

Bahasa Betawi Is One of Mother Tongue Of Language Which Is Endangered

Abstract

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Betawi language as a mother language is one of the nation's cultural assets which requires attention from many parties in order to maintain and preserve it. Betawi is a local language existing in the midst of a very complex community. This position opens the door of opportunity for this language to sustainable or, otherwise, become extinct from this nation's area of culture due to the interference of various languages used by diverse population as such.

Some researchers classify Betawi language into three groups namely *Betawi Tengah*, *Betawi Pinggir*, and *Betawi Udik*. The discussion in this paper focuses on Betawi Tengah language. The choice of discussion topic refers to the geographical part of Jakarta, which is Central Jakarta. The Betawinese living in Central Jakarta communicate using the particular Malay-Betawi, which is different from Betawi language used at Jakarta suburbs.

The most obvious characteristic of Betawi Tengah language is the use of /é/ phoneme at the end of each word which is in Bahasa Indonesia has /a/ as its suffix, for example [kata] becomes [katé]. Other than that, there is also a transformation of diphthong phoneme /ai/ into /é/ and /au/ into /o/ like [ramai] becomes [ramé]; [pulau] becomes [pulo]

These characteristics will always attach to Betawi Tengah if this language is consistently used. This sustainability will manifest if several parties take part in it. Parties which take role in preserving Betawi Tengah language are the speakers of Betawi language, either natives or newcomers; artists, especially singers of Betawi songs, and mass media particularly television.

Keywords: Betawi language; cultural assets, media.

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Introduction

The 21st of February is commemorated as the International Mother Language Day. There are at least 300 out of 6,000 mother languages all over the world which are now endangered. Therefore, efforts to preserve mother languages need to be improved by individuals, organizations and government. Matsuura (2007) declared this at the commemoration of The International Mother Language Day (www.mediaindo.co.id).

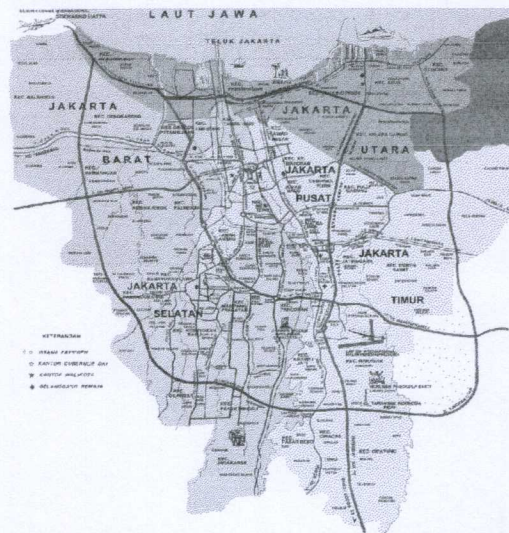
Local languages or mother languages existing in a country becomes the nation's cultural assets. Thus, local languages do not only belong to their surrounding communities, but also to the nation, so each citizen is responsible to preserve it. "Language is the most powerful tool to preserve and develop the nation's cultural heritage. All activities which encourage mother languages will not only boost the development of language variety and multi-languages education, but also to build linguistic awareness based on mutual understanding, tolerance and dialogue." – from the microsite of United Nation's International Mother Language Day –

Betawi language is a language used by the natives living in the area of Betawi, which is nowadays known as Jakarta (the capital city). As a capital city, Jakarta is visited and inhabited by various ethnics, even foreigners. This brings influence to the existence of Betawi language due to the variation of language used by people living in this city. As one of the nation's cultural assets, Betawi language requires attention from many parties in order to get maintained and preserved

Jakarta is divided into five parts: Central Jakarta, West Jakarta, East Jakarta, North Jakarta and South Jakarta. The geographical location of Jakarta or Betawi area causes difference in the social and cultural aspect of its people. Some researchers classify Betawi language into three groups namely *Betawi Tengah*, *Betawi Pinggir*, and *Betawi Udik*. The writer as a person born

and raised in Jakarta divided Betawi language into two parts namely Betawi Tengah and Betawi Pinggir. This classification is based on two aspects: geographical aspect and the use of language.

