



# Examining Language Attitudes and Ideologies in Naming Practices - The Case of Betawi

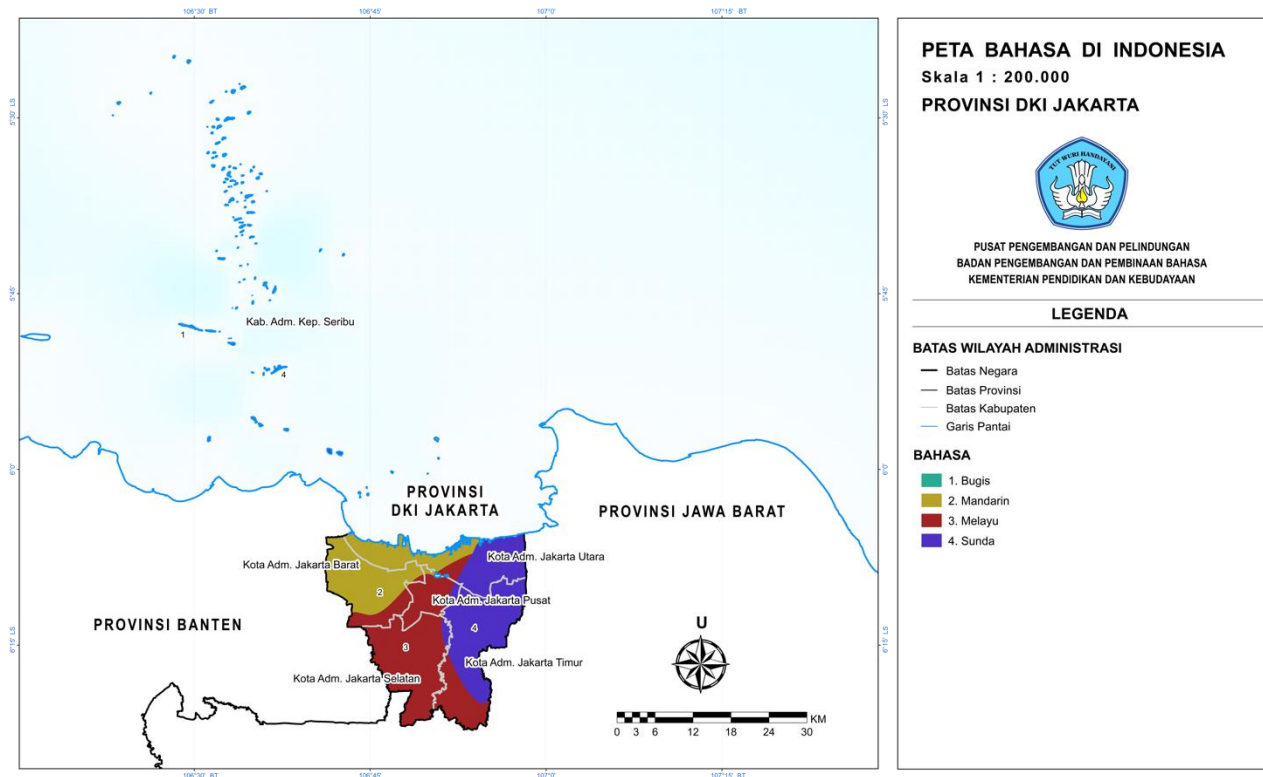


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# What is Betawi?



Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa

Lexifier: Malay | Indonesian

Other Source Languages:  
Sundanese, Balinese,  
Javanese, Hokkien, Arabic,  
Dutch, Portuguese

Threatened (6b) Expanded  
Graded Intergenerational  
Disruption Scale (EGIDS)  
(Ethnologue)

# Significance of Studying Betawi in Creolistics

- Previous frameworks focus heavily on European-lexified creoles
- Betawi has been largely understudied in the field of creolistics
- Betawi is a threatened language at risk of further endangerment with the sinking of Jakarta
  - Environmental damages as a result of colonization
  - Betawi embodies the connection between colonialism to ongoing climate change crisis and language endangerment.

