

THE ROLE OF ACCENTS IN BATU BARA MALAY COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the role of accent in Batu Bara Malay communication. Batu Bara Malay is a dialect of Malay spoken in Batu Bara area of North Sumatra, Indonesia and has unique phonological characteristics. This research is also to identify the characteristics of the accent in Batu Bara Malay, understand its impact in daily communication, and investigate the role of accent in communication. This research uses a combination approach of case study and phonological analysis. The data were collected through interviews with native Batu Bara Malay speakers, observations of daily communication, and analysis of voice recordings. The research results show that Batu Bara Malay has distinctive accent characteristics, including phonological variations in the use of phonemes and intonation that are different from the standard Malay or Indonesian. In the context of daily communication, the use of accents in Batu Bara Malay affects understanding and expression. Differences in accents in informal conversation and formal communication were also identified. Social and cultural factors play a role in accent variation. This research contributes to further understanding of Batu Bara Malay and the importance of maintaining this dialect. The results can be used as a basis for efforts to preserve language and culture in Batu Bara Malay community.

Keywords: *accent; Batu Bara Malay; communication; language maintenance; phonological variation.*

1. Introduction

Batu Bara Malay is a dialect of Malay spoken in Batu Bara area, North Sumatra, Indonesia. This dialect has distinctive phonological characteristics, including differences in the use of phonemes, intonation, and accent compared to standard Malay or Indonesian. Batu Bara Malay is an important part of Indonesia's cultural and linguistic heritage.

Although Batu Bara Malay has these unique characteristics, research on the role of accent in communication in this dialect is still very limited. The limitations of this research make understanding the use of accent and intonation in daily communication in Batu Bara Malay less adequate.

In the context of language and cultural preservation, it is important to understand how accents influence communication and how social and cultural changes may influence the use of accents in Batu Bara Malay. With a deeper understanding of the

role of accents in this dialect, it can help in efforts to preserve and maintain Batu Bara language and culture. Therefore, this study aims to fill this knowledge gap by exploring the role of accent in Batu Bara Malay communication.

The role of accents in Batu Bara Malay communication is to deepen the understanding of how accents in Batu Bara Malay dialect influence daily communication.

Specific research objectives include identifying accent characteristics, namely to identify and document accent characteristics in Batu Bara Malay, including distinctive phonemes, intonation, and accent patterns used in the dialect. In addition, understanding the Impact of Accents in Communication which is to explore how the use of accents affects comprehension and expression in daily communication. This can include the influence of accent in various communication contexts, such as informal conversation, formal communication, or social interaction; besides, understanding how Batu Bara Malay speakers perceive the use of accents in their own communication and how they feel accents influence their interactions with other speakers. Then, in the context of language preservation, this research can help in documenting and understanding the role of accents in Batu Bara Malay so that it can maintain and preserve this dialect.

2. Literature Review

This research examines accents in communication within a tribe which is closely related to linguistics, so there are several relevant scientific theories related to this research, namely phonology, phoneme, allophone, intonation, and accent.

Odden (2013) states that Phonology is one of the core fields that compose the discipline of linguistics, which is the scientific study of language structure. Then, Chomsky (2000) says that language is the inherent capability of native speakers to understand and form grammatical sentences. A language is a set of (finite or infinite) sentence, each finite length constructed out of a limited set of elements. This definition of language considers sentences as the basis of a language. Sentences may be limited or unlimited and are made up of only minor components.

Some linguists such as Jakobson and Halle (1968) propose that phonemes may be further decomposable into features, such features being the true minimal constituents of language.

An allophone is a variant of a phoneme based on position in a word, for example the first phoneme in the word “eat” and its meaning is phonetically different. Variations of a phoneme that do not differ in meaning are called allophones (Triadi & Emha, 2021)

Intonation describes how the voice rises and falls in speech. The three main patterns of intonation in English are falling intonation, rising intonation and fall-rise intonation. (Cambridge dictionary, 2023)

In sociolinguistics, an accent is a way of pronouncing a language that is distinctive to a country, area, social class, or individual. (The New Oxford American Dictionary, 2005).

Lippi-Green (1997) states that an accent may be identified with the locality in which its speakers reside (a regional or geographical accent), the socioeconomic status of its speakers, their ethnicity (an ethnolect), their caste or social class (a social accent), or influence from their first language (a foreign accent). Although grammar, semantics, vocabulary, and other language characteristics often vary concurrently with accent, the word "accent" may refer specifically to the differences in pronunciation, whereas the

word "dialect" encompasses the broader set of linguistic differences. "Accent" is often a subset of "dialect" (The New Oxford American Dictionary, 2005).

3. Research Method

This research uses a qualitative research approach, namely by conducting interviews. Creswell (2016:4) explains that qualitative research is method for exploring and understanding the meaning that a number of individuals or groups of people ascribe to social or humanitarian problems.

