

# Needs Analysis of Students in Dialectology Learning at Toraja Christian University of Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the needs of students at the Toraja Christian University of Indonesia in dialectology learning. The study is beneficial in providing profound insights into the needs and preferences of students in dialectology learning, assisting the university in developing a more relevant and effective dialectology course. Furthermore, by understanding the student's needs, the university can allocate learning resources more efficiently, including providing more suitable teaching materials, effective teaching methods, and improving learning facilities. This research is a mixed-methods study, combining both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Data for this study were obtained from 46 students in the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Program at Toraja Christian University of Indonesia who enrolled in the Dialectology course during the academic year 2022/2023. Data were collected through survey and interview techniques. The results of the research indicate that students' needs in dialectology learning include understanding the learning materials, effective teaching methods, required learning resources, and desired practical experiences. Students' expectations and motivations in dialectology learning vary, ranging from deepening their understanding of language and culture and learning about dialectal differences in their society to contributing to language preservation.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Dialectology is a field of linguistic study that is gaining increasing attention (Jalaluddin, 2021b). The importance of dialectology lies in its potential to preserve regional languages from the threat of extinction (Dewi, Pulung, & Muttalib, 2019). It is widely accepted that many regional languages are being abandoned by their speakers, and the study of dialectology offers a means to understand and document these languages (Chambers, 2015). By studying dialectology, we can appreciate the linguistic and cultural diversity of a region and understand the social and historical context in which the language is spoken (Magidow, 2021). The value of dialectology becomes even more crucial in the era of globalization, where cross-cultural communication is increasingly important.

The study of dialectology has become increasingly important due to the diversity of languages and dialects within a given country or region (Cajot & Renard, 2016; Inoue, 2019). It enables individuals to understand the differences in language and dialects used by communities and to appreciate the cultural, historical, and social backgrounds of the people who use them (Rak, 2021; Sousa, Suarez, Crujeiras, & Calaza, 2020). Learning dialectology also helps individuals communicate effectively with people from different regions who speak different dialects, which is especially relevant in the era of globalization where cross-cultural interaction is becoming more prevalent (Munawarah & Datang, 2019).

In several universities in Indonesia, dialectology is included as a course in the curriculum of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Program. The incorporation of dialectology as a course in the curriculum of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Program in various universities in Indonesia has diverse objectives. One of the main goals is to provide students with a profound understanding of the linguistic diversity and dialectal variations throughout the archipelago. Through this course, students develop linguistic analysis skills, including understanding phonological, morphological, and syntactic differences among dialects (Afria, 2020). The significance of socio-cultural context is also emphasized, assisting students in viewing language as a reflection of social and cultural realities (Wagiati, Darmayanti, & ..., 2021).

This course not only focuses on linguistic aspects but also highlights the complex relationship between language and cultural contexts. Moreover, dialectology contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage by safeguarding and understanding local language variations or dialects that may be endangered. Students are also empowered with skills to conduct local linguistic research, supporting a deeper understanding of language characteristics in various regions of Indonesia (Jalaluddin, 2021a, 2021b). Beyond academic benefits, the teaching of dialectology also holds practical relevance by preparing prospective language teachers to address challenges in instructing students from diverse language and dialect backgrounds. Overall, the implementation of dialectology courses aims to provide a solid foundation for understanding and respecting linguistic diversity while supporting the preservation of local language and cultural identities (Afria, 2020; Sitompul & Khairani, 2022).

Dialectology plays a crucial role in Indonesia, a country renowned for its linguistic diversity and multitude of dialects. Through its primary functions, dialectology aids in documenting and recording linguistic variations across the nation, detailing phonological, morphological, and lexical differences among various dialects. Furthermore, dialectology contributes to the identification, classification, and understanding of dialectal differences, providing an in-depth comprehension of distinct linguistic structures. The preservation of local languages assumes a critical role, particularly in efforts to safeguard endangered languages.

Dialectology offers valuable input for language policy development, encompassing educational policies and the use of Bahasa Indonesia as the national language. Linguistic research conducted by dialectologists contributes to understanding the evolution of language in Indonesia. Additionally, their role in designing educational curricula and linguistic atlases ensures the accommodation of linguistic diversity within formal education. Dialectology also facilitates communication across regions and fosters an understanding of cultural identity reflected through language and dialects. Overall, dialectology serves not only as a vital tool for linguistic understanding but also has a significant impact on cultural preservation, education, and language policy formulation in Indonesia.

