



## **Recoms: Jurnal Penelitian dan Pengabdian**

Vol. 1 No.2 Desember 2024

E-ISSN: 2987-0909

# **COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN MELAYU BATUBARA LANGUAGE AND BAHASA INDONESIA IN COASTAL AREA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

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Batu Bara Malay is one of the varieties of Malay used by the people in the Batu Bara area, North Sumatra, which has significant differences from Indonesian. This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the phonemic structure of Batu Bara Malay in the Coast and Indonesian. A qualitative approach was used in this study with a contrastive analysis method to identify similarities and differences in the sound system, including vowel and consonant phonemes, intonation, and the use of word stress between the two languages. Data were collected through interviews with native speakers of both languages to obtain data on the use of sounds contextually and document analysis by analyzing related documents such as language dictionaries, and academic articles to compare the use of the same or similar words between the two. The results of the study show that there are significant differences in the phonetic structure between Batu Bara Malay in the Coast and Indonesian, including vowel phonemes, Batu Bara Malay in the Coast has more variations compared to Indonesian. There are unique variations in each language, for example differences in the pronunciation of several consonants and vowels. Intonation patterns are also different, thus significantly affecting the meaning of sentences. The use of word stress also varies, thus affecting communicative understanding between individuals.

*Keywords: Phonetics, Batu Bara Malay, Indonesian*

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International license. DOI: 10.59548/rc.v1i2.297

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## **Introduction**

Indonesian phoneme sounds are the smallest units that can distinguish meaning between words in a language. In language, phonemes are the basis for analyzing a sound. There are two main types of phonemes: vowel phonemes and consonant phonemes. Vowel Phonemes, are vowel sounds that form the core of a syllable. For example, in Indonesian, there are vowel phonemes such as /a/, /i/, /u/, /e/, and /o/. And there are also Consonant phonemes, which are consonant sounds that involve obstructions or constrictions of airflow. For example, /p/, /t/, /k/, /b/, /d/, /g/, and so on. Language is one of the fundamental aspects of human social and cultural life (Puja Sri Rahayu et al., 2023).

In its position as the state language, Indonesian functions as an official language, a language of instruction in the world of education, a means of connecting at the national level for the benefit of planning and implementing national development as well as government interests and as an intermediary for developing culture, science and technology (Sintia Pratama et al., 2023).

In Indonesia, which is known as a country with linguistic and cultural diversity, there are many regional languages that have unique characteristics. One language that is interesting to study is Batu Bara Malay, which is spoken in Batu Bara Regency on the coast, North Sumatra. This language is close to Indonesian, but also shows significant differences in phonetic aspects. A phonetic comparison between Batu Bara Malay and Indonesian is important to do, considering that these two languages are not only used in the context of daily communication, but also reflect the cultural identity of the people. Although both languages come from the same family, variations in pronunciation, intonation, and sound structure can affect understanding and interaction between speakers. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of phonetic differences and similarities can provide valuable insights into the linguistic dynamics of the region. The background of this research is driven by the need to further understand how phonetic variation functions in social and cultural contexts.

This study aims to identify the similarities and differences in sound systems between the two languages, as well as their implications for intercultural communication. Using a qualitative approach and contrastive analysis method, the researcher will collect data from native speakers and analyze the phonetic elements. Through this research, it is hoped that new insights can be found into the influence of phonetic differences on the meaning and interpretation of words in everyday communication.

## **Research Methods**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a contrastive analysis method to identify similarities and differences in sound systems, including vowel and consonant phonemes, intonation, as well as the use of word stress between the two languages. Data was collected through interviews with native speakers of both languages to obtain data on the contextual use of sounds and document analysis by analyzing related documents such as language dictionaries, as well as academic articles to compare the use of the same or similar words between the two languages.

## **Results And Discussion**

Sakholid Nasution says that language is a sound symbol that is chanted by many people or a community to work together, interact and identify themselves to other fellow community members, language also has the nature and characteristics of his opinion Abdul Chaer and Leonie Agustina which include: language is a lambing system in the form of sound, language is unique, language is universal, language is arbitrary, language is productive, language is dynamic, language is diverse, and language is human (Sakholid Nasution, 2017).

