

Betawi Culture as an Instrument for Language Preservation: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Betawi Culture and Language

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to analyze the role of Betawi culture in preserving the Betawi language using a sociolinguistic approach, focusing on the Setu Babakan Betawi Cultural Village area in South Jakarta. As an officially designated center for Betawi cultural preservation by the government, Setu Babakan serves as an important space for various cultural activities that actively use the Betawi language. Using a qualitative-descriptive method, data were collected through participant observation and interviews with cultural figures, area managers, as well as artists and visitors. The results show that Betawi culture, such as lenong performances, gambang kromong art, traditional wedding reenactments, and traditional culinary arts, plays an active role in maintaining the existence of the Betawi language. The use of Betawi language in various cultural activities in Setu Babakan not only strengthens ethnic identity but also serves as a means of intergenerational language transmission. However, challenges remain, particularly in attracting the interest of the younger generation and maintaining the continuity of cultural practices consistently. This study recommends increasing institutional support and utilizing digital media as complementary strategies in efforts to preserve the Betawi language through culture.

KEY WORDS: Betawi culture, Betawi language, Language preservation, Sociolinguistics, Setu Babakan.

INTRODUCTION

Regional languages are one of the important elements in shaping a community's cultural identity. In the midst of rapid globalization and urbanization, many regional languages are experiencing a decline in function, including the Betawi language. As part of Jakarta's cultural heritage, Betawi is now increasingly rare among the younger generation and is often replaced by standard Indonesian or popular slang in public spaces (Youngsun et al., 2024; Yaumi et al., 2024; Kyeongjae et al., 2025; Weda et al., 2021). This phenomenon raises concerns about the sustainability of the Betawi language in the future. Nevertheless, amid these challenges, efforts to preserve Betawi culture and language can still be found, one of which is in the *Betawi Cultural Village Setu Babakan*, South Jakarta. This area is not only a physical representation of Betawi culture but also serves as a cultural hub that actively uses Betawi in various social, artistic, and traditional practices. The presence of *lenong* performances, traditional ceremonies, art training, and cultural tourism activities makes Setu Babakan a natural laboratory for observing the relationship between culture and language preservation.

Thornborrow (1998) states that language loss can also be associated with the loss of cultural identity. A language may disappear for various reasons—for instance, speakers may choose to shift from one language to another when social conditions change, or a language can survive by resisting dominant forces. Cultural identity can be defined as a characteristic in the form of culture that distinguishes one region from another. Each region certainly has its own culture that differs from others (Suheri et al., 2025; Sachiya et al., 2025). In this regard, Betawi culture naturally possesses distinctive traits and uniqueness that set it apart from other regional cultures.

Traditional regional arts are cultural assets of the nation that require special attention for their preservation and development. Essentially, art is part of the journey of a culture that is strongly determined by the supporting community. Traditional art is usually passed down from generation to generation without significant changes. Through a sociolinguistic approach, it is important to examine to what extent Betawi culture in this area functions as an instrument of language preservation, how Betawi is used in cultural contexts, and how the community responds to the values of local language in the midst of changing times. This research is expected to contribute to the understanding of language preservation strategies based on local culture in urban areas.

Sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and society. According to Fishman (1972), the use of language in social contexts cannot be separated from the culture that surrounds it. Language reflects the values,

norms, and identity of a social group (Jung et al., 2025; Salsabila et al., 2025; Rahman & Weda, 2019). In the context of Betawi culture, language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a symbol of cultural identity.