Learning dialectology can pose several challenges for both students and teachers. These challenges form the basis of this research and include the following: (a) Insufficient teaching materials, as dialectology is often an under-documented field. This can impede the learning process (Markus, 2022). (b) The complexity of dialects, which can vary significantly between regions, makes it difficult for learners unfamiliar with the language to grasp. (c) Lack of prior knowledge about a dialect can hinder students' understanding and mastery of the language. (d) A shortage of qualified teachers or dialectology experts can leave learners without the guidance and support they require. (e) The difficulty of selecting the appropriate dialect to study, as some dialects may be more beneficial to learners than

others. (f) The challenge of maintaining a dialect, particularly for students who do not live in an environment where the language is spoken regularly. (g) Difficulty applying a dialect in social situations, particularly for students from outside the region or group that uses the dialect. These obstacles may make learning dialectology a daunting task, requiring significant effort, perseverance, and support.

The research on the needs analysis of students in dialectology learning at the Toraja Christian University of Indonesia aims to gain a deeper understanding of students' needs, interests, and expectations regarding the dialectology course. The primary objective is to identify both the basic and specific learning needs of students, enhancing their comprehension of dialects and languages. Additionally, the research aims to explore students' interests and motivations in studying dialectology, assessing the alignment with their interests and what drives them to delve into dialectal differences. Understanding students' expectations, such as a desire to comprehend local culture, contribute to language preservation, or acquire specific communication skills, is also a key focus.

The study will evaluate the current curriculum and teaching methods to ensure their relevance to students' needs and preferences. Recommendations will be provided for the development of dialectology learning materials that better suit students' needs and improve their learning experience. Furthermore, the research will assess the extent to which the dialectology course contributes to language and cultural preservation in Toraja, offering suggestions to enhance students' role in preserving and nurturing the local linguistic and cultural heritage. Overall, the study aims to provide valuable insights to improve the quality of dialectology teaching and better meet the student's needs at the Toraja Christian University of Indonesia.

## 2. METHODS

The research is a mixed method Sequential Explanatory Design (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006; Liem, 2018; Toyon, 2021), which involves the collection and analysis of both quantitative (Admin, 2022; Pintek, 2021; Rukin, 2022) and qualitative data in two distinct phases (Mikuleniene, 2020). In the first phase, the researcher will gather quantitative data through surveys or questionnaires to understand the extent of the student's needs and expectations towards learning dialectology (Sugiyono, 2020; Sugiyono, 2015). The data will undergo statistical analysis to discern patterns and trends. In the subsequent phase, the researcher will gather qualitative data through in-depth interviews or focus group discussions to gain a nuanced understanding of students' experiences and perspectives on dialectology education. Subsequently, the qualitative data will be integrated with the quantitative data to conduct a thorough analysis of students' needs and expectations (Herdayati, 2018; Herdayati & Syahrial, 2019).

The Sequential Explanatory Mixed-Methods Design is a research approach that sequentially combines quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon or research topic (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Ivankova et al., 2006). In this approach, the initial phase involves the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by the second phase which includes the collection and analysis of qualitative data. The main goal is to expand and explain quantitative findings by utilizing qualitative insights, thereby achieving a more comprehensive and contextual understanding of the investigated phenomenon. This design provides flexibility to address the limitations of each method, resulting in a more holistic and in-depth analysis.

The mixed-method research usually starts with the collection of large-scale quantitative data, such as surveys of students related to dialectology learning (Sugiyono, 2015). The quantitative data is then analyzed using statistics to obtain more detailed information about the student's needs. Subsequently, researchers will use a qualitative approach, such as interviews to gain a deeper understanding of students' needs, interests, and expectations towards learning dialectology.

The results of both types of data are then combined and comprehensively analyzed to obtain a more complete picture of the student's needs in dialectology learning. By using a mixed-method approach, researchers can obtain more comprehensive information and generate better

recommendations for developing a more effective and relevant curriculum and teaching methods that meet the needs of students.

The data for this research was obtained from 46 students of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Program at UKI Toraja who enrolled in the Dialectology course in the Fall semester of the academic year 2022/2023. In the study of analyzing the needs of students in learning dialectology, two data collection techniques were utilized, namely surveys and interviews (Aditya, 2021; Admin, 2022; Anwar, 2014; Pintek, 2021).

Firstly, the survey technique was used to collect quantitative data on the student's needs related to learning dialectology (Maulida, 2020). A questionnaire was distributed to respondents, who were students taking the dialectology course. The questionnaire included questions about their needs, interests, and expectations in learning dialectology, as well as other relevant aspects of the subject. Secondly, the interview technique was used to collect in-depth qualitative data about the student's needs (Maulida, 2020). Interviews were conducted with some students who had completed the questionnaire, or with students who had expertise and experience in learning dialectology. The interviews were conducted with structured question guidelines so that the researcher could obtain specific and relevant data.

