

How Language Can Be Different In Style And Origin

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Abstrak

Kata Kunci:

Bahasa Batak, Bahasa Jawa, Gaya Komunikasi, Budaya Indonesia, Keanekaragaman Budaya.

Bahasa adalah salah satu aspek terpenting dari budaya manusia, mencerminkan nilai-nilai, tradisi, dan sejarah masyarakat. Di Indonesia, yang memiliki lebih dari 700 bahasa daerah, bahasa adalah cerminan dari identitas masyarakat dan alat untuk memahami keragaman budaya. Artikel ini membahas perbedaan gaya komunikasi antara Batak dan Jawa dan alasan di balik perbedaan ini. Batak dikenal karena gaya bicaranya yang tegas, ekspresif, dan hangat, mencerminkan keterbukaan dan semangat orang Batak yang berasal dari lingkungan sosial yang menekankan rasa kebersamaan dan afiliasi klan. Sebaliknya, orang Jawa menekankan kesopanan, etiket, dan hierarki sosial, mencerminkan budaya Jawa yang sangat menghargai harmoni, hierarki, dan tradisi spiritual yang dipengaruhi oleh berbagai kepercayaan. Perbedaan-perbedaan ini muncul sebagai hasil dari lingkungan geografis, struktur sosial, dan nilai-nilai budaya yang membentuk karakter masing-masing masyarakat. Orang Batak, yang tinggal di daerah pegunungan di sekitar Danau Toba, cenderung memiliki interaksi sosial yang langsung dan ekspresif. Di sisi lain, masyarakat Jawa yang tinggal di dataran Jawa memprioritaskan keharmonisan sosial untuk menjaga stabilitas di masyarakat yang padat penduduknya. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk memberikan wawasan tentang keragaman budaya dan linguistik Indonesia, menunjukkan bagaimana bahasa bukan hanya sarana komunikasi tetapi juga cerminan identitas masyarakat dan simbol kekayaan budaya. Dengan memahami perbedaan-perbedaan ini, kita dapat menghargai keunikan dan kontribusi masing-masing budaya dalam membentuk kekayaan budaya Indonesia.

Abstract

Key Words:

Batak language, Javanese language, Communication style, Indonesian culture, Cultural diversity.

Language is one of the most important aspects of human culture, reflecting the values, traditions, and history of a society. In Indonesia, which has more than 700 regional languages, language is a reflection of a society's identity and a tool for understanding cultural diversity. This article discusses the differences in communication styles between Batak and Javanese and the reasons behind these differences. Batak is known for its assertive, expressive, and warm speaking style, reflecting the openness and spirit of the Batak people who come from a social environment that emphasizes a sense of togetherness and clan affiliation. In contrast, Javanese emphasizes politeness, etiquette, and social hierarchy, reflecting the Javanese culture that highly values harmony, hierarchy, and spiritual traditions influenced by various beliefs. These differences arise as a result of the geographical environment, social structure, and cultural values that shape the character of each society. The Batak people, who live in the mountainous region around Lake Toba, tend to have direct and expressive social interactions. On the other hand, the Javanese people who live in the plains of Java prioritize social harmony to maintain stability in a densely populated community. This article aims to provide insight into the cultural and linguistic diversity of Indonesia, showing how language is not only a means of communication but also a reflection of community identity and a symbol of cultural richness. By understanding these differences, we can appreciate the uniqueness and contribution of each culture in shaping the richness of Indonesian culture.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most important aspects of human culture. In Indonesia, which has more than 700 languages, each region has its own unique way of speaking. According to Ethnologue (2023), Indonesia is the country with one of the largest number of languages in the world, and this reflects its very rich cultural diversity. Gunarwan (2019) states that language style not only reflects the way people communicate, but also describes the values, traditions, and history of the people in the area. In this article, we will explore how Batak and Javanese languages show differences in their communication styles.

Batak language, which is spoken by the Batak people in North Sumatra, is known for its assertive and expressive style of speech. For example, when Batak people greet with 'Horas!', they show enthusiasm and warmth in social interactions. As Sibarani (2018) explains, this kind of expression reflects the open and friendly character of Batak culture. This is in line with Clyne's (2010) statement that in more expressive cultures, language is often used to build emotional closeness.

On the other hand, Javanese, which is widely used in Central and East Java, has a different approach. Javanese language pays great attention to politeness and manners. Expressions such as 'Matur nuwun' (thank you) show how important etiquette is in daily communication in Javanese culture. For example, according to Wibowo (2017), the use of different Javanese language varieties, such as 'ngoko' and 'krama,' shows the level of respect to the interlocutor according to their social status. This is also in line with Brown and Levinson's (1987) opinion on politeness theory, which suggests that in many cultures, language reflects social hierarchy and the level of closeness between individuals.

It is important to understand that communication is not only related to the words spoken, but also to the values contained in them. In the context of Batak and Javanese, we see how each language places different emphasis on elements such as warmth, closeness, and politeness. For example, as expressed by Hymes (1974), language also functions as a shaper of social identity, which can influence relationships between individuals in society.