Language preservation is a systematic effort to maintain the use and existence of a language so that it does not become extinct. According to Grenoble and Whaley (2005), language preservation involves documentation, revitalization, and the active use of language in the community, including through cultural and educational media. One preservation strategy is to make culture a vehicle for functional language learning and use. Culture encompasses value systems, customs, arts, and traditions passed down from generation to generation. A living and active culture often become a natural medium for maintaining local languages. In Betawi society, traditional arts such as *lenong*, *gambang kromong*, and oral traditions like *pantun* are important tools in keeping the Betawi language alive.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between language and cultural identity has been widely emphasized in sociolinguistic studies. Thornborrow and Wareing (2019) argue that the loss of language can be directly linked to the erosion of cultural identity, as language embodies not only communication but also traditions, values, and social practices. In this regard, the Betawi community demonstrates how the preservation of cultural identity ensures the endurance of their language. The consistent use of kinship terms such as *baba*, *engkong*, *abang*, and *empo* in daily conversations illustrates how language functions as a cultural marker that maintains social cohesion and identity. Previous studies highlight that local arts serve as vital channels for sustaining language use within communities. The case of Betawi traditional performances—such as *lenong*, *topeng blante*, *gambang kromong*, and *palang pintu*—illustrates how Betawi language continues to play a central role in cultural expression. Survey findings reveal that in most of these art forms, more than 60% of respondents still use Betawi language, while a smaller portion shows language mixing with Indonesian or other languages. This suggests that traditional arts not only entertain but also act as reservoirs for linguistic continuity.

The establishment of Setu Babakan as a Betawi Cultural Village reflects institutional efforts to safeguard Betawi heritage. According to Regional Regulation of DKI Jakarta No. 3/2005, Setu Babakan functions as a designated cultural zone aimed at fostering and preserving Betawi traditions, language, and folklore. Such formal recognition reinforces the significance of policy in language and cultural preservation. It also demonstrates how top-down initiatives can strengthen grassroots efforts by providing legitimacy and structured support for cultural sustainability. Beyond language and arts, religion also forms part of Betawi cultural identity. Research findings show that all respondents in the study identify as Muslims, highlighting Islam as a unifying factor in the Betawi community. Nevertheless, the community maintains religious harmony with people of other faiths, reflecting inclusivity in cultural identity. This coexistence suggests that Betawi identity is not only constructed through language and traditional practices but also shaped by shared religious values and social tolerance. Consequently, the interplay of language, arts, institutional policies, and religion sustains the resilience of Betawi identity amid external influences.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a focus on sociolinguistic analysis. The research is conducted at the Betawi Cultural Village of Setu Babakan in South Jakarta. The research subjects include Betawi cultural figures, the management of Setu Babakan, traditional performers such as *lenong* actors and *gambang kromong* musicians, as well as visitors and local communities involved in cultural activities. Data collection is carried out through participatory observation by examining language use in performances and cultural activities. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with cultural figures, management, and visitors. In addition, documentation studies are applied by analyzing event brochures, performance scripts, and historical records of Betawi culture. The data are analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves identifying key themes related to the role of culture in language preservation. These themes include the intensity of Betawi language use, community responses to language in cultural activities, as well as challenges and supports for language preservation through cultural practices.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Cultural Identity Questionnaire Results

Betawi cultural identity is the object of this research. The Betawi cultural identity research was conducted by asking six questions related to Betawi cultural identity. The distribution of respondents' answers regarding Betawi cultural identity can be seen in Table 1.



Table 1. Use of Betawi Language in Betawi Cultural Identity

Question	BB	%	Mixed	%	Other L.	%
Question 1	264	67.5	123	31.4	4	1.0
Question 2	236	60.3	153	39.1	2	0.5
Question 3	301	76.7	88	22.5	2	0.5
Question 4	235	60.1	153	39.1	3	0.7
Question 5	174	44.5	209	53.4	8	2.0
Question 6	212	66.4	101	25.8	6	1.5

Table 1 shows the respondents' answers to six questions related to Betawi cultural identity.

The first question asked, "If you are a performer or have ever watched a Betawi lenong performance, what language is used in the lenong performance?" Respondents who answered that Betawi Language was used amounted to **67.5%**, those who stated that Betawi Language was mixed with Indonesian and other languages were **31.4%**, and those who answered that Betawi Language was no longer used were **1.0%**.

The second question asked, "If you are a performer or have ever watched a Betawi topeng blantek performance, what language is used in the topeng blantek performance?" Respondents who answered that Betawi Language was used amounted to **60.3%**, those who stated that Betawi Language was mixed with Indonesian and other languages were **39.1%**, and those who answered that Betawi Language was no longer used were **0.5%**.