Interviews are an effective way to collect qualitative data in linguistic research, especially in understanding the role of accent in communicating using Batu Bara Malay. There are several native speakers of Batu Bara Malay connected for an in-depth interview of how speakers use accents in daily communication.

There are several designs, techniques and research procedures used in this research in detail. The first step is planning. The researcher plans research, identifies objectives, determines theoretical frameworks, and designs interview guides. The second is selecting respondents. The researcher select respondents carefully. This includes searching for native Batu Bara Malay speakers who have a strong knowledge of this dialect. The researcher also considers social and cultural variations in selecting respondents. The third is an Open Approach. The researcher designs an open-ended interview guide, including in-depth questions about the role of accent in Batu Bara Malay communication. The fourth is conducting the interview. Interviews are conducted according to prepared guidelines. The researcher records interviews for later analysis. From the results of these recordings, a phonological analysis of the accents in Batu Bara Malay can be carried out. The fifth is data analysis. The interview data are then analyzed, including transcription of the interviews and identification of relevant patterns and findings. The sixth is interpretation and discussion. The results of the interviews are interpreted in the context of the research. The researcher considers the implications of the findings in understanding the role of accent in Batu Bara Malay. The seventh is limitations and conclusions. The researcher identifies limitations in the research, such as sample limitations, and summarizes the findings found in the research. The final step is publication of results. The research results are published in the form of article that is shared with the scientific community.

4. Discussion

Phonological research in Batu Bara Malay dialect reveals a number of interesting phenomena that differentiate this dialect from standard Malay or Indonesian. The following is a discussion of the results of the phonological analysis:

a. Typical Phonemes:

1). Vocal Variations

In Batu Bara Malay dialect in which accents fall into the dialect category, there are vowel variations that are different from the standard language. Many letters have changed to the phoneme [o]. The following are examples of words that have changed:

Indonesian	Batu Bara Malay	Elucidation	The Meaning
<i>Apa</i>	<i>Apo</i>	a becomes o	what
<i>kelapa</i>	<i>kelapo</i>	a becomes o	eat
<i>Pegang</i>	<i>Pogang</i>	e becomes o	hold
<i>kemana</i>	<i>kemano</i>	a becomes o	Where
<i>cepat</i>	<i>copat</i>	e becomes o	Hurry

<i>bila</i>	<i>bilu</i>	a becomes o	When
<i>ia</i>	<i>io</i>	a becomes o	Yes
<i>siapa</i>	<i>siapo</i>	a becomes o	Who
<i>lata</i>	<i>kato</i>	a becomes o	Word
<i>lembut</i>	<i>lombut</i>	e becomes o	Soft
<i>keras</i>	<i>koras</i>	a becomes o	Hard
<i>sedap</i>	<i>sodap</i>	e becomes o	Nice
<i>dia</i>	<i>dio</i>	a becomes o	he/she
<i>pedih</i>	<i>podih</i>	e becomes o	Painful
<i>tepuk</i>	<i>topuk</i>	e becomes o	Pat
<i>coba</i>	<i>cubo</i>	o becomes u and a becomes o	Try
<i>kedai</i>	<i>kodai</i>	e becomes o	Stall
<i>belanja</i>	<i>belanjo</i>	a becomes o	Shopping
<i>saya</i>	<i>sayo</i>	a becomes o	I/me
<i>hamba</i>	<i>hambo</i>	a becomes o	I/me

In Batu Bara Malay dialect, a distinctive vowel variation phenomenon occurs. A number of vowel phonemes, such as /a/ and /e/, have changed to [o]. Examples of these changes include the word "*apa*" becoming "*apo*" and "*lembut*" becoming "*lombut*". These changes reflect the unique characteristics of this dialect that distinguish it from standard Malay or Indonesian.

2). Vowel variations and changes in consonant letters

In Batu Bara Malay dialect, besides there are different vocal variations, many consonants have also changed or been lost. The following are some examples of words that underwent simplification:

Indonesian	Batu Bara Malay	Elucidation	The Meaning
<i>berhenti</i>	<i>beonti</i>	the letters r and h are lost, the second vowel e becomes o	stop
<i>kereta</i>	<i>keto</i>	The letters r and e are lost, vowel a becomes o	motorcycle
<i>Pasar</i>	<i>Posa</i>	the letter r is lost, vowel a becomes o	market
<i>hendak</i>	<i>ondak</i>	the letter h is lost, vowel e becomes o	want/wish
<i>pergi</i>	<i>pogi</i>	the letter r is lost, vowel e becomes o	go
<i>cerdik</i>	<i>Codik</i>	the letter r is lost, vowel e becomes o	canny

Apart from vowel variations, this dialect also shows changes in consonant letters, such as the loss of the letters "r" and "h" in the word "*berhenti*" which becomes "*beonti*" and the second vowel "e" becoming "o" or the loss of the letter "r" in the word "*pasar*" becoming "*posa*". This reinforces the unique phonological characteristics of this dialect.

b. Insertion of Glottal Consonant [ʔ]:

In some words, the glottal consonant [ʔ] (such as the sound uttered before pronouncing the word "uh-oh") may be inserted between vowels. For example, the word "*anak*" can be pronounced as "*anʔak*".

