

Betawi Adolescents' Language Attitudes Towards Their Mother Tongue: A Sociolinguistic Perspective in Indonesia

Tajuddin Nur, *

¹ Jakarta National University

*Corresponding author. Email: Tajuddin.kwardadki@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study was aimed to examine the attitude of Betawi adolescents towards their mother tongue, the Indonesian, and foreign languages influence on using mother tongue for communication. This employed a descriptive quantitative design with a sociolinguistic approach. The respondents were drawn from cities within the Jakarta province, including Central Jakarta, North Jakarta, West Jakarta, East Jakarta, South Jakarta, and the border areas such as Bekasi, Tangerang, and Depok. Additionally, questionnaires were used to collect data from a sample size of 120 Betawi adolescents spread across the city. Lambert's theory, which states that the attitude consists of cognitive (knowledge), affective (judgmental), and conative (behavior) aspects, was used to describe and interpret the data collected. From the results, it was concluded that the attitude of Betawi adolescents towards their mother tongue was negative, the Indonesian influenced shifting the mother tongue, and finally, foreign languages had no influence on shifting from their mother tongue.

Keywords: language attitudes, adolescents, mother tongue.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many experts, specifically in the field of social psychology, conducted studies on attitude. Triandis [1] argued that attitude is the readiness to react in an encountered situation or event. Fundamentally, it is considered as a person's readiness to deal with a situation mentally. Furthermore, Anderson, (2010) suggested two types of attitudes, including linguistic and non-linguistic, related to cognition or beliefs about a certain language. Therefore, language attitude can be termed as long-term belief or cognition about language or language objects, which influences a person to react in a certain way.

Although people embrace their native language, external influence, specifically association with elite groups such as the political class, economically endowed persons, and the social-cultural class, might negatively impact its perception. For instance, most people copy the languages of the ethnicities, which are considered successful economically, politically, and socially. In such a situation, people express a positive

view of the second language and negatively look down upon their mother tongue [2].

Lambert [3] stated that attitude consists of cognitive, affective, and conative aspects. Cognitive aspects are related to knowledge about the environment and the ideas used in the thinking process. The affective factor involves judging whether someone, something, or a situation is welcome or not. Also, the conative aspect is concerned with the behavior or actions as the final decision on reactive readiness to a situation.

Adolescence is the transition period from childhood to adulthood characterized by the beginning of physical and social-psychological maturity. The adolescent age period is categorized into two, including 10-14 years, essentially referred to early adolescence, and 15-20 years or late adolescence group. According to the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency, the age limit for adolescents is 15-24 years, which is close to the one set by the United Nations on youth.

According to WHO (1974), adolescents experience biological, psychological, and socioeconomic changes as they transit. Biological changes are different within

individuals, but the majority exhibit similar physical changes such as an increase in height, gaining muscle mass, distribution of body fat, and developing secondary sexual signs. Psychological changes involve personal identification, solving individual problems, abstract thinking, and recognizance of other people’s opinions. Additionally, the socioeconomic changes refer to the transition experienced by adolescents from full socioeconomic dependence to a relatively more independent state Sarwono, [4].

Mother tongue is the first language, which people master daily to convey thoughts, feelings, and the needs of life. It is universally embodied with Wierzbicka as a “natural semantic metal language,” a subsection of the complete natural language [5]. Concisely, the wealth of a nation is reflected through the variety of the local languages it has. In Indonesia, the local language is central to preserve cultural heritage, therefore, many educational programs support the use of the mother tongue [6].

The use of Indonesian as the official language in schools has led to the drastic fall of local dialects, specifically among adolescents. Furthermore, the use of English or other foreign languages is considered more prestigious and provides greater value than native languages. The influence of these languages has resulted to most Betawi adolescents forsaking their mother tongue. This has threatened extinction of Betawi language because of the following reasons. First, the parents are no longer accustomed to speak Betawi to their children. Second, the community extensively uses Indonesian in their daily communication in place of the local dialect. Third, the Betawi language is not taught in schools as a local content subject, and efforts to maintain the language by the Jakarta Provincial Government are only limited to rhetoric and rules that are not yet implemented. Therefore, this study aimed to describe the Betawi adolescents’ language attitude towards their mother tongue in cognitive, behavioral, and affective aspects.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Study Area

This study adopted a sociolinguistic approach with a quantitative data collection technique. The data was collected within the cities of Jakarta, including Central Jakarta, North Jakarta, West Jakarta, East Jakarta, South Jakarta, and the border areas such as Bekasi, Tangerang, and Depok. These regions were considered as the areas of residence for the Betawi people. A total of 120 adolescents were identified and randomly selected as the main population target for the study.