The third question asked, "If you are a performer or have ever watched a Betawi palang pintu ceremony performance, what language is used in the palang pintu performance?" Respondents who answered that Betawi Language was used amounted to **76.7%**, those who stated that Betawi Language was mixed with Indonesian and other languages were **22.5%**, and those who answered that Betawi Language was no longer used were **0.5%**.

The fourth question asked, "If you are a gambang kromong singer or have ever watched a gambang kromong performance, what language is used in the gambang kromong performance?" Respondents who answered that Betawi Language was used amounted to **60.1%**, those who stated that Betawi Language was mixed with Indonesian and other languages were **39.1%**, and those who answered that Betawi Language was no longer used were **0.7%**.

The fifth question asked, "If you have ever been involved in or witnessed a traditional Betawi wedding ceremony, what language is used in the traditional Betawi wedding ceremony?" Respondents who answered that Betawi Language was used amounted to **44.5%**, those who stated that Betawi Language was mixed with other languages were **53.4%**, and those who answered that Betawi Language was no longer used were **2.0%**.

The sixth question asked, "You must have read Betawi literature/books or Betawi stories. In Betawi literature or Betawi stories, what language is used?" Respondents who answered that Betawi Language was used amounted to **66.4%**, those who stated that Betawi Language was mixed with Indonesian and other languages were **25.8%**, and those who answered that Betawi Language was no longer used were **1.5%**.

2. Observation and Interview Results

Based on direct observations at the Betawi Cultural Village of Setu Babakan, interviews with several Betawi figures, and secondary data in books about Betawi history—such as *Betawi Tempo Doeloe: Menelusuri Sejarah Kebudayaan Betawi* by Abdul Chaer, *Sejarah Perkampungan Budaya Betawi: Demi Anak Cucu* written by Yahya Adisaputra et al., and *Setu Babakan dari Penelitian ke Penelitian* published by the Jakarta Provincial Tourism and Culture Office—data was obtained proving that the Betawi Language is still widely used in daily conversations. The use of Betawi Language in everyday conversations among the Betawi people in Setu Babakan remains strong.

During the initial observation, the researcher noticed that the Betawi community in Setu Babakan still used Betawi Language, especially among the older generation. For example, when the researcher spoke with a mother and a child in Setu Babakan:

The researcher asked a mother, "Excuse me, Ma'am, where is the Setu Babakan management office?" The mother replied, "Noh, sonoh, belah belor, Bang." The researcher then asked again, "Could you please tell me who could take me there?" The mother responded, "Yes, of course," then called a child, saying, "Eh, Tong, take this gentleman to the UPT office, okay?"



On the way, the researcher had a short conversation with the child. The researcher asked, “Where do you go to school?” The child answered, “I study at SD Serengseng Sawah, Sir.” The researcher asked again, “What grade are you in now?” The child replied, “Fifth grade, Sir.” The researcher continued, “Why aren’t you in school now?” The child answered, “I did go to school, Sir, but only until twelve o’clock.”

This short conversation between the researcher, the mother, and the child illustrates that Betawi Language with its distinctive dialect is still used in everyday conversations in Setu Babakan, especially among the older generation. However, conversations involving children already show a mix of Betawi Language and formal Indonesian vocabulary.

The Betawi community in the Betawi Cultural Village of Setu Babakan still strongly maintains Betawi Language as a marker of cultural identity. Several cultural elements that continue to support language maintenance include aspects of daily life, social relations, traditional ceremonies, and traditional arts.

3. Aspects of Daily Life

Daily life, as a universal element of culture, includes housing, clothing, and cuisine. These aspects are generally in the form of physical culture. The influence of daily life as a cultural element on language maintenance lies in the preservation of vocabulary related to these aspects. Vocabulary that continues to be found and productively used by the community of the Betawi Cultural Village of Setu Babakan includes terms related to Betawi houses, cooking utensils, clothing, and cuisine. As explained by one of the informants, Indra Sutisna, a Betawi cultural figure in Setu Babakan, such vocabulary can be seen in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Vocabulary of Daily Life.