The geographical aspect can be seen from the Jakarta city map below:



Picture 1: **Jakarta City Map**

<https://www.google.co.id/>

Geographically, Betawi Tengah residents are natives living in the area of Central Jakarta which includes Gambir, Menteng, Kemayoran, Senen, Cempaka Putih, Sawah Besar, Johar Baru, and Tanah Abang municipalities. In terms of language use, Betawi Tengah language also involves its neighbourhood areas such as West Jakarta (Palmerah, Petamburan, Tabora, and Taman Sari municipalities), East Jakarta (Matraman and Jatinegara) and South Jakarta (Setiabudi, Tebet, Kebayoran Lama, Kebayoran Baru). Betawi language used at the North Jakarta has a rather different characteristic compared to Betawi Tengah and Betawi Pinggir. That characteristic indicates adhesiveness with the Chinese accent. This may cause by the large number of Chinese descendants living on the area of North Jakarta.

Betawi Pinggir citizens are natives living outside the Central Jakarta and its neighbourhood areas. If there are researchers include the group of Betawi Udik, they are probably citizens living outside DKI Jakarta borders but close by Jakarta itself like Ciledug, Serpong, Ciputat, and Pamulang, part of Tangerang-Banten; Sawangan, Citayem, part of Depok; Pondok Petir and Parung, part of Bogor area; and some municipalities included in the Bekasi region.

One internet site explains that the classification of those two cultural areas (Betawi Tengah and Betawi Pinggir) is not only based on the geographic aspect but also cultural characteristics, including language and traditional arts they support. In general, Betawi dialects could be divided into two sub-dialects: Betawi Tengah and Betawi Pinggir (<http://kebudayaanindonesia.net> 7/9/2015).

Based on the above mentioned matter, the discussion on these Betawi groups is an important subject to declare in order to prevent misunderstanding during the discussion, especially in terms of culture which adopts language as part of it. Betawi language discussed in this paper is more about the concern on the extinction of Betawi Tengah language.

Language is part of the culture. Below is a Betawi traditional house which physically deploys philosophical values related to the characteristics of the Betawi ethnic.



Rumah Adat Betawi / Betawi Traditional House

<http://www.indonesiakaya.com>

The first impression while staring at the picture of Betawi ethnic traditional house is the openness of the house owner. The wide house park and sheltered terrace depicts the philosophy that guests who came will be warmly welcomed and their safety and comfort will be kept.

The Betawinese indeed possess openness to anybody who wants to visit their places. This can be seen from the big number of newcomers at the Betawi (Jakarta) without causing

any problems, even though natives Betawi were knocked out and moving to the Jakarta suburbs.

Betawi language is one of dozens varieties of Malay language existing in Indonesia. The openness of this Betawi language is also possessed by the Malay language, as stated by Umami (2008): Malay language as the root of national language is a language possessing features of language which is full of tolerance, dynamic and firm on its identity.

There is a proverb saying that "Language reflects the nation." This proverb proves to be right when it comes to Betawi language. Similar to the characteristic of its speakers, Betawi language is also an open language. This means that vocabularies from other languages can easily get absorbed by Betawi language. Vitalis Goo (2008) explains that words coming from Chinese language, especially Hokkien dialect, are found in Betawi language. Siregar (2005) states that Betawi language is a creole language rooted from the Malay language market having vocabularies from other foreign languages.

The Malay language market was first naturally used by the low class society. This natural development of language brings effect on the absence of normative structure, which is a structure that is able to differentiate between Betawi and Malay language, which in this case is "Melayu Tinggi" acknowledged by Betawi people as Bahasa Indonesia. Based on the result of a research, Muhajir (2006:1) stated that 93% of Betawi language basic vocabularies are similar to Bahasa Indonesia vocabularies, while the rest 7% comes from Javanese, Sundanese, Balinese and Chinese languages. The result of this research shows that linguistically, Betawi language is one variation of Malay language.

The similarity between Betawi (Tengah and Pinggir) language with Bahasa Indonesia in some aspects and also the obscurity of the standard structure of Betawi language potentially causes interference in the use of both languages. Interlingua interference between Betawi language and Bahasa Indonesia is unconsciously done, especially by newcomers who do not deeply recognize the Betawi language. The continued, unconscious interference which do not get proper attention either from the Betawi people themselves or the languages keen learners will gradually cause the language loss.

In order to define Betawi language as a local language possessing conspicuousness in terms of structure, we can start by identifying its characteristics.