By using survey and interview techniques (Aditya, 2021; Admin, 2022; Herdayati & Syahrial, 2019; Maulida, 2020; Pintek, 2021), the researcher could obtain more comprehensive data about the student's needs in learning dialectology. The quantitative data obtained from the survey could provide an overall picture of the student's needs, while the qualitative data obtained from the interviews could provide a deeper understanding of individual needs and students' experiences in learning dialectology.

The implementation steps of the research begin with planning, involving the establishment of objectives and research design. Quantitative data is gathered through surveys or questionnaires distributed to students to identify their needs in dialectology learning (Waruwu, 2023). Quantitative data analysis is conducted using statistical methods to gain initial insights into patterns and trends in students' needs.

Subsequently, qualitative data is collected through in-depth interviews or focus group discussions (Waruwu, 2023). The purpose of these interviews is to obtain a deeper understanding of students' experiences and perspectives on dialectology learning. Qualitative data analysis is performed using thematic or content analysis, focusing on findings that can explain and complement the quantitative results (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

The next step involves data integration, where findings from quantitative and qualitative data analyses are merged. This is done to provide a more comprehensive understanding of student's needs and expectations in dialectology learning. Conclusions and recommendations are then formulated based on data integration, offering relevant and robust suggestions for improving dialectology learning at the Toraja Christian University of Indonesia.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Following the survey, the data from students is presented.

**Table 1.** Data from survey

No	Questions	Answer	percentage
1	Have you enrolled in the Dialectology course?	Yes	100%
2	Do you feel the need to learn Dialectology?	Yes	75 %
3	Where do you acquire your learning resources for Dialectology?	Lecturers' presentation materials	77%
4	In your opinion, what is the most effective way to present Dialectology teaching materials for better understanding?	Concise and compact materials with examples	97%

5	What specific topics or content do you think are suitable for instructors to include in Dialectology classes?	Relevant to the context of Toraja people's lives	100%
6	In Dialectology learning, do you think theory or practical analysis is more essential?	Both theory and practice.	100%

A survey was conducted by administering six questions. The first question is, 'Have you enrolled in the Dialectology course?' This question aims to ensure that the inquiry is directed to the appropriate respondents. To ascertain the needs of students learning dialectology, the suitable respondents are those who have enrolled in the dialectology course. This is intended to delve further into the needs of students learning dialectology. Based on the survey results, 100% or all 46 surveyed students have enrolled in the Dialectology course. The second question in the survey is, 'Do you feel the need to study Dialectology?' This question aims to determine the level of necessity for students to comprehend and study the Dialectology course. The survey results indicate that 76.08% of 35 students answered 'Yes.'

The next question, which is the third question, is 'Where do you get learning materials for teaching Dialectology?' This question aims to identify the learning sources that students have been using. Based on the survey results, it is known that 76.08% or 35 students answered 'From the lecture materials.' Based on further interviews, the remaining 11 students bought Dialectology reference books online.

Furthermore, the fourth question is, 'In your opinion, how can the teaching materials of Dialectology be presented in a way that is easy for you to understand?' This question aims to determine the ways of presenting the materials that are easy for students to comprehend and understand. Based on the survey results, it is known that 76.08% or 35 students answered 'From the lecture materials.' The remaining students, based on further interviews, which are 11 students, bought Dialectology reference books online.

The fifth question is, "What materials should be provided by the lecturer for dialectology learning?" This question aims to determine the student's needs regarding the materials they require in their learning. Based on the survey results, 100% or 46 surveyed students answered that the course should be relevant to the context of the Toraja people's lives.

The final question given to the students is, "In dialectology learning, do you need more theory or practical analysis of dialectology?" This question aims to determine the type of learning materials students need, whether it is theoretical or practical. Based on the survey results, 100% or 46 surveyed students answered "Theory and Practice."

Studying dialectology is crucial for students majoring in Indonesian Language and Literature, specifically for students at Toraja Christian University of Indonesia. With dialectology learning, students can enhance their understanding of language diversity. Dialectology helps students understand the language variations in their region or community (Pappachan, 2020; Rak, 2021). Each region or community has its own dialect or language variation. Learning dialectology helps students recognize and understand the differences in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and other linguistic features among these dialects (Ambros, 2006; Pearson, 2006).

Furthermore, the need for learning dialectology is crucial as it enables students to communicate more effectively in various contexts (Rahmawati, 2013; Vulāne & Stikute, 2020). By understanding the dialects used by people in a particular region or community, students can adapt to their way of speaking and avoid communicative misunderstandings. This is especially important in social interactions, business, or professional situations where accurate and effective understanding is highly valued.