2.2. Data Collection

The questionnaires with interrogations arranged according to the study objectives were issued to the participants for data collection. The arrangement was based on Lambert’s theory that identified attitude in terms of cognitive (knowledge), affective (judgmental), and conative (behavior) aspects. The PASW Statistics program was used to analyze data and the findings discussed in the context of Lambert’s theory.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Betawi Adolescent’s Language Attitude towards Mother Language

Betawi adolescents’ language attitude towards their mother tongue was analyzed based on Lambert’s theory. The results confirmed that adolescents put into action whatever they learn, which becomes a tangible manifestation of understanding. Therefore, people try to guess a person’s attitude towards a given situation through these three aspects analyzed below.

3.1.1. Cognitive Aspect

In this aspect, five indicators were analyzed, including identity, the use of everyday language in the family, language transmission, the language taught in schools as local content subjects, and the use of Betawi language among adolescents, as illustrated in (Table 1) below.

Table 1. Respondents’ Responses to Cognitive Aspect

Indicator Code	Statement	F %	STS	TS	RR	S	SS	Total	Total Score	Ideal Score
KO1	The Betawi language shows the identity of the Betawi people	F	22	72	24	2	0	120	246	600
		%	18.3	60	20	1.67	0	100	41.00	
KO2	The Betawi language is a means of daily communication in the family	F	18	56	44	2	0	120	270	600
		%	15	46.7	36.7	1.67	0	100	45.00	
KO3	Language transmission from parents to their children	F	20	71	25	4	0	120	253	600
		%	16.7	59.2	20.8	3.33	0	100	42.17	
KO4	The Betawi language is taught in schools as a local content subject	F	21	74	22	3	0	120	247	600
		%	17.5	61.7	18.3	2.5	0	100	41.17	
KO5	The Betawi language is used by adolescents in their daily interactions	F	31	68	18	3	0	120	233	600
		%	25.8	56.7	15	2.5	0	100	38.83	
Total									1,249	3,000
Percentage									41.63	

The expected score for the responses from the questionnaires on cognitive aspects was 3,000. However, the calculation showed the total value obtained was 1,249 (41.63%) of the ideal score, with all indicators recording below 50%. The results showed that the KO2 indicator had the highest score of 45%, indicating that the Betawi language was used daily in family communication.

Based on the analysis, it was concluded that respondents (Betawi adolescents) showed a negative language attitude in the cognitive aspect as evidenced from all the indicators, which were below 50%. Additionally, the cognitive aspect related to knowledge taught by parents to their children and in schools proved to have a negative perception.

3.1.2. Cognitive Aspect

Five indicators including a sense of pride in the Betawi language, the use of the Betawi language, and the benefits of the Betawi language used to explain the affective aspect, were presented as shown in (Table 2) below.

Table 2. Respondents' Responses to Affective Aspect

Indicator Code	Statement	F %	STS	TS	RR	S	SS	Total	Total Score	Ideal Score
AF1	I feel proud if I communicate using the Betawi language	F	24	68	25	3	0	120	247	600
		%	20	56.7	20.8	2.5	0	100	41.17	
AF2	I find it easier to master Betawi vocabulary than Indonesian	F	37	71	12	0	0	120	215	600
		%	30.8	59.2	10	0	0	100	35.83	
AF3	The Betawi language is more useful than the Indonesian	F	25	60	25	10	0	120	260	600
		%	20.8	50	20.8	8.33	0	100	43.33	
AF4	By mastering the Betawi language, my self-esteem increases	F	24	72	22	2	0	120	242	600
		%	20	60	18.3	1.67	0	100	40.33	
AF5	It's easier for me to understand information if I use the Betawi language	F	32	75	13	0	0	120	221	600
		%	26.7	62.5	10.8	0	0	100	36.83	
Total									1,185	3,000
Percentage									39.50	

The expected score for responses on affective aspects was 3,000. However, the calculation showed that the total value obtained was 1,185 (39.50%) of the ideal score. Furthermore, all the indicators recorded a score below 50%, with the AF3 at the top with 43.33%. This was an indication that Betawi was more useful than the Indonesian language. The second-highest score involved AF1 with 41.17%, which explained that the respondents were proud of using the Betawi language to communicate.

In conclusion, the average score of all indicators was below 50%, indicating that the respondents had a negative attitude towards the affective aspect. Further, the affective aspect that concerns judging whether the adolescents were proud of the Betawi language and its benefits were negatively exhibited.