Characteristics of each language become the distinguisher between one language and another. Betawi Tengah language is different from Betawi Pinggir and Bahasa Indonesia even

though three of them are part of Malay language. Ridwan Saidi (2009: *kompas.com*), an analyst of Betawi culture, compared between Betawi Tengah diaclet (*Batavia Centrum*) and Betawi Pinggir in terms of pronunciation, such as [gue] in Betawi Tengah language is pronounced as [gua] in Betawi pinggir. Dahlan (2009: *kompas.com*) also explained that Betawi Pinggir is influenced by the Javanese language, reflected in words such as *ngalor*, *ngidul*, *ngetan*, *ngulon*, *lanang*, *wadon*. These words are not found in Betawi Tengah language.

Betawi Tengah, Betawi Pinggir and Bahasa Indonesia

To get more familiar with Betawi Tengah language, the society must be able to differentiate it from Betawi Pinggir and also Bahasa Indonesia. To make it easier to differentiate those three cognate languages, it can be seen from the characteristics of those languages. The characteristics can be categorized into phonological, morphological and syntactical features of those languages.

Phonological Features of Betawi Tengah are as follows:

1. phoneme /a/ as suffix in Bahasa Indonesia turns into /e/ in Betawi language.
2. Phoneme /a/ followed by consonant at the edge of word in half of Bahasa Indonesia vocabularies turns into /ə/ in Betawi language.
3. diphthong phoneme /ai/ and /au/ in Bahasa Indonesia, turn into e/ dan /o/ in Betawi language.
4. phoneme /h/ at the beginning or end of Bahasa Indonesia words becomes invisible in Betawi language.

Examples of words with phonological features can be found in the table below:

Table 1. Phonological Features of Betawi Tengah Language

No.	Betawi Langauge		Bahasa Indonesia	
	phoneme	word	Phoneme	Word

No.	Betawi Language		Bahasa Indonesia	
	phoneme	word	Phoneme	Word
1.	e	[ka-té] [ko-té] [lu-pé] [kə ma-né]	A	[ka-ta] [ko-ta] [lu-pa] [kə ma-na]
2.	ə + m	[ta-nəm] [ma-ləm] [sə-rəm] [ko-ləm]	a + m	[ta-nam] [ma-lam] [se-ram] [ko-lam]
	ə + n	[tə-lən] [pə-sən] [tə-kən]	a + n	[tə-lan] [pə-san] [tə-kan]
	ə + p	[a-səp] [a-təp] [ca-kəp] [man-təp]	a + p	[a-sap] [a-tap] [ca-kap] [man-tap]
	ə + t	[cə-pət] [dapət] [lə-pət] [li-pət] [səm-pət]	a + t	[cə-pat] [dapat] [lə-pat] [li-pat] [səm-pat]
3.	e	[ca-bé] [da-mé] [ra-mé] [ran-té] [sam-pai]	ai	[ca-bai] [da-mai] [ra-mai] [ran-tai] [sam-pai]
	o	[ba-ngo] [li-mo] [pu-lo] [si-lo]	Au	[ba-ngau] [li-mau] [pu-lau] [si-lau]
4	-h	[abis] [ilang] [itam] [uruf] [utang] [ma-ré] [pa-té] [ru-mé] [sam-pé] [ta-bé]	H	[habis] [hilang] [hitam] [huruf] [hutang] [ma-rah] [pa-tah] [ru-mah] [sam-pah] [ta-bah]

No.	Betawi Language		Bahasa Indonesia	
	phoneme	word	Phoneme	Word
		[u-bé] [lə-bi] [su-bu]		[u-bah] [lə-bih] [su-buh]

Morphological Features of Betawi Tengah

1. *-in* suffix is equal to *-i* and *-kan* suffix in Bahasa Indonesia.
2. does not have *men-* and *ber-* prefix (having *ng-* and *be-* prefix instead)
3. Have vocabularies (different from Bahasa Indonesia)
4. Final syllable: [-én] dan [-en].

Table 2. Morphological Features of Betawi Tengah Language

No.	Betawi Language		Bahasa Indonesia		Decription
	suffix	word	suffic	word	
1.	-in	[ajarin] [suapin] [panasin] [lunasin] [bedain] [laporin] [lupain] [mandiin]	-i	[ajari] [suapi] [panasi] [lunasi] [bedakan] [laporkan] [lupakan] [mandikan]	
2.	<i>penghilangan (me-)</i>	[ngambil] [ngapur] [ngurus] [ngamal] [ngomong]	<i>me-</i> <i>ber-</i>	[məngambil] [məngapur] [məngurus] [bəramal] [bəbicara]	
	<i>be-</i>	[bəcandé] [bəlagé] [bətingké]		[bəcanda] [bəlagak] [bətingkah]	
3.		[gué] [ayé] [lhú] [nyak] [babé] [mpok]		[saya, aku] [kamu] [ibu] [babé] [kakak prm]	To peers only (when it comes to elders, it becomes impolite).

