



Interest in Learning Indonesian through Non-Formal Introduction in Grade VI Students at Anuban Jitjongrak School, Krabi, Thailand

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the interest in learning Indonesian among sixth-grade students at AnubanJitjongrak School in Krabi, Thailand, where the language was introduced through non-formal instruction outside of regular class hours. The study was motivated by the fact that Indonesian is not taught as a formal subject at the school; consequently, language exposure occurred through daily interactions, language games, and simple conversations during community service and international internship activities. A qualitative descriptive approach using a case study method was employed. Data were collected via a three-point Likert scale questionnaire comprising ten questions administered to the sixth-grade students. The data were analyzed descriptively to characterize the students' responses and their interest in learning Indonesian. The results indicate that the students demonstrated a positive interest in learning Indonesian, despite the language not being part of the formal curriculum. The majority of students showed interest, attentiveness, and active participation—such as paying attention to vocabulary introductions, asking about word meanings, and attempting to pronounce Indonesian words. Furthermore, learning through games and casual conversation helped boost the students' intrinsic motivation and fostered a more comfortable learning atmosphere. It can be concluded that introducing Indonesian outside of formal class hours positively contributed to cultivating the sixth-grade students' interest in learning the language, suggesting that a non-formal approach holds potential as an effective alternative strategy for introducing Indonesian to foreign learners at the primary school level.

Keywords: interest, learning Indonesian, non-formal introduction, student, Thailand

Minat Belajar Bahasa Indonesia melalui Pengenalan Nonformal pada Siswa Kelas VI di Anuban Jitjongrak School, Krabi, Thailand

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis minat belajar bahasa Indonesia pada siswa kelas VI di *AnubanJitjongrak School*, Krabi, Thailand, yang diperkenalkan melalui instruksi nonformal di luar jam pembelajaran. Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh belum diajarkannya bahasa Indonesia sebagai mata pelajaran formal di sekolah tersebut, sehingga pengenalan bahasa dilakukan melalui interaksi sehari-hari, permainan bahasa, dan percakapan sederhana selama kegiatan KKN dan magang internasional. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi angket dengan skala Likert 3 tingkat dan terdiri atas sepuluh pertanyaan, yang disebarkan kepada siswa kelas VI. Data dianalisis secara deskriptif untuk menggambarkan respons dan minat belajar siswa terhadap bahasa Indonesia. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa memiliki minat belajar yang positif terhadap bahasa Indonesia meskipun bahasa tersebut tidak diajarkan sebagai mata pelajaran formal. Mayoritas siswa menunjukkan ketertarikan, perhatian, dan partisipasi aktif, seperti memperhatikan pengenalan kosakata, bertanya tentang arti kata, serta mencoba mengucapkan kata-kata bahasa Indonesia. Selain itu, pembelajaran melalui permainan dan obrolan santai mampu meningkatkan motivasi intrinsik siswa dan menciptakan suasana belajar yang lebih nyaman. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa pengenalan bahasa Indonesia di luar jam kelas memiliki kontribusi positif dalam menumbuhkan minat belajar siswa kelas VI, sehingga pendekatan nonformal berpotensi menjadi strategi alternatif yang efektif dalam pengenalan bahasa Indonesia bagi penutur asing di tingkat sekolah dasar.

Kata kunci: minat belajar, bahasa Indonesia, pengenalan nonformal, siswa, Thailand

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesian is the national language, serving as a means of communication, a national identity, and a means of developing knowledge and culture. In addition to being used by native speakers in Indonesia, Indonesian is also being introduced to foreign speakers as a second or foreign language. Introducing Indonesian to foreign speakers plays a crucial role in broadening cross-cultural understanding, strengthening international relations, and enhancing the presence of Indonesian internationally. In recent years, the learning and introduction of Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) has experienced significant development. Indonesian is not only studied in formal settings such as universities or language institutions, but is also being introduced through various non-formal activities, such as cultural exchanges, volunteer programs, and direct interaction with Indonesian speakers. Non-formal language introduction is considered effective in fostering initial interest and passion for learning foreign languages, especially among students.