From the explanation above, we know that language is a tool for a group of people (society) to interact with each other. Language also has many characteristics, one of which is that language is unique, dynamic, arbitrary and diverse. Especially in Indonesia, one of the causes of language is unique and diverse is because of the many tribes and cultural influences by each region. Therefore, this discussion refers to some of these language characteristics, by analyzing the phonemic differences between Coastal Batu Bara Malay and Indonesian.

The results of this phonemic analysis show that although Coastal Coal Malay and Indonesian come from the same language group, namely Malayo-Polynesian, there are a number of significant differences in phonemes. In terms of prosody, the difference in intonation between the two languages indicates a summary in communication patterns, where Batu Bara Malay on the Coast tends to be more expressive and varied, while Indonesian is more inclined to neutral and stable intonation. This relates to the use of Bahasa Indonesia as an official language which is more formal compared to Batu Bara Malay which is used in daily communication in a more informal social environment.

Indonesian, which is a standardized language and used in formal and educational situations, requires a more standardized and controlled pronunciation. In contrast, Batu Bara Malay on the Coast is more free and flexible. Overall, these findings reinforce the theory that the phonemic of a language is influenced by social and cultural factors, which are reflected in the way speakers of that language produce sounds and speech forms. This phonetic adaptation process is not only influenced by standardized language rules, but also by the social and cultural environment in which the language is spoken, leading to the formation of unique and diverse dialect variations.

#### **A. Phonemic Comparison (Phonemics in Indonesian)**

Indonesian has 20 vowel phonemes consisting of 12 monoftong vowels and 8 diphthong vowels. Monoftong vowels consist of /i/, /e/, /ɛ/, /a/, /ə/, /o/, /ɔ/, /u/, /ʊ/, /a/, /e/, and /o/. Diphthong vowels consist of /ai/, /au/, /ei/, /oi/, /ui/, /ia/, /ua/, and /ɛi/. Some linguists also distinguish between open and closed vowels in Indonesian.

Indonesian has 18 consonant phonemes consisting of 5 letup consonants (/p/, /t/, /k/, /b/, /d/), 4 sliding consonants (/s/, /ʃ/, /h/, /ɣ/), 2 nasal consonants (/m/, /n/), 2 release consonants (/l/, /r/), 1 nasal consonant (/ŋ/), 1 sliding letup consonant (/t/), 1 nasal letup consonant (/n/), and 2 release letup consonants (/p<sup>h</sup>/, /t<sup>h</sup>/). Some linguists also distinguish between non-vocalic consonants in Indonesian (Puja Sri Rahayu et al, 2023). From the explanation above, it can be seen that the phonemics of Indonesian are many and varied and have been researched and recognized by linguists. But the phonemics in the Coastal Coal Malay Language are also no less numerous and diverse, it can even be said to be very unique. For this

reason, the following is an explanation of the phonemics of the Batu Bara Pesisir Pantai Malay Language.

### **B. Phonemic in Melayu Batubara language**

Batu Bara Malay has differences in pronunciation, which is usually very visible such as the final vowel sound which is often changed from (a) to (o), for example "where" becomes "dimano". The phonemes themselves are almost the same as Indonesian, as explained above. However, there is a slight difference in the mention in the Batu Bara Pesisir Pantai Malay Language which makes when the sentence is written, the writing will be different from Indonesian. For example, if in Indonesian "how much" in Batu Bara Pesisir Pantai Malay is written as "beghapo or bapo". This difference is what makes Batu Bara Coastal Malay and Indonesian look significantly different. It should be noted that not all Batu Bara people speak Malay, because there are also a small number of Javanese and Toba Batak. However, in Batu Bara near the coast almost all of its people speak Malay and the dominant majority of the community in Batu Bara Regency is inhabited by Malay speakers.