No. Daily Necessities	Vocabulary
1 Betawi House	empyak, gimbal, gigi balang, bapang style, joglo style, fence, pangkeng, balcony
2 Cooking Utensils	wok, mortar, small knife, rice basket, winnowing tray, grater, steamer pot, bamboo steamer, kettle, rice scoop, teapot, frying pan
3 Betawi Clothing	pangsi trousers, berego, headscarf, sadariah shirt, kopiah (cap), cukin (shawl), ujung serong, tiger nails (ornament), liskol, stanjan, kebaya encim
4 Betawi Culinary Delights	timus, cucur, gemplong, laksa, biji ketapang, jalabia, lepet, semur, gado-gado, asinan, bir peletok, kerak telur, nasi uduk, nasi ulam, ketan urab, kembang goyang

4. Social Relations

ccGroup living among humans is referred to as community life. According to Koentjaraningrat, a society is a group of people who interact and associate with one another (Koentjaraningrat, 2009: 116). In order to interact, there must be a primary means, namely language. Through language, each individual within a society can communicate and engage with others. Modern society has many tools for interaction, such as telephones, radios, televisions, and others. However, all of these tools still require language. Without language, such tools would be meaningless.

The kinship system remains a strong form of social relationship in the Betawi Cultural Village of Setu Babakan. A set of kinship terms is still widely used by the community. The kinship terms in the Betawi language are not the same as those in Indonesian, nor are they identical to kinship terms in other regions. The kinship system is also closely related to the system of address, in which terms are used by the ego to address others around them. From the perspective of the ego, the kinship terms in the Betawi language, as explained by Indra Sutisna, a Betawi cultural figure at Setu Babakan, can be seen in Figure 1.

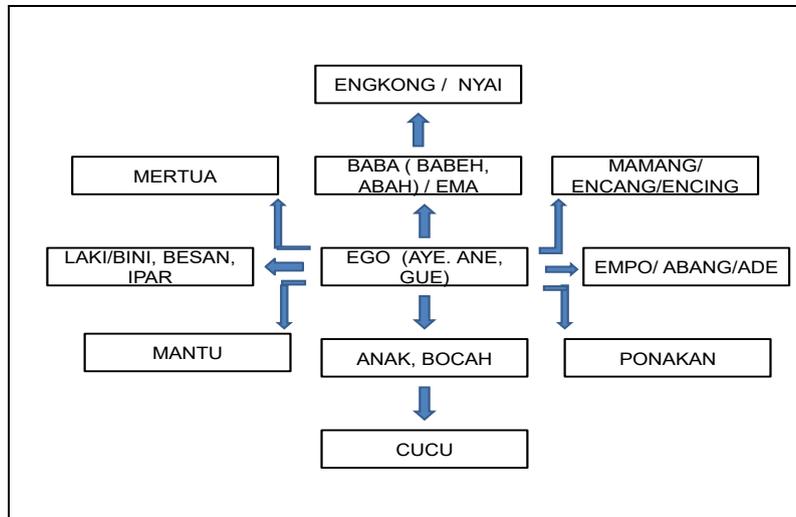


Figure 1. The Kinship System of the Betawi People

On the same level as the ego (aye, gue, ane – “I, me”) on the right side is *sodare* (siblings), meaning people born from the same father and mother. An older brother than the ego is called *abang*, while an older sister than the ego is called *empok*. A younger sibling of the ego, whether male or female, is called *ade*.

On the left side of the ego is *bini* (wife) if the ego is male, and *laki* (husband) if the ego is female. Then, to the left of the *bini* or *laki* are the *ipar* (in-laws), namely the siblings of the wife or husband, whether male or female, older or younger than the ego’s spouse. Further to the left of the *ipar* are the *besan* (co-in-laws), meaning the parents of one’s son-in-law or daughter-in-law, both male and female.

One level directly above the ego are *baba*, *babeh*, or *abah* (father), and *emak* (mother). Then, to the right of *baba* and *emak* are *mamang*, *ncang*, and *ncing*. Here, *mamang* refers to the brothers of the father or mother; *ncang* refers to the older siblings of the father or mother, whether male or female; and *ncing* refers to the younger siblings of the father or mother, also whether male or female. To the left of *baba* and *emak* are the *mertua* (parents-in-law), meaning the parents of one’s husband or wife, both male and female.

