minority languages, including Tutong, Kedayan, Belait, Dusun, Murut, and Bisaya. While these languages face challenges due to the dominance of Malay and English, various cultural and media initiatives have been undertaken to preserve and promote them.

One of the most prominent cultural events celebrating indigenous language and heritage is *Adau Gayoh*, the harvest festival of the Dusun community. Celebrated annually on May 1st in the Tutong District, *Adau Gayoh* marks the end of the rice harvesting season. The festival features traditional dances such as *Ancayau*, *Kasapi Imang-Imang*, and *Ebang Batarang*, accompanied by indigenous musical instruments like drums and the *gulintangan* (gongs). These performances are conducted in the Dusun language, serving as a medium for cultural expression and language preservation. Traditional foods like *penyaram*, *nubor lopot*, and *kelupis* are prepared and displayed on a *puun*, a tiered tray used during the *Adat Panakod* (Cutomary Feast) feast, further reinforcing cultural practices and vocabulary (English.news.cn, 2025).

In 2024, the Belait Cultural Festival was held at Taman Rekreasi Kampung Sungai Mau. The festival featured seven traditional performances highlighting the region's diverse ethnic heritage, including Belait traditions. Such festivals provide opportunities for the Belait language to be actively used and celebrated, reinforcing its role as a living language rather than a relic of the past (Zulkiflee & Chuchu, 2025).

The Kedayan community in the Lamunin district celebrates *Makan Taun* (Annual Feast), an annual communal feast held to express gratitude for the rice harvest. This important cultural event marks the end of the harvest season and reinforces unity within the Kedayan community. *Makan Taun* serves as a platform for the celebration of Kedayan traditions, language, and culinary practices. Traditional performances such as *beanding* (a traditional dance) and *bemukun* (a form of musical ensemble) are common features of the event. The feast is also accompanied by local dishes, including *kelupis sulang* (a type of rice cake) and *umbut luba* (a delicacy made from the heart of the rattan plant). These dishes, along with the performances, are vital for promoting the Kedayan language and reinforcing cultural identity among both younger and older generations of the community.

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The communal gathering provides a space for members of the Kedayan community to engage in the use of their language and to pass down important cultural practices that may otherwise be at risk of being forgotten due to urbanization and language shift. As the *Makan Taun* festival grows in popularity, it continues to play a crucial role in preserving Kedayan traditions while fostering intergenerational bonding through language and customs (Junaidi, 2020; Junaidi 2025).

Community organizations and cultural groups have been instrumental in promoting indigenous languages through performances and festivals. While mainstream media coverage remains limited, these grassroots efforts provide visibility and encourage younger generations to engage with their linguistic heritage.

Cultural festivals and community initiatives in Brunei play a crucial role in the preservation and promotion of indigenous and minority languages. Events like *Adau Gayoh*, the Belait Cultural Festival, and *Makan Taun* not only celebrate cultural heritage but also provide practical avenues for language use and intergenerational transmission. Institutional support from organizations like the Language and Literature Bureau and Universiti Brunei Darussalam further strengthens these efforts, contributing to the sustainability of Brunei's linguistic diversity.

CONCLUSIONS

This article has provided a brief overview of the strategies employed by Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam in the maintenance and revitalisation of minority and indigenous languages. Given the expansive and multifaceted nature of the topic, this overview does not claim to be an exhaustive analysis but aims to introduce the key efforts, challenges, and areas for future exploration. While some aspects may not have been covered, the goal has been to offer a snapshot of how these countries are addressing the preservation of their linguistic heritage.

Indonesia, with its vast linguistic diversity, has made significant efforts in integrating minority languages into national policies through initiatives such as the *Revitalisasi Bahasa Daerah* (Regional Language Revitalisation) programme. These efforts focus on embedding local languages into educational curricula, providing community-based support, and ensuring that linguistic diversity is recognised as a core component of the national identity. The role of digital technologies in these efforts cannot be overstated, with platforms like *BASAbali Wiki* serving as a model for how community-driven, tech-enabled projects can contribute to the revitalisation of endangered languages. However, challenges remain, particularly in ensuring that these initiatives are implemented consistently across Indonesia's geographically and culturally diverse regions.