Through an understanding of Batak and Javanese language styles, we can gain a deeper insight into the diversity of Indonesian culture. Each dialect is not only a means of communication, but also a mirror of the identity of its society. As Sapir (1921) said, 'Language is the key to understanding a culture.' By digging deeper into these two languages, we can better appreciate the rich culture that exists in Indonesia and how language becomes a bridge between people from different backgrounds.

METHOD

If the research method is carried out with a qualitative method involving campus friends as a data source, here is a design method that can be used:

1. Research Method

This article uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, utilizing campus friends as the main source in data collection. The research was conducted through the following steps:

2. Respondent Identification

Respondents were selected from students who came from Batak and Javanese cultural backgrounds. These respondents were selected because they had direct experience with the use of Batak or Javanese in everyday life.

3. Open Discussion

Open Discussion: Small discussion groups were conducted to dig deeper into respondents' perspectives on the relationship between language and their culture.

4. Participatory Observation

The researcher interacted directly with respondents in the campus environment, observing their communication patterns, both in formal and informal conversations.

5. Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews were conducted with campus friends who came from Batak and Javanese backgrounds. Questions included:

- How do they describe the way of speaking typical of their culture?
- What cultural values do they consider reflected in the language?
- Have they ever experienced differences in communication when speaking with people from their cultures?

6. Data Analysis

Data from discussions, observations, and interviews were analyzed qualitatively to find communication patterns that reflect the characteristics of Batak and Javanese culture. The differences and similarities found became the basis for explaining the relationship between language, values, and traditions of each culture.

This method was designed to utilize direct interaction with campus friends as a practical way to understand how Batak and Javanese communication styles are applied in the context of student life. It also allows researchers to gain direct insight into the respondents' real experiences.

DISCUSSION & RESULTS

Batak culture is a rich and diverse set of traditions, practices, and beliefs that have been passed down through generations and are deeply rooted in the northern part of Sumatra, Indonesia, particularly in the areas surrounding Lake Toba. The Batak people, who belong to various subgroups like Toba, Karo, Mandailing, Simalungun, Pakpak, and Angkola, each have their unique customs, but they share common elements that reflect a deep connection to their land, history, and spiritual beliefs.

The Batak people are known for their strong sense of community, with social structures that emphasize the importance of family and clan affiliations, and their lives are often centered around traditional ceremonies that celebrate birth, marriage, death, and other significant life events. One of the most notable features of Batak culture is its intricate system of kinship and clan divisions, which plays a crucial role in how the Batak interact with one another, with people often identifying strongly with their clan name, which is inherited through the mother's line.

Music and dance are important aspects of Batak culture, with traditional instruments such as the taganing (a type of drum) and hasapi (a stringed instrument) playing a significant role in ceremonies and celebrations, while Batak songs and dances often tell stories of heroism, love, and the struggles of life. The Batak people are also known for their craftsmanship, particularly in wood carving, where intricate designs and motifs are used to decorate their houses and religious artifacts. These artistic expressions are not just decorative but hold symbolic meanings tied to the Batak worldview.

The Batak language is a group of languages spoken by the Batak people, who primarily reside in the northern part of Sumatra, Indonesia, specifically around the area of Lake Toba, although the Batak people and their languages extend into several other regions of the island. This language group belongs to the larger Austronesian language family, which is a vast family of languages spoken across Southeast Asia, Oceania, and parts of Madagascar.

Within the Batak language family, there are several distinct languages, each associated with a particular Batak subgroup, and these languages vary significantly, both in terms of pronunciation and vocabulary, though they share some common linguistic features. Among the most prominent of these languages is Toba Batak, which is widely spoken and often considered the lingua franca for Batak-speaking communities, though there are also languages like Karo Batak, spoken in the Karo Highlands, Pakpak Batak, spoken in the northern regions of Sumatra, Simalungun Batak, spoken in the southeastern regions around Lake Toba, Mandailing Batak, primarily found in the southern parts of North Sumatra, and Angkola Batak, which is closely related to Mandailing and spoken in the Angkola region of South Tapanuli.

These various Batak languages are not just spoken languages; they carry rich cultural significance and are deeply intertwined with the traditions, folklore, ceremonies, and histories of the Batak people, which are passed down through generations. Historically, the Batak languages were written using the Batak script, a unique and ancient writing system that is still studied today, but in contemporary times, the Latin alphabet is more commonly used in writing the Batak languages. Despite their differences, these languages and their dialects continue to serve as a vital means of communication and cultural identity for millions of Batak people.

Javanese culture is one of the most influential and deeply ingrained cultural traditions in Indonesia, emanating from the island of Java, where the majority of the country's population resides. It is characterized by a rich and complex tapestry of history, language, religion, and social customs that have evolved over centuries, blending indigenous beliefs with foreign influences from India, China, the Middle East, and Europe.