### **C. Phonemic Similarities**

In (Muhammad Sholeh 2022) said, the Indonesian language discussion certainly cannot escape the Malay language, because this Malay language has been labeled as the root of the history of the Indonesian language, because since the 7th century, Malay has been used to communicate between communities, especially by Southeast Asian communities. This is evident from the discovery of Malay-language inscriptions such as the Kedukan Bukit Inscription in Palembang (AD 683), the Talang Tuo Inscription in Palembang (AD 684), the Kota Kapur Inscription in West Bangka (AD 686) and the Karang Brahi Inscription between Jambi and the Musi River (AD 688), which has a Pre-Nagari inscription and Old Malay language, indicating that the Old Malay language has long been used as a means of communication in the previous Srivijaya era.

Although Indonesian is officially the language of national unity, but in some areas still use Malay as a means of communication between each person, this is found on the island of Sumatra, one of which is in the North Sumatra part of the Coastal Coal Regency and Kalimantan. On other islands such as Java, the people have bilingual abilities (mastering two

languages) or more, so it is not surprising that the people of Sumatra and Kalimantan besides being able to master Malay, can also master Indonesian well (Sholeh et al., 2022).

The phonemic similarities between Indonesian and Coastal Coal Malay are quite numerous, because these two languages belong to the Malay language group, which comes from the same language family, namely Austronesia. While there are certainly some dialectal differences and influencing cultural influences between the two languages, many phonemes (letters) remain similar between the two. The following is an explanation of some of the phonemic similarities that can be found between Indonesian and Batu Bara Coastal Malay, Indonesian: Batu / Kutu/ Kuku/ Kaki/Mutu/Baku/Paku/Jamu/Kotak/Sapu/Angi/Api/Ayah. Batu Bara Pesisir Pantai Malay: Batu /Kutu / Kuku /Kaki/ Mutu/ Baku /Paku /Jamu /Kotak /Sapu /Angi/Api/Ayah.

The explanation above is the similarity between Indonesian and Batu Bara Pesisir Pantai Malay, based on interviews from native speakers of Batu Bara Pesisir Pantai, he said "many people misunderstand this Batu Bara Malay, they think that every sentence ending in Batu Bara must end with the letter (o). Even though not all words or language that are released end with the letter (o). For example, there was an incident where my friend from around Medan asked me this "Ayoh what do you do", then I told him that not all of our language endings with the letter (o) because there are also many similarities between the Batu Bara Malay language and Indonesian, one of which is for the word (Dad)."

Based on the explanation above, we can conclude that many people misunderstand that there are no similarities between Indonesian and Coastal Batu Bara Malay, while in fact there are many similarities between these two languages. The following will also explain the similarities in the use of digraphs, namely (a combination of two letters), Indonesian: Nyanyi /Nyapu/Nyuci/Nyabut/Ngantuk/Ngopi/Nguli. Batu Bara Coastal Malay: Nyanyi /Nyapu/Nyuci/Nyabut/Ngantuk/Ngopi/Nguli.

Based on the explanation above, there are quite a lot of phonemic similarities between Indonesian and Coastal Coal Malay that we often hear between the two languages. For the use of intonation and sound pressure, these two languages use similar intonation patterns, although in Coal Malay because there is an influence of regional accents that make the

intonation sound slightly different. However, in terms of phonemes, this difference in intonation does not really change the identity of the sound.

#### **D. Phonemic Differences**

Every language has its own phoneme system, which consists of phonetic parts used to form the words of the language itself. Language reflects the culture of a society and every language has its own phonological system (Mukhlis, 2023). The phonemic differences between Indonesian and Coastal Batu Bara Malay are numerous, due to environmental, cultural, and hereditary factors. Despite the dialectal differences and influential cultural influences between these two languages, many phonemes (letters) remain similar between the two, the difference is only one or two letters.

The following is an explanation of some of the phonemic differences that can be found between Indonesian and Coastal Coal Malay. Indonesian: What/Who/Where/Why/Where/How/What/Eye/Five/Long/Lembu/Betul/Work/Head/Coconut/Study/Go/Sad/Kitchen/room/Mamak. Batu Bara Coastal Malay: *Apo/Siapo/Dimano/Kenapo/Kemano(where)/Beapo/Bapo/Mato/Limo/Lamo/Lombu/Botul/Kojo/Kepalo/Kelapo/Belojo/Pogi/Sodeh/Dapo(kitchen)/Komo/Kama/Omak*.