No.	Betawi Language		Bahasa Indonesia		Decription
	suffix	word	suffic	word	
		[abang] [amé] [gedé] [nggak] [bangət] [bəlagu] [nyang] [tumbén] [lubér]		[kakak lk] [dəngan] [bəsar] [tidak] [sangat] [sombong] [yang] [tidak biasa] [melimpah]	
4	Syllable	Word	Syllable	Word	
	-rén -én	[ke-ma-rén] [la-én]	-rin -in	[kemarin] [la-in]	
	-pen -bel -ket	[sim-pen] [sam-bel] [i-ket]	-pan -bal -kat	[sim-pan] [sam-bal] [i-kat]	

Table 3. Syntactical Features of Betawi Tengah
The Use of Particle, *dong*, *kék*, *déh*, *si (h)*, and *kok* in Betawi Language Sentences

No.	Betawi Language		Bahasa Indonesia	
	particle	sentence	particle	sentence
1.	dong	<i>Bantuin dong, jangan diliatin ajé!</i>	-	<i>Bantu saya, jangan melihat saja.</i>
2.	kék	<i>Anak siapé kék, kalo salé ya salé.</i>	-	<i>Anak siapa saja, kalau salah ya salah.</i>
3.	déh	<i>Ude deh nggak use ribut.</i>	-lah	<i>Sudahlah tidak perlu ribut.</i>
4.	si (h)	<i>Lu si, nggak mau dəngər katé orang tué.</i>	-	<i>Kamu tidak mau mendengar nasihat orang tua.</i>
5	kok	<i>Kok jadi begini?</i>	-	<i>Mengapa jadi begini?</i>

Example of Betawi Tengah Language in Song

Lampu Merah II (Aman Doris)

Penyanyi: Benyamin S dan Ida Royani

*Awas lampu méré jangan masuk dulu, abang mesti taat amé peraturan.
Jangan adé maré abang jugé tau, nunggu lamé-lamé abang gak sabaran.
Kalo lagi méré abang mesti sabar, kalo udé ijo boléh abang masuk.
Abis pegimané abang musti sabar, kok sedari tadi lampu méré terus.*

Ni lampu méré terus, tar gue cari jalan laén (terserah).

*Lampu méré (setop), lampu ijo (jalan), lampu kuning (setar pelan-pelan bang).
Abang sodok yé (jangan) abang kebut (jangan), inget dong bang demi kslametan.*

*Ayo siap-siap lampu udé kuning, ayo dong cepetan sabet déh buruan bang.
Abang jadi bingung knapé ngdadak mogok, kagak salé lagi akinyé nyang soak.
Heran ni aki soak melulu, cas dong bang ah, padahal baru dicas kemarén
Eh bosen kalo mo dipaké soak melulu soak melulu ntar gué naék mobil laén nih, nyaho.*

*Lampu kuning (siap), lampu ijo (boléh déh bang), lampu méré (é bang jangan dulu)
Kite musti (taat) amé (peraturan), jangan jadi (algojo di jalan)*