3.1.3. Conative Aspect

Five indicators were considered, including the use of Betawi language in communication with family, neighborhood communication, formal situation communication, social media communication, and communication in recitation activities, as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Respondents' Responses to Conative Aspect

Indicator Code	Statement	F %	STS	TS	RR	S	SS	Total	Total Score	Ideal Score
KON1	I often use the Betawi language in communicating with my family	F	36	73	11	0	0	120	215	600
		%	30	60.8	9.17	0	0	100	35.83	
KON2	I often use the Betawi language in communicating with my neighbors	F	24	73	21	2	0	120	241	600
		%	20	60.8	17.5	1.67	0	100	40.17	
KON3	I often use the Betawi language in communicating in formal situations	F	24	66	29	1	0	120	247	600
		%	20	55	24.2	0.83	0	100	41.17	
KON4	I often use the Betawi language in interacting on social media	F	20	65	34	1	0	120	256	600
		%	16.7	54.2	28.3	0.83	0	100	42.67	
KON5	I often use the Betawi language in my recitation activities	F	15	77	28	0	0	120	253	600
		%	12.5	64.2	23.3	0	0	100	42.17	
Total									1,212	3,000
Percentage									40.40	

The expected score for responses on the conative aspect was 3,000. However, the calculation showed the total value obtained was 1,212 (40.40%) of the ideal score. Typically, all indicators scored below 50%, with the KON4 indicator taking the lead of 42.67%, indicating that respondents often use the Betawi language in their interactions.

Based on the analysis, it was concluded that the respondents showed a negative language attitude in the conative aspect. Moreover, the conative aspect regarding behavior or actions as reactive readiness towards using the Betawi language in every situation had a negative score.

The analysis shows that cognitive, affective, and conative aspects of language are closely related. However, a person's social experience is the cause of inconsistency exhibited in the three aspects. In this study, the relationship among the three aspects is close to predict that behavior influences attitude.

3.2. The Influence of Indonesian on Mother Tongue

Language shift and maintenance can be likened to the two sides of a coin. In the same way, language cannot defend itself, therefore, it keeps shifting. The choice of language has long-term effects (at least three generations) and is collective (performed by all community members). Holmes, (2001,1992) suggested that economic, social, political, demographic, behavioral, and value factors promote language shifts. Furthermore, Sumarsono, (2017) stated that bilingualism, migration, economy, and education cause language shifts. According to Susan Gal, (1979) the factors that influence language shift are economy, religion, age, differences in prestige, and ambivalent attitudes.

Table 4 presents the analysis of 9 indicators regarding the attitude of Betawi adolescents towards shifting to the Indonesian language from their mother tongue.

Table 4. Respondents' Responses to Indonesian Variables

Indicator Code	Statement	F %	STS	TS	RR	S	SS	Total	Total Score	Ideal Score
BHS1	The Indonesian language shows my identity as the Indonesian Nation	F	3	7	24	77	9	120	442	600
		%	2.5	5.83	20	64.2	7.5	100	73.67	
BHS2	Indonesian as a means of daily communication in the family	F	3	9	27	77	4	120	430	600
		%	2.5	7.5	22.5	64.2	3.3	100	71.67	
BHS3	The government carries out the preservation of the Indonesian language with real programs	F	5	15	30	63	7	120	412	600
		%	4.17	12.5	25	52.5	5.83	100	68.67	
BHS4	I feel proud if I communicate using Indonesian	F	0	10	36	64	10	120	434	600
		%	0	8.33	30	53.3	8.33	100	72.33	
BHS5	I find it easier to master Indonesian vocabulary than Betawi	F	0	13	46	57	4	120	412	600
		%	0	10.8	38.3	47.5	3.3	100	68.67	
BHS6	It is easier for me to understand information if I use Indonesian	F	0	5	32	75	8	120	446	600
		%	0	4.17	26.7	62.5	6.67	100	74.33	
BHS7	I often use Indonesian in communicating with my family	F	2	10	45	59	4	120	413	600
		%	1.67	8.33	37.5	49.2	3.3	100	68.83	
BHS8	I often use Indonesian in formal situations	F	2	22	62	28	6	120	374	600
		%	1.67	18.3	51.7	23.3	5	100	62.33	
BHS9	I often use Indonesian when interacting on social media	F	0	2	34	80	4	120	446	600
		%	0	1.67	28.3	66.7	3.3	100	74.33	
Total									3809	5,400
Percentage									70.54	

The expected score from the respondents concerning the Indonesian variable was 5,400. However, the calculation showed that the total value obtained was 3,809 (70.54% of the ideal score). This indicated that most respondents agreed Indonesian had shifted the language of communication. From the results, the BHS6 and BHS9 indicators had the highest score of 74.33%, indicating that respondents understood information more easily when using Indonesian and used it more, specifically on social media.