Two levels above the ego are *engkong* (grandfather) and *nyai* (grandmother). The terms *engkong* and *nyai* apply to both paternal and maternal grandparents.

To the right of the *anak* (child) is the *ponakan* or *keponakan* (nephew/niece), meaning the children of the ego’s siblings, both male and female. Then, to the left of the *anak* are the *mantu* (sons- or daughters-in-law), meaning the spouse of one’s son or daughter. Two levels below the ego are the *cucu* (grandchildren), meaning the children of one’s children, both male and female.

In relation to the kinship system, in daily conversations this system is often used in greetings and forms of address. For example, the use of kinship terms as greetings and address observed by the researcher in everyday conversations in the Betawi cultural village of Setu Babakan:

Udin asks his mother: “*Nyak, did you see grandfather (engkong) come here earlier?*”

The mother says to her child: “*Tong, help your mother (nyak), please take the rice to your aunt’s (ncing) house!*”

Mamat says to Ali, his nephew: “*Li, uncle (ncang) wants to go to your house, is father (baba) at home or not?*”

A youth leader opens a speech at a meeting by saying: “*Ncang-ncing, Nyak-Babe, Abang-mpo, whom I respect...*”

These examples illustrate how the kinship system, maintained as part of cultural elements, becomes an inseparable part of daily conversations in greetings and address within the Betawi cultural community of Setu Babakan.

One cultural element that is still preserved in Betawi community ceremonies at Setu Babakan is the *Palang Pintu* (gate-opening) ritual in wedding ceremonies. As explained by Abdul Chaer, a Betawi figure and language expert, in an interview conducted by the researcher, those involved in the *palang pintu* ceremony are a parade group consisting of the leader who also serves as a *pantun* (poetic rhyme) reciter, accompanied by a *sike* reader (rhythmic chant) and several martial arts performers.

Such ceremonies have now developed, not only as part of wedding ceremonies but also used for welcoming distinguished guests.



Figure 2. The Wedding Gate-Opening Ceremony

Upon arriving in front of the bride's house, the groom's entourage is confronted by a representative from the bride's family who asks who they are and where they are going. The questions and dialogue are conducted in the form of *pantun* (traditional rhyming verses). The language used is Betawi Malay, which is distinctive for its use of *pantun*.

An excerpt of the opening dialogue during the wedding gate-opening ceremony is delivered by the groom's *pantun* master (JPP) and the bride's *pantun* master (JPW):

JPP: Assalamualaikum!

JPW: Waalaikum salam! Oh my, you startled me, Brother. Where are you from and where are you heading? Who are you looking for?

JPP: Why? Oh dear, you ask questions like a firetruck, rushing in non-stop. Well, Brother, I just want to ask, is this really the house of Babe Duloh who has a daughter named Saodah?

JPW: If that's what you're asking, Brother, no doubt about it, this is the house.

JPP: Alhamdulillah!

JPW: So what's the purpose of your visit here, Brother?

JPP: Well, Brother, the big family of Babe Toing from Cilandak wants to stop by here!

JPW: And what business do they have, Brother?

JPP: Oh dear! This time I've brought along Babe Toing's son, Brother.

JPW: Who is he, Brother? If I may know his name!

JPP: Which one, Brother? This one (pointing at Tuan Raje Mude). As the saying goes, Brother, a durian fruit from Cimacan, Brother Yoga is as handsome as Amitabh Bachchan.

JPW: You're quite something, Brother!

JPP: Here's the thing, Brother, just as *Bismillah* is followed by *Rahman* and *Rahim*, I've come with the entourage bringing news, bringing Tuan Raje Mude who wishes to sit here.

This is a glimpse of the dialogue between the male and female *pantun* masters as the opening of the wedding gate-opening ceremony. The conversation continues with the main ritual of the gate-opening, which involves challenges from the bride's side and responses from the groom's side. As illustrated in the dialogue below:

JPW: Oh, so the purpose of your visit is to bring Brother Yoga here to stay? Well, according to our elders, there are conditions, Brother!