At the heart of Javanese culture is a strong sense of harmony, reflected in both daily life and spiritual practices, where the concept of rukun or peaceful coexistence, and the idea of maintaining balance between the physical, spiritual, and social worlds, hold immense importance. The Javanese people have a deep respect for their ancestors, and this reverence is seen in various cultural ceremonies and rituals, which often incorporate elements of animism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, with many Javanese people practicing Islam in a way that has been uniquely shaped by their cultural heritage.

The Javanese language itself is an important element of cultural identity, featuring different levels of formality that reflect respect and social hierarchy, which plays a pivotal role in communication, social interactions, and family life. This social structure is evident in Javanese society, where respect for elders, deference to authority, and the importance of maintaining a strong family unit are emphasized, and community life is often organized around these values.

Javanese is one of the major languages spoken in Indonesia, primarily on the island of Java, where it is the native language of the Javanese people, the largest ethnic group in the country. As a member of the

Austronesian language family, Javanese shares roots with other languages in the region but has evolved into a distinct and complex language with its own set of grammar, vocabulary, and phonetics.

Javanese is not only a means of communication but also a reflection of the deep cultural and social systems of the Javanese people. The language has a rich literary tradition, with historical texts, poetry, and philosophical works written in Javanese, particularly from the era of the Majapahit Empire.

One of the most distinctive features of Javanese is its complex system of speech levels, which are used to convey respect, politeness, and social status. These speech levels, typically divided into *ngoko* (informal), *madya* (middle), and *krama* (formal), play a crucial role in determining the appropriate form of speech based on the relationship between the speaker and the listener, reflecting the hierarchical nature of Javanese society.

The use of these levels in daily conversation and in formal settings, such as ceremonies, rituals, and official events, is a key aspect of Javanese identity. In addition to its social hierarchy, Javanese language incorporates a significant number of loanwords from Sanskrit, Arabic, Dutch, and even English, reflecting the historical interactions of the Javanese people with various cultures and nations.

The Javanese script, derived from the ancient Brahmi script and related to the Balinese script, was historically used to write the language, though today, the Latin alphabet is more commonly used, especially in modern communication and media. Despite the widespread use of Bahasa Indonesia, the national language of Indonesia, Javanese remains a vibrant and widely spoken language, with millions of native speakers across Java and in diaspora communities. Javanese continues to be an important marker of cultural identity, with its language playing a central role in traditional music, dance, theater (such as *wayang kulit*), and literature, all of which serve as expressions of Javanese history, philosophy, and worldview.

Both of the languages have their own uniqueness and their own origin. The Batak language most likely founded on the Sumatra area while the Java almost in whole Indonesia due the civil on Indonesia are Javanese. Javanese and Batak are both important regional languages in Indonesia but are quite different in terms of their linguistic characteristics, cultural significance, and geographical distribution. While Javanese is spoken by the majority of people on Java and has a complex system of speech levels, Batak is spoken by the Batak people of Sumatra and has its own unique set of languages and cultural practices.

Javanese belongs to the Austronesian language family, specifically the Malayo-Polynesian branch. It is one of the major languages spoken on the island of Java. Batak refers to a group of related languages that also belong to the Austronesian family, but within a different branch. Batak languages are part of the Western Malayo-Polynesian subgroup and are spoken primarily in the northern part of Sumatra.

Javanese has a highly complex system of speech levels, which includes informal (*ngoko*), middle (*madya*), and formal (*krama*) registers. These levels of speech reflect respect, social hierarchy, and politeness, and they are crucial in communication. Batak languages, in contrast, do not have the same elaborate system of speech levels as Javanese, though there are variations in vocabulary and style depending on context, region, and the relationship between speakers.

Javanese has its own script, which is derived from the ancient Brahmi script and is known as the Javanese script. However, today, the Latin alphabet is widely used in writing Javanese. Batak also has a traditional script called the Batak script, which was historically used for religious texts and other important writings. However, like Javanese, the Latin alphabet is now commonly used for writing Batak languages.

Javanese and Batak are not mutually intelligible, meaning speakers of one language generally cannot understand the other without learning it. While both belong to the Austronesian family, they are distinct languages with different grammar, vocabulary, and phonology.

CONCLUSION

Language and culture are reflections of the values, traditions, and history of society. In Indonesia, the richness of culture is seen in the diversity of language that become regional identities. Batak and Javanese, as two important regional languages, show unique characteristics that reflect the culture of their people. Batak language is known for its assertive, expressive, and enthusiastic communication style, reflecting the open nature and close kinship relationship in Batak culture. In contrast, Javanese emphasizes politeness, manners, and social hierarchy that show the importance of harmony and stability in the lives of Javanese people. These differences in communication styles are influenced by geographical, social, and cultural value factors. The Batak people, who live in mountainous environment around Lake Toba, emphasize direct and expressive interaction, while the Javanese people who live in densely populated areas prioritize social harmony to maintain relationships between individuals. Through an understanding of these two cultures, we can appreciate the richness and diversity of Indonesian culture.

Language is not only means of communication, but also a symbol of identity and bridge between people with different backgrounds. By respecting, we strengthen the sense of unity in diversity.

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