Documentary on  
Jakarta's sinking:



# Research Question

Do different labels for Betawi reflect different language attitudes?  
If so, which labels are used by who?

# Framework: Léglise & Migge 2006

- « Names for languages (or people) are never neutral » (1)
- Local linguistic market (Bourdieu 1982) (3)?
- Takitaki: Out-group, in-group designation (19)

Who names a language what, and what does that tell us about the language attitudes of that group relative to the language?

# Framework: Knörr 2018

- Phonetic reference to creole identity (17)
- Indigenization (15)
- Identity creation (15)

Can we also extend this to phonetic reference of a creole's proximity to its lexifier?

- e.g., Kristang, Papiamentu, HC, Kriolu, vs. Jakarta Malay, Betawi Malay

# Comparing Indonesian and Betawi: « Just » a dialect?

## Betawi

Ketike itu **datenglah** Yesus dari Nazaret di tanah Galilea, dan Die dipaptis **di sungai** Yordan ame Yohanes. Ketike Die **keluar dari aer**, Die ngeliat langit robek dan Roh kayak burung merpati **turun ke atas-Nye**. Lalu kedengeran suare dari sorga: « Elo Anak Aye yang Aye kasihi, kepada Elo Aye berkenan »

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Betawi\\_language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Betawi_language))

## Indonesian

Pada masa itu **datanglah** Yesus dari Nazaret di tanah Galilea, lalu Yahya membaptiskan Dia **di dalam Sungai** Yarden. Maka ketika Ia naik **keluar dari air** itu, dilihat-Nya langit terbelah, serta Roh Allah **turun ke atas-Nya** seperti seekor burung merpati. Lalu kedengaranlah suatu suara dari langit, mengatakan, Engkau inilah Anak-**Ku** yang **Kukasihi**, kepada-**Mu** juga Aku berkenan!

(<https://biblehub.com/tl/mark/1.htm>)

Yellow highlighting indicates lexical similarity.

Blue highlighting indicates unique Indonesian enclitic markers (no attested Betawi equivalent).

Swadesh



# Contemporary Language Ecology

Second-half of 20th century:



Today: Bidirectional?



(Abtahian, Cohn, Djenar, Vogel 2021)

Other languages present:

- Javanese
- Sundanese
- Buginese
- Chinese (Hokkien)



# Understudied Language

- Wallace 1976: Phonological changes & age-grading
- Ikranagara 1980: Descriptive fieldwork grammar
- Muhadjir 1981: Morphological reduplication and affixation of Betawi
- Kurniawan 2018: Phonological variation in Jakarta Indonesian (contact variety formed, in part, by Betawi)

# Previous Studies: Language Attitudes in the Community

- Wouk 1989: Betawi associated with low socio-economic status (8)
- Lakawa & Walaretina 2018: positive language attitudes
- Nur, Lukman, Kaharuddin, & Dafirah 2021: mixed negative and positive language attitudes

# Difference in Participant Demographics

	Lakawa & Walaretina 2018	Nur, Lukman, Kaharuddin, & Dafirah 2021
Gender	100% M	54% M 46% F

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Age	32-65	15-24
Geography	Betawi Cultural Village (Setu Babakan)	Betawi Cultural Village (Setu Babakan)

# Difference in Participant Demographics

	<b>Lakawa &amp; Walaretina 2018</b>	<b>Nur, Lukman, Kaharuddin, &amp; Dafirah 2021</b>
Gender	100% M	54% M 46% F
Age	32-65	15-24
Geography	Betawi Cultural Village (Setu Babakan)	Betawi Cultural Village (Setu Babakan)
Language Atittude	Positive	48% held explicitly negative language attitudes (language of old people, not practical in contemporary Jakarta)