The insertion of the glottal consonant [ʔ] in some words is an interesting phenomenon in this dialect. A related example of this insertion is the word "*anak*" which is pronounced as "*anʔak*". These consonant insertions are a characteristic that distinguishes this dialect from standard Malay or Indonesian.

c. Intonation Pattern:

In Batu Bara Malay, intonation patterns have their own characteristics. For example, in interrogative sentences, intonation tends to be high at the end of the sentence. Here are some examples of these words as follows:

Apo? When you hear a speaker speak using the word "*apo*" it tends to sound high at the end.

Ondak kemano? The last word will tend to be higher.

Sometimes it seems rude, but that does not mean that Malay Batu Bara residents speak rudely, but that's the intonation they sound. This is one of the intonation features that differentiates this dialect from standard Malay or Indonesian.

d. Certain Allophones:

Consonant Allophone /r/: The consonant /r/ is like the allophone [gh] (which is pronounced with the tongue with the mouth opened wider) in certain words or positions. For example, the word "*kerak*" may have the allophone [gh] in this dialect and thus be pronounced "*koghak*." But it seems almost inaudible so it makes a "*koak*" sound.

These allophones create variations in pronunciation and are a characteristic that differentiates this dialect from standard Malay.

When a speaker speaks in a formal atmosphere, the voice will sound smoother and closer to standard Indonesian or Malay text.

In this study, the results of the phonological analysis show that Batu Bara Malay has distinctive phonemes, vowel variations, glottal consonant insertions, unique intonation patterns, and certain allophones that differentiate it from standard Malay or Indonesian. This shows the complexity and richness of this dialect and the importance of understanding the phonological differences in regional languages.

The research results also reveal that accent variations in Batu Bara Malay can be different in formal and informal communication contexts. In formal situations, such as speeches or official interactions, speakers may tend to use accent variants that are closer to standard Malay or Indonesian. However, in informal conversations or everyday interactions, accent variations typical of these dialects are more likely to occur. This highlights speakers' flexibility in changing their speaking style depending on the communication context.

Accent variations in Batu Bara Malay not only reflect regional differences but also reflect an important role in the speakers' social identity. The research shows that accent can be an indicator of factors such as age, gender, and social background. The accent becomes a way to show affiliation with a particular social group or to maintain cultural traditions.

Apart from influencing the way speakers express themselves, the use of accent also influences understanding in communication. Speakers and listeners may need to adjust to better understand messages conveyed in different accents. In this context, this study underlines the importance of sensitivity to accent variations in efforts to increase communication effectiveness.

The results of this research have direct implications for the preservation of Batu Bara Malay language and culture. By understanding the characteristics of accents and variations within these dialects, communities can appreciate and preserve their linguistic and cultural heritage. This research provides a basis for the development of educational programs aimed at preserving this language and culture, especially in the context of formal education and community programs.

5. Conclusion

Batu Bara Malay dialect shows a distinctive phonology with vowel variations and consonant changes that distinguish it from standard Malay or Indonesian. These variations include changing the vowels [a] and [e] to [o] and changing or eliminating certain consonants. Then in this dialect, there is the phenomenon of inserting the glottal consonant [ʔ] in some words, which is a unique characteristic and affects the pronunciation of words. Next, in Batu Bara Malay dialect there is also a distinctive intonation pattern. The intonation pattern in Batu Bara Malay tends to be high at the end of interrogative sentences, creating an intonation that sometimes sounds harsh. This is a typical feature in everyday communication. Furthermore, in Consonant and Vowel Allophones, this dialect accent creates certain allophones for certain consonants and vowels, such as the consonant /r/ being the allophone [gh] in certain words and the variation of the vowel [a] to [o].

The use of accents in Batu Bara Malay communication plays an important role in expressing cultural identity and community pride. This accent also affects understanding and expression in everyday conversations. Accent variations in these dialects are not static, and this research reveals variations in social and communicative contexts. In formal situations, speakers tend to follow the norms of standard Malay or Indonesian, while in daily communication, dialect-specific accent variations become more apparent.

This research helps deepen understanding of Batu Bara Malay, and the results of this research can be used to improve understanding and preservation of this dialect as well as provide insight into the role of accent in communication. This contributes to the maintenance of a rich language and culture within Batu Bara Malay community.

This study has certain limitations that can be corrected in future research. Further studies could broaden the scope and consider more social, cultural and contextual factors that influence accent variations in Batu Bara Malay.

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