Thailand is one of the countries in Southeast Asia with geographical and cultural proximity to Indonesia. In the context of education in Thailand, the foreign language generally taught in elementary schools is English. Although Indonesian is not yet a formal subject in many foreign schools, including in Thailand, language introduction can occur through non-formal interactions such as casual conversations and activities outside the classroom. This situation provides an opportunity to foster interest in learning Indonesian among foreign students, even though it is not part of the official curriculum. The introduction of Indonesian in Thailand, particularly in southern regions like Krabi, faces unique challenges given the majority of locals communicate in Thai and the lack of exposure to Malay (Febriandika et al., 2023). Nevertheless, Thai students still have opportunities to learn Indonesian through interactions with

native speakers, cultural activities, and educational and community service programs involving Indonesian students. This study aims to analyze the interest in learning Indonesian among sixth-grade students at Anuban Jitjongrak School in Krabi, Thailand.

Based on the researcher's experience during the Community Service Program and internship at Anuban Jitjongrak School in Krabi, Thailand, the researcher served as an English teacher. During these activities, Indonesian was not formally taught in the classroom. However, during various informal interactions, such as casual conversations, play activities, and Q&A sessions outside of class, students demonstrated curiosity about Indonesian. Some students spontaneously asked the meaning of Indonesian words, tried to imitate pronunciation, and showed interest when the researcher introduced simple vocabulary. This phenomenon indicates that even though Indonesian is not included in the official school curriculum, students still have the potential to be interested in learning and studying Indonesian. In an educational context, learning interest is a crucial factor influencing student engagement in the language learning process. Learning interest is associated with students' tendency to pay attention, be interested, and be involved in learning activities, which can indirectly influence the outcomes and quality of language learning. Educational research indicates that learning interest is a crucial variable that needs to be analyzed to understand the motivational aspects of students in learning languages and other subjects (Supriyadi & Olpisrianasro, 2024a). Learning interest reflects students' interest, attention, enjoyment, and involvement in the learning process. Learning interest plays a crucial role in encouraging active student participation, thus influencing learning success (Sugianto et al., 2023). In language learning, learning interest is a factor that can increase students' motivation to learn, understand, and use the language being learned. There-



fore, analyzing Indonesian language learning interest is the first step in determining the potential for developing Indonesian language learning for foreign speakers.

Extensive research has been conducted on learning Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA), particularly with Thai learners. Research (INTHASE 2024) shows that integrating technology into BIPA learning can improve learning effectiveness for Thai learners and help them understand Indonesian more communicatively. Furthermore, research (Krismayani et al., 2024) reveals that Thai students studying BIPA have a positive perception of learning Indonesian, although they still face linguistic and cultural barriers, necessitating more direct practice with native speakers. Furthermore, research (Supriyadi & Olpisrianasro, 2024b) explains that learning interest influences student engagement during the learning process, making it a crucial factor in achieving learning outcomes. However, these three studies have not specifically examined the interest in learning Indonesian among elementary school students in Thailand, which emerges through informal interactions during international community service activities. Therefore, this study was conducted to fill this gap. Based on the background, theoretical review, and previous research, the research problem in this study is how sixth-grade students at Anuban Jitjongrak School, Krabi, Thailand, develop interest in learning Indonesian after being introduced to Indonesian through informal interactions during the Community Service Program (KKN). This study aims to describe and analyze sixth-grade students' interest in learning Indonesian through informal interactions. This research is expected to provide theoretical benefits as an additional reference regarding the introduction of Indonesian for non-native speakers, particularly at the elementary school level.

METHOD

This study will adopt a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of sixth-grade students' interest in learning Indonesian through informal interactions at Anuban Jitjongrak School, Krabi, Thailand (Nurcahyani & Rahayu, 2024) and was chosen because it allows researchers to comprehensively explore the factors influencing learning interest, student perceptions, and the learning strategies implemented (Sari et al., 2023). The research procedure began with observations during the Community Service Program and international internship. Next, the researcher introduced Indonesian through informal interactions, such as daily conversations, games, and simple vocabulary outside of formal learning activities. Following these activities, the researcher collected data on students' learning interests.