Learning dialectology is necessary because it serves to preserve culture and identity. Dialects often play a significant role in the identity and culture of a particular community. Studying dialectology helps students understand and preserve the cultural heritage associated with specific languages and dialects (Nawi & Embong, 2021; Thamrin, Suhardi, Veronica, & Lusi, 2021). By preserving these dialects, students can maintain and appreciate their unique cultural identity and traditions.

The need to learn dialectology is also related to linguistic research. Dialectology is an important field of study within linguistics. Learning dialectology helps in understanding language structure, language change over time, and the socio-linguistic influences within specific communities (Nawi & Embong, 2021). Research in this field also contributes to the development of linguistics as a whole.

Dialectology learning contributes to language preservation efforts (Nawi & Embong, 2021; Thamrin et al., 2021). Through research and understanding of dialectology, students can assist in the preservation of endangered languages. Certain languages and dialects may be facing the risk of extinction due to social changes, urbanization, or globalization. By studying dialectology, students can record, document, and safeguard this linguistic heritage for future generations (Nawi & Embong, 2021; Ulfah, 2019).

Another need expressed by students in dialectology learning is concise and condensed lecture materials. Compact lecture materials are used to provide a brief yet substantial overview of a topic or to summarize key points from broader materials. These materials should be accompanied by practical examples that are easily understood by students. Examples in learning are used to illustrate or demonstrate the concepts or theories being taught. By providing concrete examples, students can grasp and relate abstract concepts to real-world situations. These examples help provide a clearer understanding and reinforce the comprehension of the taught concepts (Thamrin et al., 2021).

Another objective of providing examples in learning is to help students see how the concepts they are learning can be applied in practical situations (Nawi & Embong, 2021). By providing real-life examples, students can understand how the concepts function in the real world, face challenges, or solve problems. Furthermore, examples are used to deepen students' understanding of concepts or theories by showcasing different variations or applications. By providing examples from various contexts or perspectives, students can comprehend the concepts more comprehensively and observe subtle nuances.

In the learning process, interesting and relevant examples can enhance students' engagement in learning (Jalaluddin, 2021a; Wagiaty et al., 2021). By providing engaging, applicable, or intriguing examples, students will be more interested and motivated to learn the concepts or theories being taught. Another need expressed by students in dialectology learning is learning resources. Typically, students rely heavily on teachers' PowerPoint materials in their learning. This can result in inadequate learning materials obtained by students. Therefore, it is expected that lecturers can provide adequate learning resources.

Learning resources in dialectology aim to provide knowledge about the different dialects and language variations that exist (Jalaluddin, 2021b). These learning resources can include books, articles, audio recordings, or other sources that depict the differences in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and other linguistic features among these dialects. Learning resources in dialectology facilitate the recognition and analysis of the distinctive linguistic features of these dialects. These resources can provide concrete examples of sound pronunciation, vocabulary differences, grammar variations, or other characteristics that distinguish these dialects. Furthermore, learning resources aim to develop an understanding of the social and cultural influences on the use and preservation of dialects (Dewi et al., 2019; Wigati Purwaningrum & Maulani Pangestu, 2021). By providing explanations of social factors such as social status, ethnic identity, or geography, these learning resources help students understand the social and cultural contexts behind language variations.

In addition, learning resources in dialectology also aim to foster an understanding of the history and development of dialects. By providing information about the origins and evolution of dialects, these learning resources help students understand the social, historical, and influencing factors behind the development of specific dialects (Dewi et al., 2019; Wigati Purwaningrum & Maulani Pangestu, 2021). An important goal of learning resources in dialectology is to promote the preservation of endangered dialects. These learning resources can provide information about efforts to preserve specific dialects, such as documentation, research, or language preservation programs.

Alongside learning resources, students also need dialectology learning materials that are relevant to their lives in Toraja. Through dialectology learning, Toraja students can deepen their understanding

of the Toraja language and the dialectal variations within their community (Pappachan, 2020; Rumaean, Laksono, & Yulianto, 2018). They can learn to recognize language variations used in different regions of Toraja, enabling them to better understand and communicate with fellow Toraja community members.

Dialectology materials assist Toraja students in preserving their cultural heritage. By studying dialectal differences and linguistic patterns in the Toraja language, they can help maintain the uniqueness of their culture (Jalaluddin, 2021a). By understanding language and dialectal differences, Toraja students can contribute to preserving the linguistic and cultural richness of Toraja. Additionally, dialectology learning grounded in the life of the Toraja community can help Toraja students understand their identity as Toraja people. By delving deep into their language and dialect, they can strengthen their sense of pride and appreciation for their cultural heritage. This also aids in building a strong sense of identity and strengthening their bond with the Toraja community.

