



## MINORITY LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION: BETAWINESE AND LAMPUNGNESE CASE STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

Awareness about the decline of various ethnic cultures in Indonesia has been the government concern since the New Order era (1966-1998). Towards the issues, the Indonesian government has done more concrete actions, i.e., cultural revitalization, including local languages, which began in the second year of the First Five Development Year (Repelita), the 1970s [1]. The same source further explained that there were five main activities to carry on, including (a) language standardization, (b) language socialization, (c) translation, (d) language and literary research, and (e) development of language agents and information networks [1]. Interestingly, (a) the condition of the local language in Indonesia, (b) the shifting factor of the language, and (c) the language revitalizations that have been done are various. The paper will discuss two cases of minority languages revitalization in Indonesia, namely Betawi and Lampung. Both languages are interesting to review and compare since they have the same characteristics: they are the language of minority ethnic groups whose environment is the center of migration of various ethnicities since the Dutch colonial. The massive development of Jakarta has displaced Betawi people to the suburbs, such as Depok, Bekasi and Tangerang (Shahab, 2004: 20). As a consequence, the existence and the role of the Betawi language, which is considered a dialect of Jakarta, is now being eroded (Chaer, 2017: 160). Meanwhile, the Lampungnese region has been the first transmigrant location in the colonial era from Java island, 1905. Currently, Lampungnese is around 11.92 percent [2] of the entire population in the Province and the younger speakers have shifted to Indonesian/Malay. This desk study examines various literature, previous research, and policy papers to present findings regarding the latest report on language revitalization carried out. One of the efforts to revitalize the Betawi language that has been carried out is building Betawi cultural villages in Condet and Setu Babakan [3]. However, the high number of mixed marriages and the dominance of Indonesian made it challenging to transmit local language between generations since younger generations speak Indonesian more often. On the other hand, the Lampung provincial government has made efforts to teach the Lampung language from elementary school to university to produce Lampung language teachers. Unfortunately, the efforts that have been done have not shown better results since younger Lampungneses are more fluent in Indonesian better than Lampungnese.

### KEYWORD

Language revitalization;  
Betawinese;  
Lampungnese.



## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The government of Indonesia has been aware of the eroding of local identity in Indonesia since the early New Order era. At that time, anthropologists had recommended revitalizing various cultural traditions in Indonesia, including language. In the 1970s, the second year of the five-year-development program, there are activities to revitalize the local language, i.e., (a) language standardization, (b) language socialization, (c) translation, (d) gathering information through language and literature researches, and (e) recruiting linguistic and communication experts [1].

Based on desk research, the paper discusses two local languages of Indonesia, Betawi and Lampung, which have relatively similar characteristics, i.e., (1) minority languages because of the small number of the speakers and (2) the heterogeneous of the population. The issues that will further discuss are (1) how is the condition of both language speakers, (2) why has this happened and (3) how the government responds to language endangerment that occurs in both ethnic groups.

## **II. METHODS**

The paper is based on library research that relies on various resources, including previous research and policies [4]. The data were gathered through online and offline libraries. The researchers continuously read, write, categorize and interpreted the data. In the end, all of the findings were illustrated and argued through some subchapters of the writing to answer the research questions.

## **III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This subsection will discuss two main issues, namely the revitalization of Betawi and Lampung languages. Each language will be divided into two subsections. The first thing that discusses are how the condition of the language and speakers. It will focus on the causes of the language shift. Secondly, it will be discussed the language revitalization that has been carried out. In detail, this part will address the policies underlie and points on the revitalization actions.

### **Betawi Language Revitalization**

Betawinese is an indigenous ethnic group in Jakarta that has experienced various challenges, both vertically and horizontally, which have affected their cultural identity. Vertically, they have to encounter the government that undertakes long-term development [5]. As a result, Betawinese were displaced to satellite areas around Jakarta, such as Tangerang, Bekasi, Depok and Bogor [6] [7]. Besides, Betawinese is vis á vis with the ethnicity superdiversity of Jakarta inhabitants since they come from various places in Indonesia. In daily life, it is widespread for them to get in contact with various ethnic identity migrants. These conditions continuously affect their language since, many times, they have switched their communication channel to Indonesian as a lingua franca for social interactions. It is a fact where Betawinese inter-ethnic marriage couples use Indonesian as their primary language [8].

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Betawi language [bew] or Jakarta Malay dialect follows the number of the speakers. Demographically, the use of Betawinese has expanded since they have to migrate out of Jakarta. However, Betawinese language use in the Jakarta area is getting narrow. This fact is supported by the recent research finding by the Ministry of Education and Culture. It is found that South Jakarta is the central area of Betawinese usage. Meanwhile, North, West, Central, and East Jakarta are dominated by Bugisnese, Mandarin and Sundanese [9].

The current condition of the Betawinese is in between survived or shifted [9]. The Betawi language is predicted to survive because the language is still widely used by the media industry, such as soap operas, radio, and social media [10] [11]. In addition, we often hear some Betawinese vocabulary in conversations among Jakarta migrants. According to Arsanti and Setiana [12], the use of Betawinese among migrants is a part of their identity as Jakartanese. Besides, for Jakarta inhabitants, Betawinese is also an essential part of their intercultural interactions.