JPP: Masya Allah, there are conditions!

JPW: Yes, if you can fulfill the conditions. As the saying goes, Brother, "Areca nut and kenari fruit, a bulbul perches on the frangipani tree; if Brother Yoga is not yet ready, it's better to go home."

JPP: In that case, let me first ask the entourage. (The *pantun* master asks Tuan Raje Mude's entourage.)

TRM: Buy charcoal in Sukabumi, plant a guava tree in my garden; since we've already come here, even if we turn to ashes, I'll see it through.

JPW: Good, Brother, that's what I hoped for.

JPP: That's it, don't send us back. I won't return until Tuan Raje Mude meets Mpok Saodah, his future bride. "A sailing boat blown by the wind; if I may know, what are Mpok Saodah's conditions? Please tell me."

JPW: So Brother Yoga wants to know Mpok Saodah's conditions? The first condition:

"Not just any nail, a nail falls upon this gate,

Not just any door, this one you must open first..." (*the wedding gate*)

The ceremony then continues with a *silat* (martial arts) performance between the groom's and the bride's champions. This performance is interspersed with humorous pantun that make the guests laugh and enjoy themselves. Usually, the performance takes place over two rounds. In the first round, the groom's champion loses. However, in the second round, the bride's champion is defeated and acknowledges the strength of the groom's champion.

After the *silat* performance, the next step is a Qur'an recitation requested by the groom's side. At this moment, the prepared reciter chants verses from the Holy Qur'an.

The wedding gate-opening ceremony concludes with the groom's entourage being welcomed into the bride's house. This is followed by the *seserahan* ceremony. The main offering is, of course, the groom himself, along with accompanying gifts such as a pair of crocodile bread, women's essentials, and fruits. The wedding ceremony itself is then led by the *penghulu* (religious officiant).

5. The Arts

One cultural element still preserved in the Betawi cultural villages is the arts. Arts can be categorized into several types, as explained by Abdul Chaer, a Betawi figure and language expert.

1. **Literary arts**, in the form of poetry or prose.
2. **Vocal arts**, in the form of songs.
3. **Musical arts**, expressed through melodies.
4. **Dance arts**, expressed through body movements.
5. **Theatrical arts**, in the form of drama performances.
6. **Sports and martial arts**, particularly *silat*.
7. **Painting and visual arts**.
8. **Decorative arts**, in the form of small ornamental crafts.

The art most closely linked to language preservation is literary art. In Betawi society, forms of literary art include short stories and novels. Oral literature also thrives, with stories narrated by storytellers. These stories can be grouped into three types:

1. Stories originating from mainland China.
2. Folktales, which are stories of nobility.
3. Romance stories, which depict everyday life in society.

Another form of Betawi literary art is the *pantun*. Among the Betawi, *pantun*—delivering expressions in rhyming lines of two or four verses—is highly cherished and has become customary. Nowadays, *pantun* are often used to lighten formal speeches.

Examples of Betawi pantun:

Drizzle falls softly,

Pomfret fish salted away,

Why are you crying all the time?

Come Syawal, you'll be wed someday.

A snake-head with a shiny head,

Rain falls there, here clouds spread,

Whose child is that with a veil on her head?

Eyes glance aside, her foot misstepped.

Another art related to language preservation is theatrical art (*seni lakon*). It can be divided into two: those performed by humans and those by puppets (*wayang*). Human performances include *lenong*, *jinong*, *topeng*, *jipeng*, and *blantek*. Puppet-based

performances include *wayang kulit*, *wayang golek*, and *wayang orang*.

Among these, *lenong* is the most popular Betawi theatrical art. Its beauty lies in the seamless integration of action, actors, dialogue, songs, dances, and music (*gambang kromong*). Thus, *lenong* represents a synthesis of literary, vocal, musical, and acting arts.