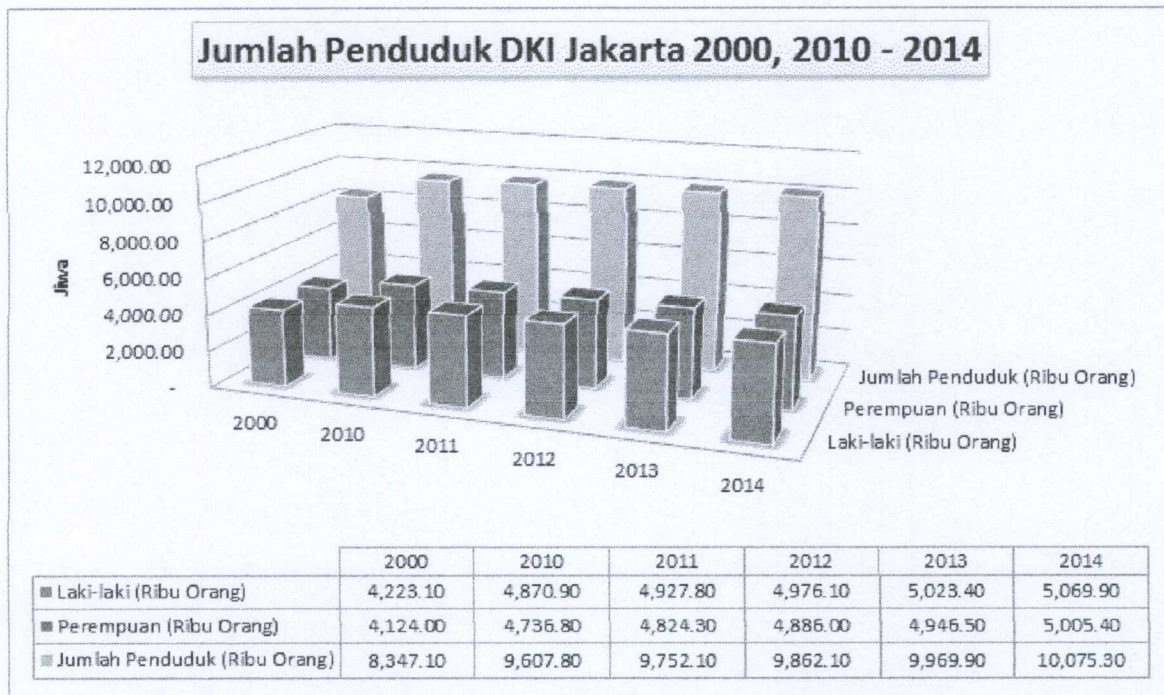
*Liat pak polisi diri di bunderan, ngatur lalu lintas demi keamanan.
Nggak peduli panas gak peduli ujan, demi keamanan lalu lintas jalan.*

Untung adé pak pulisi kalo gak macet, é mang na udé dilébarin sempit lagi.
<https://www.youtube.com/>

The Preservation of Betawi Language

Jakarta (Betawi) serves as the capital city of Indonesia. Various economic activities are here in this city. There are a lot of opportunities can be seized by each citizens to develop and improves their economic status. As a result, people from other provinces also come to chase after the same opportunity.

Jakarta is 740.28 km² with 10,075,300 population in the year of 2014 as reflected by the statistic below:



<http://bappedajakarta.go.id/>, accessed on September 7th, 2015

During the day, this number adds up due to the coming of workers from Bekasi, Tangerang, Bogor and Depok. Jakarta citizens consists of 35% Javanese, 25% Betawinese, 15% Sundanese, 6% Chinese and 3% Padangnese (this percentage exludes foreigners who already become Indonesia nationals).

This fact, particularly the number of ethnics and languages used can potentially become the cause of extinction of Betawi Tengah language. Neglecting Betawi language features or mixing the use of language in communication will cause the obscurity of the language used. If this happens continuously, it is fairly predictable that the Betawi language will lose without us realizing about it.

Betawi Tengah language can survive or become extinct depending on several aspects. Those aspects are the use of Betawi language, traditional arts (Betawi) and mass media. Bahasa Betawi could be preserved if it is always used by constantly applying the existing features. This means that the use of language will not mix the linguistic principles of Betawi Tengah with Betawi Pinggir or with other languages.

Betawi language could also be preserved if this language is used for communicating through arts. Through song lyrics written in Betawi language like the above sample, the society will know better about this language. Through theatrical performance arts (*lenong* or theater) about the life of Betawi (Tengah) people, this language will also gradually and surely become popular in the society.

The mass media, either printed or electronic, have a lot of functions. One of the positive impacts of the media is becoming the channel of cultural transferring. Television medium nowadays has wider range of coverage compared to other media in terms of preserving Betawi language. Betawi language in forms of music and performance arts broadcasted by TV channels will be recognized by the watching audience and it is likely to be imitated. Therefore, there is no obstacle to preserve Betawi language as one of the nation's cultural heritage.

From there, it can be concluded that the Betawi language which until now does not have any firm structure still have chances to be reborned with clear identity. This chance will come true if the society, especially those authorized in the field of language and culture, intends to preserve this cultural asset.

Recommendations

1. More attention to Betawi language or local language is deemed necessary, especially to those authorized parties and cultural enthusiasts.
2. The preservation of Betawi or local languages can be done through intercomponent cooperation within the government bodies (The Center of Language Development, Department of Education, Department of Culture and Tourism, Department of Youth and Sport) and mass media.
3. Betawi language or local language becomes a compulsory subject in lesson of local contents administrated by the local department of education.

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