# Revisiting the Research Question

Do different labels for Betawi reflect different language attitudes?  
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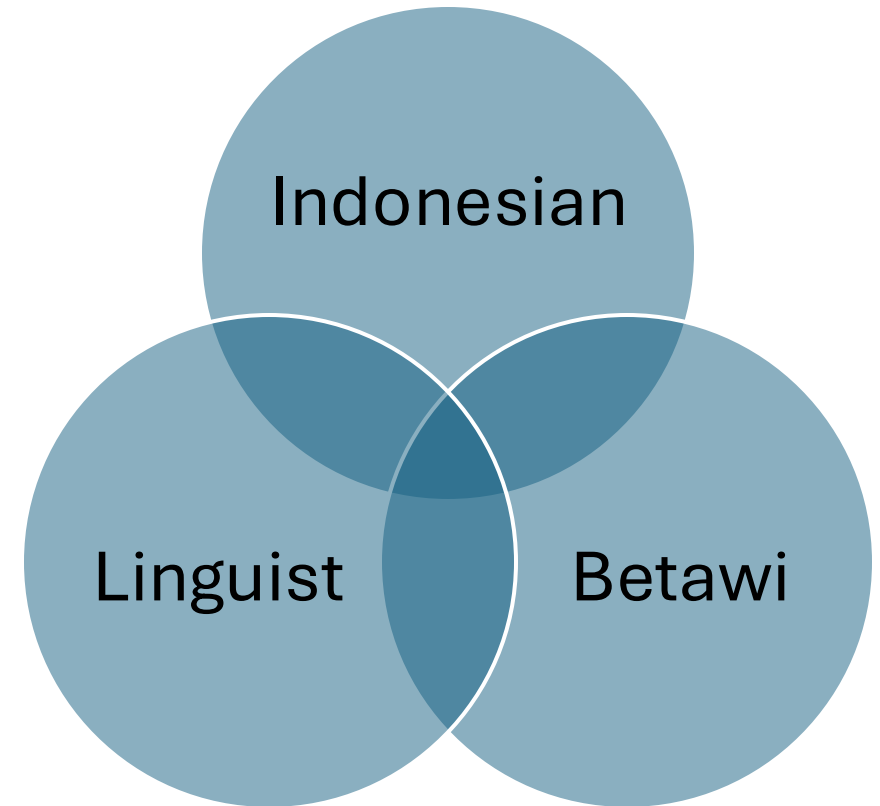
1. In-group, out-group?
2. Age?
3. Gender

# Methodology

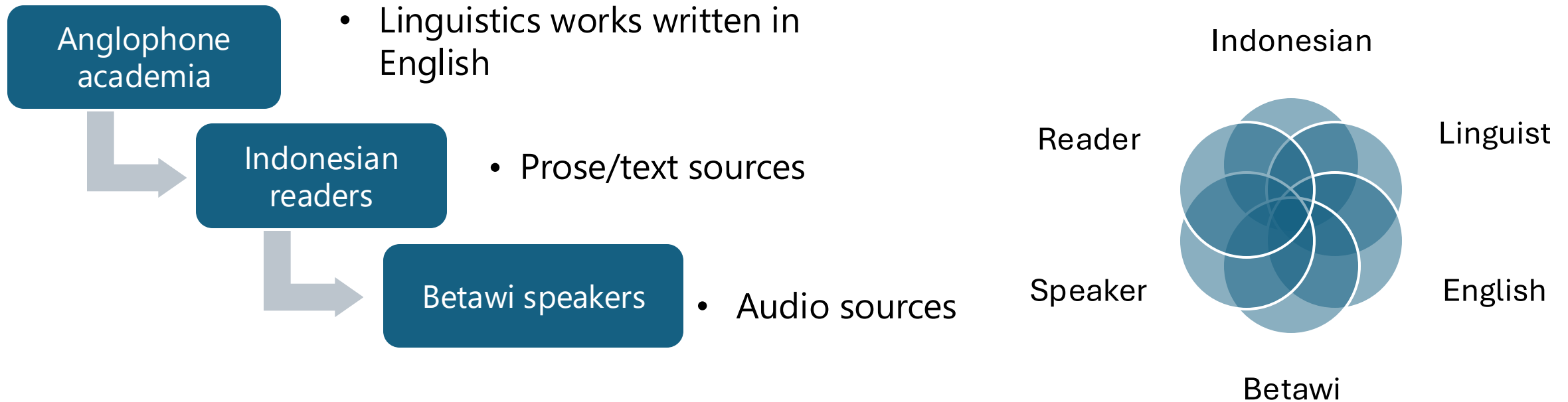
- Comparing the naming of Betawi across sources produced by
  - Betawi linguists and community members
  - Indonesian government/linguists
  - Americans and international community members
- Comparing the naming of Betawi across sources produced for
  - In-community use
  - Broader national use
  - Anglophone academia
  - Digital global community