The research was conducted at Anuban Jitjongrak School, Krabi, Thailand, from November 2025 to January 2026 during the Community Service Program and international internship programs. The subjects were sixth-grade students participating in the informal Indonesian language introduction activities. To determine students' learning interests, the researcher used a data collection method involving a questionnaire survey with students to gain a comprehensive perspective (Luchiyanti & Rezania, 2022; Nanda et al. (2025; Budiana & Nisa, 2022; Azhari et al. (2026).

The research instruments consisted of observation sheets and a learning interest questionnaire. Observations were conducted to obtain information on students' responses during the Indonesian language introduction process. Meanwhile, the questionnaire served as supporting data to determine students' interest in Indonesian. The questionnaire was constructed using a 3-level Likert scale, with A (Like) given a score of 3, B (Neither) given a score of 2, and C (Dislike) given

a score of 1, resulting in a rich and contextual description of the research subjects.

Observational data were analyzed descriptively qualitatively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The observation and questionnaire results were interpreted to describe students' interest in learning Indonesian after participating in a non-formal introduction to Indonesian. The qualitative descriptive approach used in this study will allow for the identification of variables contributing to students' interest in learning, as well as potential educational interventions that can improve the effectiveness of Indonesian language learning (Rustandi et al., 2023). This method allows for comprehensive data collection, allowing for rich interpretation of field facts and individual experiences. Qualitative research with a case study approach is highly relevant for investigating students' learning interests because it emphasizes an in-depth understanding of the context, not just the results, and allows the researcher to be the primary instrument in data collection.

RESULTS

1. Student Responses to Informal Indonesian Language Introduction

This research was conducted with sixth-grade students at Anuban Jitjongrak School, Krabi, Thailand, through Indonesian language introduction activities conducted outside of formal learning. The language introduction took the form of simple conversations, language games, everyday vocabulary introductions, and casual interactions between the researcher and students. Based on observations and questionnaires, the majority of students responded positively during the activities. Students appeared enthusiastic about participating in each activity, paid attention when the researcher introduced new vocabulary, and expressed curiosity about Indonesian. The relaxed learning atmosphere encouraged students to interact more

actively and not feel burdened during the language introduction activities.

The students' positive responses were also evident in their courage in trying to pronounce the Indonesian vocabulary introduced. Some students repeated the words spoken by the researcher, while others asked questions about the meaning and pronunciation of certain words. Furthermore, some students spontaneously used Indonesian vocabulary when interacting with the researcher outside of the introduction activities. Observations indicate that the informal activities provided opportunities for students to use the language more naturally without academic pressure. These conditions indicate that non-formal introduction to Indonesian can create an engaging learning environment for students.

2. Student Interest in Learning Indonesian

Students' interest in learning Indonesian was evident through various forms of engagement during the activities. Based on observations and questionnaires, students showed attention to the material being introduced, enthusiastically participated in language games, and actively participated in simple conversations using Indonesian vocabulary. Some students also asked questions about the meaning of words they didn't understand and asked the researcher to repeat the pronunciation of some words so they could imitate them correctly. These attitudes demonstrate a growing curiosity during the Indonesian language introduction process.

In addition to curiosity, interest in learning was also reflected in students' desire to continue interacting using Indonesian even though the introduction took place outside of formal learning hours. Several students showed interest in simple expressions frequently used in everyday conversation, such as greetings, salutations, and expressions of gratitude. Students also appeared more confident when given the opportunity to repeat vocabulary they had learned. These findings indicate that introducing Indonesian through non-



formal activities can foster initial interest in the language. Thus, language introduction activities provide a fun learning experience while encouraging active student engagement throughout the process.

DISCUSSION

The research results showed that the introduction of Indonesian through non-formal activities received a positive response from sixth-grade students at Anuban Jitjongrak School, Krabi, Thailand. This response was evident in the students' attentiveness during the activities, their courage in trying to pronounce Indonesian vocabulary, and their curiosity demonstrated through various questions asked to the researcher. These findings demonstrate that language learning does not always have to take place in formal settings to attract students' interest. A relaxed learning environment provides students with the opportunity to learn a new language without feeling pressured by academic demands. This situation demonstrates that a comfortable learning atmosphere can foster initial interest in Indonesian. The Indonesian language introduction activities were conducted through casual interactions, language games, and small talk, so students were not placed in a rigid classroom environment.