3.3. The Influence of Foreign Languages on Mother Tongue

Foreign languages had the potential to shift the attitude of Betawi adolescents' towards their mother tongue. This is because foreign language is among the subjects taught in school, besides being considered prestigious. Table 5 presents nine indicators that describe the language attitudes of Betawi adolescents in responding to foreign languages.

Table 5. Respondents' Responses to Foreign Language Variables

Indicator Code	Statement	F %	STS	TS	RR	S	SS	Total	Total Score	Ideal Score
BA1	Foreign languages show my identity as a global nation	F	6	84	29	1	0	120	265	600
		%	5	70	24.2	0.83	0	100	44.17	
BA2	Foreign language vocabulary is a means of daily communication in the family	F	5	72	35	8	0	120	286	600
		%	4.17	60	29.2	6.67	0	100	47.67	
BA3	The government carries out the preservation of foreign languages with real programs	F	6	52	53	9	0	120	305	600
		%	5	43.3	44.2	7.5	0	100	50.83	
BA4	I feel proud if I communicate using foreign language vocabulary	F	4	69	43	4	0	120	287	600
		%	3.33	57.5	35.8	3.33	0	100	47.83	
BA5	I find it easier to master foreign language vocabulary than Betawi and Indonesian	F	21	64	29	6	0	120	260	600
		%	17.5	53.3	24.2	5	0	100	43.33	
BA6	It is easier for me to understand information if I use foreign language vocabulary	F	26	69	25	0	0	120	239	600
		%	21.7	57.5	20.8	0	0	100	39.83	
BA7	I use foreign language vocabulary more often in communicating with my family	F	19	74	27	0	0	120	248	600
		%	15.8	61.7	22.5	0	0	100	41.33	
BA8	I use foreign language vocabulary more often in communicating formal situations	F	9	77	24	7	3	120	278	600
		%	7.5	64.2	20	5.83	2.5	100	46.33	
BA9	I often use foreign language vocabulary in interacting in social media	F	4	77	27	9	3	120	290	600
		%	3.33	64.2	22.5	7.5	2.5	100	48.33	
Total									2,458	5,400
Percentage									45.52	

The expected score from the responses on questionnaire statements regarding foreign language variables was 5,400. However, the calculation showed that the total value obtained was 2,458 (45.52%) of the ideal score. This indicated that most Betawi adolescents did not agree that foreign languages could replace their mother tongue.

3.4. Descriptive Statistics Test Results

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The results showed that the attitude variable had a maximum value of 3.27 and a minimum value of 1.00 with an average of 2.0253. This indicated that, on average, the language attitude of Betawi adolescents' towards their mother tongue was negative.

The variable attitude of Betawi adolescents' towards Indonesian shifted their mother tongue to have a maximum value of 4.89 and a minimum value of 1.78 with an average of 3.5273. This indicated that, on average, the Indonesian was able to shift the mother tongue.

Furthermore, the attitude of Betawi adolescents towards foreign languages variable shifted the mother tongue to have a maximum value of 3.56 and a minimum value of 1.33 with an average of 2.2760. This showed that foreign languages could not influence the mother tongue shift.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics

Attitude	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Indonesia	120	1.00	3.27	2.0253	.49546
Foreign	120	1.78	4.89	3.5273	.52200
Valid N (listwise)	120	1.33	3.56	2.2760	.47831

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The attitude of Betawi adolescents towards their mother tongue was negative in all aspects, including cognitive, affective, and conative. Furthermore, the results showed that 70.54% of the respondents agreed that Indonesian affected shifting their mother tongue. Besides, less than half of the respondents (45.52) agreed that a foreign language affected shifting their mother tongue.

Based on the conclusions, the following two suggestions were conveyed. First, parents should massively teach their children the local language, specifically when at home. Second, the local governments should take concrete actions towards promoting mother tongues by issuing laws and regulations and implementing them with programs such as providing sufficient budget for mother-tongue preservation activities, specifically in schools. Additionally, it should be used as the language of school instruction in the early grades of elementary school, as well as making local content subjects in junior and senior high schools.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

In this research the author was assisted by two teams, namely the data collection team and the data processing team. The data collection team is tasked with helping the author to collect data using a questionnaire, while the data processing team assists the writer in processing the data using SPSS. The author analyzes the data and writes a research report in the form of an article.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank: Betawi community groups in five areas of Jakarta who have helped collect the required data, Betawi Cultural Institute for providing very useful references, Jakarta Scholarships for providing research funding, and other parties who have supported this research.

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