# Approximating distance to in-group: Authorship



# Approximating distance to in-group: Audience



Source	Function/Description	Authorship	Intended Audience	Language Label Used
Wallace 1976	Dissertation on phonological change	American researcher	Anglophone academia	<i>Jakarta Malay</i>
Ikranagara 1980	Descriptive grammar	American researcher	Academia	<i>Melayu Betawi</i>
Muhadjir 1981	Scholarly work on morphology*	Ethnicity unknown. Indonesian national**	Anglophone academia	<i>Jakarta Malay</i> <i>Jakarta dialect</i>
Ikranagara 1988	Indonesian translation of Ikranagara 1980	American researcher	Academia	<i>Bahasa Melayu Betawi</i>
Chaer 2009	Indonesian-Betawi dictionary	Betawi Indonesian linguist	Indonesian-readers	<i>Dialek Jakarta</i>
Kemdikbud 2019	Government article about Abdul Chaer	Unknown individual, published to Indonesian government website	Indonesian-readers	<i>Dialek Betawi</i>
Fazriansyah 2020	YouTube entertainment video	Betawi Indonesian community member	Betawi speakers	<i>Betawi</i>
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Chaer 2023	Indonesian-Betawi dictionary	Betawi Indonesian linguist	Indonesian-readers (Indonesian prose)	<i>Bahasa Betawi</i> <i>Betawi-Melayu*****</i>
Peta Bahasa n.d. ( <i>Language Map</i> )	Visual display of language ecology in Jakarta	Indonesian Government	Indonesian-readers (Indonesian prose)	<i>Melayu</i>

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# Audience: Academia

- All names present Betawi as a type of Malay
  - Jakarta Malay
  - *(Bahasa) Melayu Betawi* (Betawi Malay (Language))
  - Jakarta dialect (same term also used to refer to Jakarta Indonesian)
  - Similar to calling Haitian Creole « Haitian French » or Cape Verdean « Cape Verdean Portuguese »

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# Audience: Indonesian community

- Dialect
  - *Dialek Jakarta*
  - *Dialek Betawi*
- Language
  - *Bahasa Betawi*
  - *Melayu*
- *Betawi-Melayu*

« A language is a dialect  
with an army and navy » -  
Weinreich 1945

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# Audience: Betawi community

- Betawi as a distinct and independent language
- Explicit connection between language and cultural identity
  - *Bahasa budaya Betawi* (lit. Language culture Betawi) or Betawi cultural language
- Distinction between community name and older/government label
  - *Betawi Melayu* was the name of an ancient (no date given...) manuscript housed within the national library of Indonesia (Chaer 2023 xii)

# Naming « Gradient »

(Independent) Language

*Bahasa Betawi*

Betawi

Variety of Lexifier/Dialect

*Bahasa Melayu Betawi*

Jakarta Malay

Jakarta dialect

Lexifier

*Melayu*



# Findings

- Out-group sources tended to classify Betawi as a variety of Malay or as a dialect
- In-group sources referred to it as either « Betawi, » « *Bahasa Betawi*, » (Indonesian), or « *Basa/Base Betawi* » (Betawi)
- Coinciding splits with domain of source
  - Function in formal domains tended to label the language as a dialect or variety of Malay. Function in informal domains tended to label the language as independent.
  - Out-group authorship tended to coincide with formal domain functions.