Figure 3. Lenong Betawi Performance (youtube.com)

Lenong performance visually shows the influence of foreign culture, especially Chinese cultural elements. This happened because the accompanying music is *gambang kromong*, which in its development was nurtured and advanced by the Chinese-descended community. Based on the stories performed, lenong is divided into two types: *lenong denes* and *lenong preman*. The type usually performed at the Betawi Cultural Village in Setu Babakan is *lenong preman*, which uses everyday Betawi language, making it highly communicative and familiar to the audience, while also allowing spontaneous humor to emerge easily.

DISCUSSION

Cultural identity refers to a specific character inherent in a culture that differentiates it from others. In cross-cultural contexts, individuals should understand the surrounding cultures so that they can adapt when interacting within a different cultural environment. Cultural identity can be approached in several ways: the perfection of artistic taste; an integrated pattern of human knowledge, beliefs, and behavior; and a set of attitudes, values, and actions that characterize a group.

The factors that shape cultural identity are beliefs, a sense of security, and behavioral patterns. Belief is the main factor of cultural identity, usually inherited from ancestors. A sense of security or positive feeling for those who adhere to a culture also shapes cultural identity. Behavioral patterns likewise play a role in shaping cultural identity.

Thornborrow (1998) states that the loss of language can also be linked to the loss of cultural identity. A language may disappear for various reasons, for example when speakers shift from one language to another as social conditions change, or when a language is preserved despite dominant external forces.

Cultural identity can be defined as a cultural characteristic that distinguishes one region from another. Every region certainly has its own culture that differs from others. In this case, Betawi culture has its own distinct features that set it apart from other regional cultures.

Art is inseparable from society. As an important part of culture, art is an expression of creativity that emerges from culture itself. Society sustains both culture and art: creating, providing space for it to grow, preserving, transmitting, and developing it, which eventually leads to the creation of new cultures. Society is a community of people, and what is called social creativity originates from individuals within that society. Folk art, folk songs, or folk dances—whose creators are often no longer remembered—initially came from individual creators who were members of society. Once created, the community regards the art as their collective property.

Regional traditional arts are part of the nation's cultural assets, requiring special attention in their preservation and development. Essentially, art is part of a cultural journey, largely determined by its supporting society. Traditional art is usually passed down

from generation to generation without significant changes. Some traditions remain intact, while others are influenced by outside cultures. People can enjoy traditional art regardless of ethnicity or cultural background.

One community that strongly maintains its traditional art and culture is the Betawi people. For them, everything that grows and develops within their cultural life is fully considered their own, regardless of where the cultural elements originated. This perspective also applies to their art as a strong cultural element that expresses Betawi identity, especially in the performing arts, alongside language.

Generally, Betawi culture and arts have grown and developed spontaneously among the people in all their simplicity, and therefore Betawi art can be classified as folk art. The existence of the Betawi ethnic group as a people can be observed from their acknowledgment of specific cultural traits such as language, dialect, and art. Three life-cycle events are considered especially significant among the Betawi: circumcision, marriage, and death. Their customs, strongly rooted in Islamic teachings, emphasize remembrance of death, a ritual imbued with religious values.

Traditional Betawi arts that are closely tied to the Betawi Malay language include: *lenong*, *topeng blantek*, *palang pintu*, and *gambang kromong*. These art forms make extensive use of the Betawi Malay language, which is their main and distinctive feature. A well-preserved cultural identity influences the maintenance of language. The Betawi community continues to preserve its culture, both in the social aspects of daily life and in traditional arts. Based on respondents' answers to six questions about cultural life and art, the use of the Betawi language as a medium of communication remains highly dominant. The Betawi language is still widely used as the language of cultural communication, including in their arts.

Various Betawi arts within Betawi society still use the Betawi language as their medium of communication. For example, in the *lenong* Betawi performance, 67.5% of respondents stated that they use Betawi language, while 31.4% said that Betawi language is already mixed with Indonesian and other languages. Similarly, in the *topeng blantek* performance, 60.3% of respondents stated that they use Betawi language, and 39.1% said that Betawi language is already mixed with Indonesian and other languages. Even more strongly, in the *palang pintu* ceremony, 76.7% of respondents stated that they use Betawi language, while 22.5% said that Betawi language is already mixed with Indonesian and other languages. In musical arts such as *gambang kromong*, 60.1% of respondents stated that they use Betawi language, and 39.1% said that Betawi language is already mixed with Indonesian and other languages.