The maintenance of the Betawi language among Jakarta inhabitants is opposite to the Betawinese ethnic groups since they are starting to leave their language [9]. Currently, the language is widely used for media content and informal conversations between non-Betawi in Jakarta. However, Chaer further discusses that the Betawinese language, which Jakarta migrants use, is standard vocabularies [13]. Betawinese jargon, proverbs, and native language cannot be found. Muhajir [13] states that the Tanah Abang area, a former Betawinese enclave, is now no longer using the language daily. This condition is exacerbated by the negative attitude of young Betawi towards their mother tongue [1]: they prefer Indonesian for daily conversations [8].

Four factors affect the Betawi language shift. Firstly, massive development in Jakarta as the capital city of Indonesia has forced Betawinese to speak Indonesian to maintain communication with their fellow neighbors who are coming from various places. Secondly, the high rate of inter-ethnic marriages among Betawinese [14] has contributed to the language shift. As Interethnic couples, they often neglect their ethnic language and choose Indonesian in everyday conversation. Thirdly, the attrition of the household domain has impacted language transmission towards Betawine's younger generations. Fourthly, the social inferiority among Betawines has impacted their choice to Indonesian rather than Betawi [7]. This phenomenon, at the same time, becomes a part of the mother tongue abandoning the process.

Towards the fact of language shifting among Betawinese, realizing that the Betawi language is in danger of extinction, the Jakarta government has issued Local Regulation Number 4/2015 [15]. Besides, the Language Development and Cultivation Agency, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, also develops efforts to revitalize the language [9]. They carry out the program in two places, Setu Babakan and Condet. Both areas are where the cultural traditions of Betawinese are still preserved, even though younger speakers start to leave their languages [9]. The revitalization effort is focused on restoring the use of the Betawi language in the family. Therefore, mothers and their children aged 9-12 years are the primary targets. They were introduced to Betawinese children's games, songs, oral traditions, such as Shohibul hikayat (a Betawi speech theater); Gambang rancak (a Betawi art performed in the form of a speech theater accompanied by the Gambang kromong music); Pantun (is a poem about the life of the Betawi people); and also introduced to Betawinese vocabularies [9]. In addition, they also publish printed and digitalized

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Betawinese dictionaries. Luckily, the sustainability of this language revitalization activity is also supported by the local government policy on preserving Betawi culture [16].

### **Lampung Language Revitalization**

Lampung language (ljp; abl) is one of the regional languages spoken in Lampung Province. In this province, the Lampung language has two dialects, namely api/a dialect and nyo/a dialect. Meanwhile, Ethnologue divided both into two different languages, Lampung Api [lip] and Lampung Nyo [abl] [17]. Meanwhile, in terms of ethnicity, Lampung ethnic groups are divided into three variants, namely Lampung Peminggir (426,723 people), Lampung Pepadun (280,247 people) and Lampung Abung Bunga Mayang (85,342 people) [18]. Apart from the various debates about language and ethnicity, this paper only uses Lampung language terminology in general.

Meanwhile, in terms of population number, Lampungnese are minority communities because they are only 11.92% (792,312 people) of the Lampung province population [18]. On the other hand, the majority population in Lampung province is Javanese, who makes up 61.89% (4,113,731 people) [18]. The rest are other ethnic groups, such as Sundanese, Bantenese, Minangkabau. The imbalance composition of the population then gave rise to an assumption of language shifting because the indigenous community had to adapt to the majority migrant population. Previous research from Gunarwan shows that Lampung people tend to use Indonesian because of their environment. In 1994, Gunarwan discovered that Lampung people, within 41-50, already use Indonesian in the domestic domain [19] [20]. The findings then concluded that the Lampung language would be extinct in 75-100 years [19] [20]. Gunawan's conclusion is too simple since it was not based on comprehensive coverage of data analysis. Lampung's government utilized his findings to support Lampung's language revitalization.

Lampung province government has issued several policies towards the endangerment of the Lampung language. They are (1) Decree of the Head of The Ministry of Education office of Lampung Province Number 10229/112. L1/1990 [21]; (2) Lampung Provincial Regulation Number 2/2008 [22]; (3) Governor's Regulation Number 4/2011 [23]; dan (4) Governor's Regulation Number 39/2014 [24]. The four regulations lead to a single revitalization model, namely, teaching regional languages in primary and secondary schools. Currently, the revitalization model is still valid for all schools in Lampung Province and does not pay attention to the diversity of the ethnic communities in the region. In addition, it seems that Lampung language teaching has not shown satisfactory results to add Lampung language speakers [25].

## **IV. CONCLUSION**

Betawi language [bew] and Lampung language [ljp; abl] are two examples of minority languages in Indonesia with similar contexts and suffer a similar fate. Both bear the burden of development that shifts the existence of the language. The arrival of migrants who eventually dominated the population, the high rate of interethnic marriages, and the negative attitude of the speakers have resulted in the shifted pattern of language use in both groups. In response to the language extinction, Lampung Province has been done revitalizing efforts since the 90s until now through the teaching of Lampung language. Meanwhile, Jakarta Province seems to have just given their awareness after the regional autonomy era proven through Betawi

language preservation and cultural revitalization policy project through two Betawi community villages in Setu Babakan and Condet. However, both provinces should carry out the revitalization consistently with a measured target and supervision process to meet the goals.

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