In Malaysia, language policy is shaped by a pluralistic educational framework that accommodates various linguistic communities. The Pupil's Own Language (POL) programme in East Malaysia stands as a key effort in supporting indigenous languages, allowing children to learn in their mother tongue while also acquiring proficiency in the national language. Yet, while Malaysia's policies are progressive, particularly in terms of supporting vernacular education, the revitalisation of indigenous languages still faces uneven implementation. As some regions and communities continue to grapple with limited resources and insufficient institutional support, the sustainability of these languages remains uncertain. Additionally, the growing influence of English, particularly in urban areas, further complicates the intergenerational transmission of indigenous languages.

Brunei, on the other hand, has a more concentrated approach to language preservation. While Malay and English remain the dominant languages in public and educational life, indigenous languages like Tutong, Kedayan, and Dusun are largely excluded from the national curriculum. Despite the lack of widespread educational integration, Brunei has made strides in preserving its linguistic heritage through documentation and academic research. The efforts of institutions such as Universiti Brunei Darussalam and the Language and Literature Bureau have produced articles, bilingual dictionaries, books, and linguistic surveys, ensuring that these languages are not lost to history. However, the limited scope of these initiatives reflects a broader challenge: the gap between institutional documentation and grassroots revitalisation efforts. The challenge for Brunei lies in expanding the reach of these preservation efforts to ensure that indigenous languages remain in daily use among younger generations.

Overall, while Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei each face unique challenges in their language preservation efforts, there are common threads that emerge across these countries. All three have made progress in recognising the importance of minority languages. Policies in each nation demonstrate varying degrees of commitment to the revitalisation of indigenous languages, but the implementation of these policies remains uneven. While Indonesia leads the way with its decentralised, community-based approach, Malaysia's commitment to vernacular education and Brunei's academic preservation initiatives both highlight alternative models for language sustainability.

Despite these varied approaches, a number of recurring themes point to key areas for further development: **1. Strengthening Legal and Policy Frameworks:** The formal recognition of minority languages in national policy is a fundamental first step, but sustained efforts are needed to translate these policies into practice. Strengthening legal protections for minority languages, including ensuring their inclusion in education and media, will provide a foundation for long-term sustainability. **2. Enhanced Educational Integration:** The integration of minority languages into educational curricula remains a central pillar of revitalisation. However, the success of these efforts depends on the quality and consistency of their implementation. Ensuring that there are sufficient trained educators and appropriate materials is crucial for building a robust language infrastructure that can

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support language learning from an early age. **3. Cultural and Media Representation:** Expanding the visibility of indigenous languages in media is essential for maintaining their relevance in contemporary society. Digital media platforms, community radio stations, and television programmes can serve as vital tools for promoting language use in everyday contexts. Encouraging content creation in indigenous languages, from digital storytelling to music and television, will also help normalize their use among younger generations. **4. Technological Integration:** Leveraging technology is an essential component in modern language revitalisation. Digital tools such as online dictionaries, language learning apps, and social media platforms can facilitate greater access to language resources. AI-driven solutions, machine translation, and speech recognition technologies also hold the potential to expand the ways in which indigenous languages are used and preserved in digital environments. However, efforts must also address the digital divide, ensuring that these tools are accessible to communities in remote or underserved areas.

While significant strides have been made, the path to full linguistic sustainability is fraught with challenges. For many of these languages, the future remains uncertain, and there is a pressing need for continued investment in education, technology, and cultural promotion. The sustainability of minority and indigenous languages depends on both governmental and community efforts working in tandem, ensuring that language revitalisation is not merely a top-down initiative but also a grassroots movement that involves local communities in every step of the process.

In conclusion, while this article offers only a brief overview of how Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei are approaching the revitalisation of their minority and indigenous languages, it underscores the need for continued attention to this issue. The integration of language policies with technological and cultural initiatives holds great promise, but only through sustained and coordinated efforts can these languages be safeguarded for future generations. Further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of these initiatives, particularly in terms of their long-term impact on language vitality. By recognising the value of linguistic diversity and embedding these languages within modern technological frameworks, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei can set a powerful example for other multilingual societies facing similar challenges.

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