There are also phonemic differences between Indonesian and Batu Bara Malay which are not just one or two different words, but almost and even all the phonemics are different. Here is the explanation, Indonesian: *How/Fast/Fighting/Jago/Azan/Talking/Heart/Beautiful/Ugly/Lazy/Grooming/Walking. Malay Batu Bara Coastal Malay: Cemano(how) /Laju/ /Begadoh(fight) /Pacak/ObangBecakapap/Elok-eklok/Lagak/ Tak elok /penyogan/Besolek/Raun-raun.*

By comparing the phonemics of Indonesian and Batu Bara Pesisir Pantai Malay, we can better understand the differences and similarities between them. This will help improve cross-cultural understanding, facilitate communication between Indonesian and Batu Bara Pesisir Pantai Malay speakers, and enrich linguistic research in the field of comparative linguistics.

#### **E. Differences in Sound Emphasis**

Indonesian tends to have a more uniform sound stress pattern on syllables, especially on the first syllable in longer words. Coal Malay tends to have more flexible sound stress patterns, and can vary more depending on the context of the sentence or region. For example, in the Indonesian

sentence: "I want to learn Indonesian." In Indonesian, the stress is usually more uniform, with clear emphasis on the first syllable in the words "learn" and "Indonesia". Whereas in Batu Bara Pesisir Pantai Malay the example in the sentence: "obang(azan)". If the tone and emphasis are normal "obang" means "azan" but if the emphasis on the "o" phoneme is lengthened like "O...bang" then the meaning can change to the call of a wife to her husband. Dora Hartika Pertiwi (2022) said that the factors that cause language emphasis interference are caused by the social environment of residence, the duality of the speakers of the Coastal Coal language and Indonesian, and the ability of speakers of each language to improve their language (Pertiwi & Hindun, 2022).

It should be noted that not all languages in the Batu Bara district are as described as before, because some also use Indonesian even though it is also mixed with Batu Bara Malay due to cultural, environmental and hereditary factors. Batu Bara Regency has 12 sub-districts, 10 urban villages, and 141 villages. The area reaches 904.96 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 412,992 people (2018) with a population density of 456 people/km<sup>2</sup> (List of Subdistricts and Villages in Batu Bara Regency, n.d.). Therefore, the author made Batu Bara Coastal because of its position around Tanjung Tiram District and Nibung Hangus District. Because in these two sub-districts the language is in accordance with what the author describes above.

## **Conclusion**

A comparison between the phonemics of Batu Bara Pesisir Pantai Malay and Indonesian shows many similarities, but there are also very striking differences. Although both come from the same language family, namely the Malay language, these phonemic differences reflect the influence of local dialects, the history of language development, and the culture of the people who use the two languages. In general, Batu Bara Pesisir Pantai Malay and Indonesian have almost the same consonant and vowel phonemes, such as /a/, /i/, /u/, /o/, and /e/. Diphthongs such as /ai/, /au/, /ei/, and /oi/ are also found in both languages.

The phonemic differences reflect the diversity of dialects in Malay. Batu Bara Pesisir Pantai Malay is strongly influenced by local culture and contact with other regional languages in North Sumatra, resulting in pronunciation and phonological structures that tend to be more distinctive. In contrast, Indonesian, which is more standardized and used throughout Indonesia,

tends to have a more uniform pronunciation, although there are still dialectal variations based on different regions.

Overall, although there are differences in phonemics between Batu Bara Pesisir Pantai Malay and Indonesian, they still share many similarities as variants of the Malay language. These phonemic differences are very indicative of the richness of dialects that exist in Indonesia and how local cultural influences affect the way people speak. Understanding these phonemic differences and similarities is very important, both in linguistic studies and in understanding the richness of the Indonesian language which consists of various varieties and dialects.

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