Unlike the arts mentioned above, in the Betawi traditional wedding ceremony, only 44.5% of respondents stated that they use Betawi language, while 53.4% said that Betawi language is already mixed with Indonesian and other languages. Similarly, in Betawi literature, 66.4% of respondents stated that they use Betawi language, while 25.8% said that Betawi language is already mixed with Indonesian and other languages.

Observations and interviews with Betawi figures also revealed that cultural identity is closely related to the maintenance of the Betawi language. Daily life and social relationships are strongly connected to the vocabulary of the Betawi language used by the community. Words such as *kuali* (wok), *coet* (mortar), *kerudung* (headscarf), *kopiah* (cap), *gemblong* (a type of snack), and *lepet* (sticky rice wrapped in leaves) are still commonly used in everyday life. Similarly, kinship terms are still preserved in social interactions. Words such as *baba* (father), *encang* (uncle), *engkong* (grandfather), *abang* (older brother), and *empo* (grandmother) are still used in daily conversations. These conditions prove that as long as cultural identity is maintained, the vocabulary associated with it will also endure.

Cultural identity can be understood as cultural characteristics that distinguish one region from another. Each region certainly has its own culture that differs from others. Likewise, Betawi culture has unique traits that differentiate it from the culture of other communities.

Since the designation of Setu Babakan as a Betawi Cultural Village, the community has welcomed it positively. Various forms of support for Setu Babakan Betawi Cultural Village have been mobilized by different groups, including the local community, to realize the master plan that was collectively agreed upon. Based on Jakarta Regional Regulation No. 3 of 2005 concerning the Establishment of the Betawi Cultural Village in Serengeng Sawah, Jagakarsa, South Jakarta, Article 1 states that the Betawi Cultural Village is an area in Jakarta with a community where Betawi culture is fostered and developed, covering all cultural ideas and works, both tangible and intangible, including art, customs, folklore, literature, history, and buildings that reflect Betawi identity.

A well-preserved cultural identity influences language maintenance. The community in Setu Babakan Betawi Cultural Village



continues to preserve their culture, both in social aspects of daily life and in traditional arts. Thornborrow & Wareing (2019) state that the loss of language can also be linked to the loss of cultural identity. Language may disappear for various reasons, for example when speakers shift from one language to another as social conditions change, or when a language can be maintained despite dominant external influences. This theory aligns with the condition of the Betawi community in Setu Babakan Betawi Cultural Village. Betawi language will continue to survive as long as the community continues to maintain the cultural identity that characterizes Betawi society. Cultural identity should be safeguarded from external factors, such as economic influences, foreign cultures, political factors, and others.

The findings of this study are consistent with Thornborrow & Wareing's (2019) view that the loss of language can also be linked to the loss of cultural identity. Language may disappear for various reasons, such as speakers shifting from one language to another when social conditions change, or it may be preserved despite dominant external pressures.

Betawi language will continue to exist as long as the community preserves the cultural identity that characterizes Betawi society. Cultural identity should not be contaminated by other factors, such as economic conditions, foreign cultures, politics, and others.

This study also found that one of the identities of the Betawi community is religion. Data shows that all respondents in this study are Muslim. Based on observations and interviews, although the majority of Betawi people are Muslim, religious harmony with people of other faiths is still well maintained.

CONCLUSION

Betawi culture has proven to be an effective instrument in preserving the Betawi language, particularly in the Setu Babakan Betawi Cultural Village. Cultural activities such as lenong, gambang kromong, wedding customs, and traditional culinary arts play a significant role in maintaining the use of Betawi in public spaces. The use of this language not only strengthens ethnic identity but also serves as an important bridge in the process of passing on the language to the younger generation. However, these preservation efforts still face challenges, particularly in terms of regenerating cultural actors and adapting to changing times. Therefore, collaboration between cultural institutions, the government, and the use of digital media is a strategic step that needs to be strengthened to ensure the sustainability of the Betawi language through cultural channels.

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