# Newly Published Data: Preliminary Findings & Social Media Reactions

- BewWiki
  - Explicitly a preservation project
  - « Encourage people to use the language in a broader field »  
([https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Requests\\_for\\_new\\_languages/Wikipedia\\_Betawi](https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Requests_for_new_languages/Wikipedia_Betawi))

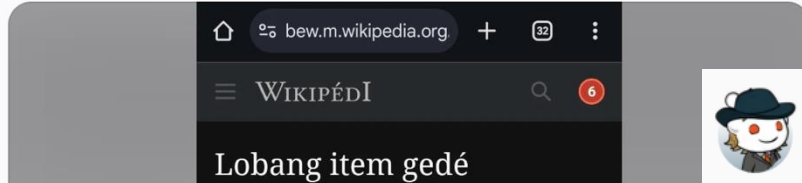


18 NSFW

## There's no way Betawi Wikipedia exists

Funny/Memes/Shitpost

Or even Betawi language at all..



**manusiabumi** • 27d ago •  
saking gedanya influence bahasa betawi d:  
vibes formal nya ilang blas wkkwkwk  
45

**TryinaD** • 26d ago •  
cah es je we jowo

I feel like because it was never a formal language in the first place, and  
it's such a proletariat thing you don't associate it with formality

8

**iwanova** • 26d ago •  
Top 5% Commenter

Dengan kata lain bahasa Betawi itu adalah bahasa yang paling  
napak tanah

Which is based and true lol

2



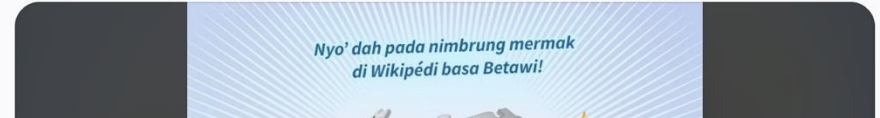
**TheArstotzkan** OP • 2y ago •

Jayalah Arstotzka! Top 1% Commenter

First, I do mean no offense to Betawi speakers. Because portrayal of Betawi  
language in Indonesian media as a language which usually used in comedic  
shows or in very informal situation, for me it is a bit strange seeing a very  
formal or sacred text like above written with it.

## Nyok bareng-bareng kite nulis di Wikipédi basa Betawi

Language/Literature



Archived post. New comments cannot be posted and votes cannot be cast.



**Raiden69Shogun** • 8mo ago •

Betawi itu mostly dialek. Kalo dibanding dengan bahasa daerah lain (minang,  
sunda, jawa, dsb) nyaris ga ada bedanya sama bahasa Indonesia.

Easy job lah untuk kontributor wikipedia

1

# Haji Abdul Chaer Meluruskan Persepsi Keliru terhadap Budaya Betawi

By ditwdb / October 30, 2019

*Abdul Chaer adalah seorang linguis yang memberikan perhatian pada bahasa dan budaya Betawi. Ia menulis empat kamus dan 41 buku yang banyak mengupas bahasa dan budaya Betawi, antara lain, Kamus Dialek Jakarta dan Folklor Betawi. Atas kepeduliannya tersebut, pensiunan lektor kepala mata kuliah lingustik pada Universitas Negeri Jakarta ini menerima penghargaan Anugerah Kebudayaan kategori Pelestari dari Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2019.*

(<https://kebudayaan.kemdikbud.go.id/ditwdb/haji-abdul-chaer-meluruskan-persepsi-keliru-terhadap-budaya-betawi/>)

« Banyak film, lenong di teve, dan penampilan stand up komedi yang menyajikan humor Betawi dengan cara mengejek, merendahkan sesama dan **menggambarkan orang Betawi yang bodoh.** » (« **Portray Betawi people as stupid** »)

# Translating this to language attitudes?

- Not able to definitively determine whether specific labels are associated with « positive » or « negative » attitudes without comprehensive input from heritage speakers (coming in 2025)
- Impressionistically, in-group terms are not used in formal contexts or by authors of non-Betawi descent
  - In-group/out-group marker?
  - Formality
  - Condescension

# Discussion and Extensions

- Naming practices for creoles vs. non-standardized varieties and dialects
  - Creole exceptionalism (DeGraff 2003) -> Does labelling a language as « creole » or non-creole impact how the naming practices take shape?
- Variation and creolistics
  - How do naming practices of non-standardized varieties and of creole languages impact the way we recognize and study variation within creolistics?
- Speaker agency: Adopting the use of speaker terminology in more contexts



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