These research findings align with research (Inthase et al., 2024), which states that learning Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) is more effective when developed through a communicative, contextual approach that is close to the students' experiences. These findings are also supported by Wayan Krismayani et al. (2024), who stated that BIPA learning for Thai students is more meaningful when they have the opportunity to interact directly using Indonesian. These two studies reinforce the findings of this study, which show that introducing the language through non-formal activities can create a fun learning experience while increasing students' interest in Indonesian. This approach allows students to have a more meaningful learning experience because

the language is used in real-life situations. In this study, the introduction of Indonesian was conducted through simple conversations, language games, and everyday interactions, making it easier for students to understand and imitate the vocabulary introduced. These activities not only increased students' attention but also created a pleasant learning atmosphere. Therefore, non-formal language introduction can be an alternative way to introduce Indonesian to non-native speakers at the elementary school level.

Students' interest in learning was also evident through their active engagement during the activities. Students not only listened to the researcher's explanations but also took the initiative to ask questions about word meanings, tried pronouncing new vocabulary, and used several Indonesian expressions during interactions. This form of involvement demonstrates that interest in learning is not only reflected in enjoyment of the lesson, but also in students' desire to actively participate. The more comfortable students feel in the learning process, the greater the likelihood of developing interest in learning the language being introduced.

In addition to providing a pleasurable learning experience, this study shows that direct interaction between researchers, as native speakers, and students positively influences the process of introducing Indonesian. Students have the opportunity to hear pronunciation directly, imitate pronunciation, and use vocabulary in simple communication situations. This interaction helps students build confidence when attempting to use Indonesian. Such learning experiences are difficult to achieve if language introduction is only conducted through one-way presentations. Thus, informal interaction plays a crucial role in supporting the growth of interest in learning Indonesian among non-native speakers.

This research has the advantage of being conducted directly in a real-life context through community service programs and international internships, allowing it to illustrate students'

responses to being introduced to Indonesian in a natural learning environment. Furthermore, this study addresses a relatively rare research topic: the interest in learning Indonesian among elementary school students in Thailand through a non-formal approach. However, this study also has limitations, as it was conducted in only one school with a limited number of participants. Data were also obtained through observation and questionnaires, thus not involving in-depth interviews that could have explored students' experiences more comprehensively. Therefore, future research is recommended involving more schools, using a wider variety of data collection techniques, and comparing the results of Indonesian language introductions through formal and non-formal approaches to obtain a broader picture.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that being introduced to Indonesian through non-formal activities can foster interest in learning Indonesian among sixth-grade students at AnubanJitjongrak School, Krabi, Thailand. This interest in learning is evident in the students' positive responses during the Indonesian language introduction activities, which involved simple conversations, language games, and everyday interactions. Students showed interest in the vocabulary introduced, participated in each activity, and were willing to try pronouncing Indonesian words. Furthermore, several students demonstrated curiosity by asking questions about the meaning and pronunciation of Indonesian words. These findings indicate that informal language introduction creates an engaging learning experience and encourages active student engagement in learning Indonesian.

The research also showed that a relaxed and communicative learning environment provides students with the opportunity to learn Indonesian without the pressures of formal learning. The

informal approach makes students more confident in interacting, trying out new vocabulary, and demonstrating enthusiasm during the activities. The enjoyable learning experience fosters an initial interest in Indonesian and provides a space for students to learn the language more naturally. These conditions demonstrate that direct interaction between researchers and students is a factor supporting the growth of interest in learning Indonesian. Therefore, informal Indonesian introduction can be an effective approach in introducing Indonesian to non-native speakers at the elementary school level.

This study demonstrates that informal Indonesian language introduction activities have the potential to support the development of Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) learning, particularly in elementary schools that have not yet incorporated Indonesian as a formal subject. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for educators and BIPA program implementers in designing language introduction activities that are more communicative, interactive, and tailored to student characteristics. Although this study was conducted within a limited scope, the results demonstrate that informal interactions can be a first step in fostering student interest in Indonesian. Future research is expected to involve more schools, participants, and utilize a variety of data collection techniques to obtain a more comprehensive picture. Thus, the development of informal Indonesian language introduction programs can continue as an effort to expand Indonesian language learning internationally.

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