Another benefit of dialectology learning based on the life of the Toraja community is that it allows students to become more acquainted with the dialects of the Toraja language. Understanding the dialectal differences within the Toraja language helps Toraja students develop their overall language proficiency (Dewi et al., 2019). They can expand their vocabulary, grasp more complex linguistic structures, and enhance their ability to communicate effectively in the Toraja language. This provides advantages in various fields such as education, employment, and social life (Albury & Diaz, 2021; Rumaean et al., 2018). Furthermore, dialectology learning materials can significantly contribute to research and the development of Toraja literature. Toraja students with a deep understanding of their language and dialect can research Toraja's linguistic and cultural richness. This can pave the way for the development of literature and publications that reflect the language and cultural wealth of the Toraja community.

Students also require dialectology learning materials that prioritize practical application. Practical-oriented dialectology learning materials have significant benefits for Toraja students. Through practical dialectology, Toraja students can directly engage in research and data collection on language and dialect differences within the Toraja community (Reniwati, Noviatry, Aslinda, & Midawati, 2016). This helps them understand existing linguistic variations, including differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and phrases in Toraja dialects (Dewi, 2020, 2022; Dewi, Baan, Situru, Biran, & Gelong, 2022). Practical dialectology allows students to observe and learn language directly from native speakers.

Engaging in practical dialectology entails firsthand data collection in the field, involving interactions with native speakers of Toraja dialects. Students will gain proficiency in observing and documenting language usage in various everyday contexts, acquiring linguistic data through interviews or direct observation, and analyzing existing linguistic variations. This facilitates the development of essential field skills, including observation, interviewing, and data analysis.

Additionally, practical dialectology allows Toraja students to actively contribute to the preservation of their language and culture. By documenting and studying Toraja dialects, they play a vital role in sustaining and honoring the richness of their language and cultural heritage. The insights garnered from practical dialectology can be instrumental in language preservation initiatives and in educating younger generations about their cultural legacy.

Through practical dialectology, Toraja students can deepen their comprehension of social interactions within the Toraja community. They can observe how the utilization of specific dialects influences communication and social dynamics within the society (Both, 2020). This enhanced understanding enables students to value linguistic and cultural diversity and foster stronger connections with the Toraja community. Moreover, practical dialectology opens avenues for Toraja students to engage in research and development in the realm of language and culture. They can apply their knowledge and skills in dialectology to contribute to linguistic research, anthropology, or other relevant fields. This, in turn, creates potential career opportunities in cultural preservation, education, research, or other sectors related to language and culture.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings from the analysis of students' needs in dialectology learning, it can be deduced that students possess specific requirements in dialectology learning. These include grasping the learning materials, effective teaching methodologies, essential learning resources, and desired practical experiences. Students exhibit diverse expectations and motivations in dialectology learning, spanning from deepening their understanding of language and culture to learning about dialectal distinctions within their community, as well as contributing to language preservation.

In practice, there exist gaps or deficiencies in dialectology learning that necessitate attention by focusing on areas where students' needs are not fully met. The development of dialectology learning materials that resonate with students' lives and culture can heighten the relevance and efficacy of the learning process. By comprehending students' needs and expectations, measures can be implemented to enhance teaching methods, provide ample learning resources, and involve students in direct practices to deepen their comprehension. Dialectology learning contributes to language and cultural sustainability and preservation by furnishing pertinent learning experiences, fostering students' pride, and nurturing cultural identity.

Aligned with the research conclusion, conducting a case study or observation of students participating in dialectology learning programs is recommended. By monitoring students' activities and responses during the learning process, the research can pinpoint areas that necessitate improvement, the challenges faced by students, and the most effective facets of learning. Moreover, involving students in determining the learning materials is encouraged. Utilizing group discussions or focus group discussions, the research can delve into students' preferences and needs regarding dialectology learning materials, aiding in the design of a more pertinent and engaging curriculum.

Readers may also contemplate conducting cross-cultural or cross-regional research. If feasible, the research could encompass students from diverse cultures or regions with dialectal variations. This approach can furnish a broader understanding of students' needs in dialectology learning and enrich their overall learning experiences. Another suggestion is to undertake a comparative analysis between dialectology learning and other language learning approaches. In this research, the needs, interests, and expectations of students in dialectology learning can be juxtaposed with those in standard language learning or other foreign language learning. This comparative analysis can yield insights into the distinctive characteristics of dialectology learning and identify areas requiring enhancement.

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