



# The Use of Indonesian by Danish Athlete "Mathias Christiansen" in Various Competitions as a Form of Love for the Indonesian Language

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## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menganalisis penggunaan bahasa Indonesia oleh atlet asal Denmark, Mathias Christiansen, dalam berbagai kompetisi sebagai bentuk kecintaan terhadap bahasa dan budaya Indonesia. Metode yang digunakan adalah analisis kualitatif terhadap interaksi dan wawancara yang dilakukan oleh Christiansen selama berkompetisi di Indonesia maupun internasional. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Christiansen tidak hanya berusaha untuk berkomunikasi dengan baik dalam bahasa Indonesia, tetapi juga mengungkapkan rasa penghargaan dan minat yang mendalam terhadap budaya maupun bahasa Indonesia. Penggunaan bahasa ini menjadi sarana untuk membangun kedekatan dengan penggemar dan masyarakat Indonesia, sekaligus menunjukkan dampak positif dari penguasaan bahasa Indonesia yang baik oleh orang asing, sehingga bahasa Indonesia semakin dikenal di kancah internasional. Temuan ini diharapkan dapat memberikan wawasan tentang peran bahasa sebagai jembatan antarbudaya dalam dunia olahraga.

## ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the use of Indonesian by an athlete from Denmark, Mathias Christiansen, in various competitions as a form of love for the Indonesian language and culture. The method used is qualitative analysis of interactions and interviews conducted by Christiansen during competitions in Indonesia and internationally. The results of the research show that Christiansen not only communicates well in Indonesian but also expresses a deep appreciation and interest in Indonesian culture and language. The use of this language is a means of building closeness with fans and the Indonesian people, as well as demonstrating the positive impact of good mastery of Indonesian by foreigners, thereby increasing Indonesia's international recognition. It is hoped that these findings will provide insight into the role of language as a bridge between cultures in the world of sport.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a symbolic system of sounds with arbitrary properties that human communities use to communicate, collaborate, and define themselves. Every independent and sovereign nation should have a unique and independent language that serves as its national identity. National identity is defined as a collection of cultural values that develop within

aspects of community life and possess characteristics that distinguish it from other societies (Antari Swandewi, 2019). Because Malay has been used as a lingua franca in Indonesia for centuries, Indonesian is derived from the Malay prototype (Mamonto, 2023), Indonesian is now the unifying language and state language of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Indonesian plays a dominant role in all aspects of social life, including fostering a love of Indonesia among its users. This love for Indonesian can be channeled in various ways, such as through Indonesian athletes who compete on the international stage and still use Indonesian. Because of this unique characteristic, foreign athletes are increasingly interested in using Indonesian. One foreign athlete interested in using Indonesian is Mathias Christiansen, a Danish badminton player.

Mathias Christiansen, born on February 20, 1994, is a Danish badminton player who joined the national team in July 2013. Mathias is a silver medalist at the 2018 and 2024 European Championships, and a bronze medalist at the 2016, 2017, and 2021 European Championships, as well as the 2023 European Games. Mathias was part of the Danish winning team at the 2016 Thomas Cup and is also one of the foreign athletes who is fluent in Indonesian. At one of the badminton competitions in Denmark, namely the "Denmark Open 2020", badminton fans were excited by Mathias' fluent use of Indonesian during an interview. From the brief review above, our group wants to investigate several things, namely:

1. The reason why the Danish athlete "Mathias Christiansen" started learning Indonesian
2. How is Mathias Christiansen's learning process in learning Indonesian?

The aim of our research is to provide answers and explanations about the extent of Indonesia's impact on the international stage, so that foreigners are interested in learning more about Indonesia and deepening their knowledge.

## 2. METHOD

We conducted this research using observational methods and literature reviews, including a YouTube video titled "The Funny Interview of Danish Athlete Mathias Christiansen in Indonesian," uploaded to the "Sportase Official" channel, with a duration of 3:30, as well as various news articles featuring interviews with Mathias Christiansen.

Observation is a systematic method for documenting human activities and the physical environment in which they occur in the workplace to obtain facts. (Hasanah, 2016) According to Spradley (1980) and Johnson (1989), observation describes what is captured by the senses and combines important information and data from the observations. The results of an observation can include the activities carried out by the subject, the reasons for those activities, and other factors surrounding the subject being studied.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **The reason why Danish athlete "Mathias Christiansen" started learning Indonesian**

Mathias Christiansen had the intention from the start to learn Indonesian. This intention initially arose when one of his teammates started learning Indonesian, so Mathias was also encouraged to learn it out of curiosity (Valentine, 2021). This is supported by Mathias's desire to get closer to Indonesian fans and badminton athletes. Mathias wants to interact with Indonesian fans and athletes without using English. (Husein, 2022) Another

reason that strengthens Mathias's intention to learn Indonesian is the nature of the Indonesian people themselves. Mathias admitted that he often vacations in Indonesia and really likes Indonesian people, so he became interested in deepening his knowledge of Indonesian. Through his deepening knowledge of Indonesian, Mathias also feels he can learn more about Indonesian culture (Ramadan, 2022).

### **Mathias Christiansen's Learning Process in Learning Indonesian**

Mathias Christiansen's initial motivation for learning Indonesian was to interact with Indonesian fans. To achieve this goal, he took several steps to deepen his use of Indonesian. Inspired by his badminton teammates, he began studying Indonesian during the 2020 lockdown to fill his free time, as tournaments were suspended for 7 months.(Prasetya, 2020) Mathias also attended classes held and facilitated by the Indonesian Embassy in Copenhagen to improve his language skills (Jonata, 2022). Outside of class, Mathias also deepened his learning through self-study, studying Indonesian through YouTube, Instagram, Duolingo, and other applications.(Husein, 2022) Mathias also has an Indonesian female teacher in Denmark who helps him with his studies. Mathias admitted that he had stopped studying because he had just undergone surgery and the Olympics, but he started trying again to study in his spare time with the help of his language teacher.(Valentine, 2021) Mathias initially found it easy when he started learning Indonesian, but as he deepened his knowledge, he found it difficult with suffixes and prefixes.(Jonata, 2022), as well as the use of Indonesian, which was too fast for his conversation partner, so Mathias asked his conversation partner to speak more slowly (Valentine, 2021).

## **4. CONCLUSION**

This article examines Danish badminton athlete Mathias Christiansen's use of Indonesian as a form of love for the Indonesian language and culture. Through qualitative research analyzing video interviews from YouTube and news platforms, the study reveals that Mathias Christiansen demonstrates a deep interest in communicating and learning about Indonesian culture. The study also shows that Indonesian has a unique appeal for foreigners. Indonesian can also inspire a sense of love in its speakers. This can be seen in the Danish badminton athlete, Mathias Christiansen. Mathias demonstrates his love for using Indonesian by studying to deepen his Indonesian language skills. Mathias deepened his Indonesian language learning by attending classes, inviting teachers, and also self-studying through various social media platforms. He has been doing this since the 2020 lockdown. These actions demonstrate Mathias's dedication to learning and deepening his Indonesian language skills. He uses these learning experiences to interact with Indonesian athletes and fans. Mathias also frequently uses Indonesian in formal interviews and informal activities. We, as Indonesian citizens, should be proud of our language, which is known internationally. The actions taken by Mathias can awaken Indonesian citizens' sense of nationalism, encouraging them to remain proud of their own language and not forget it or replace it with other languages.

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