

THE PIDGIN AND CREOLE PHENOMENON AS A BRIDGE OF COMMUNICATION AMIDST LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia has a diversity of languages spoken by various ethnic groups, which often poses challenges for cross-language communication. Pidgin and creole are important solutions to overcome these barriers, serving as communication tools that connect individuals from different language backgrounds. This research examines the role of pidgin and creole in shaping the social and cultural identity of Indonesian society. Using a descriptive qualitative approach and a literature study, this research analyzes various literatures that describe the role of these languages in social life. The results show that pidgin and creole are not only practical communication tools, but also symbols of the social, historical and cultural dynamics of the people who use them. In the Indonesian context, these two languages function as social identities and communication bridges amidst language differences.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, an archipelago of thousands of islands and more than 700 ethnic languages, has a rich and diverse culture, which is reflected in the local languages spoken by the various tribes. While this diversity creates a strong fabric of cultural identity, it also brings great challenges in terms of communication between citizens. Indonesia, with its vast ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity, is the birthplace of many unique language phenomena, including pidgin and creole languages. Language is a communication tool used to channel a thought or message that has a certain purpose that the speaker wants to convey (Khoiriyah et al., 2023).

These phenomena emerged in response to the practical need for communication between groups with different mother tongues.

These creole languages and identities not only facilitate communication between diverse groups, but also reflect the complex interplay between local identity, cultural diversity and postcolonial dynamics in Indonesian society (Fitri et al., 2024; Knörr, 2014). Amidst thousands of ethnic languages spread across multiple islands, Indonesians often face situations where cross-language communication becomes a necessity. In this context, pidgins and creoles play a vital role as communication tools

capable of connecting individuals from very different language backgrounds. The phenomenon of pidgins and creoles in Indonesia cannot be separated from the long history of interaction between different communities in the past, such as periods of colonial trade, migration, and encounters between groups with very different languages. These languages developed when groups met and had to communicate for economic, social, or even political purposes, and this is what made pidgins and creoles an effective solution in complex multilingual situations. Pidgins developed as a simplified form of language to facilitate interaction between groups that did not speak the same language. When this pidgin is passed on to the next generation, it can evolve into creole - a fully developed language with a more complete grammatical structure and vocabulary.

The phenomenon of pidgin and creole involving English also colors everyday life in Indonesia. Creole identity in Indonesia, especially in Jakarta, plays an important role in fostering transethnic integration and a shared sense of nationhood, although it is sometimes perceived ambivalently due to its association with colonialism (Knörr, 2014). These creole and identity languages not only facilitate communication between diverse groups, but also reflect the complex interplay between local identity, cultural diversity In urban communities more affected by globalization, English is often part of more informal and functional communication. In Jakarta, for example, there is

a pidgin form often referred to as "Bahasa Gaul" or Jakartanese Pidgin English, which mixes Indonesian with elements of English. This language is more often used by the younger generation in everyday conversation, especially among those who are more exposed to global culture. In addition, there is also the influence of pidgin English in various sectors of international work or trade, where mixed languages are used to ease communication between people from different language backgrounds. This mixed use of languages, while not entirely structured, still reflects a practical need and adaptation to an increasingly connected world.

The process of pidgin and creole formation can be understood more deeply by using the theory proposed by Derek Bickerton in the Creole Hypothesis. According to Bickerton, pidgins emerged as a very simple form of language when groups with different languages met and needed a way to communicate effectively. However, pidgins only became a language that was limited in its functionality. As these pidgins were passed on to the next generation, the children who grew up in these pidgin communities began to give them new structure and complexity, eventually making them creole languages. This process is one example of linguistic adaptation, where communities create more structured forms of communication in order to interact more effectively.

Thus, pidgin and creole languages are not just a means of communication, but also reflect

the social and cultural dynamics of the society. Pidgin and creole are languages born out of social and economic necessity, and symbolize how a multicultural society can adapt and find new ways to communicate.

In the context of Indonesian society, pidgin and creole languages have a very important role in representing the diversity of cultures that exist. They not only serve as a means of communication, but also become part of a community's social identity. Pidgins and creoles often reflect a blend of local languages and outside influences, illustrating the process of acculturation and interaction between different ethnic groups and cultures. The Betawi language, for example, is not only used as a means of communication in Jakarta, but also reflects the long history of interaction between Betawi, Chinese, Arabic and Dutch people who influenced each other in cultural and linguistic aspects.

This article aims to explore the phenomenon of pidgin and creole languages in Indonesia, focusing on how these languages function as effective means of communication amidst the existing linguistic diversity. The research will examine how pidgins and creoles developed, as well as their role in shaping the social and cultural identity of Indonesian society. Through this research, we hope to gain a deeper understanding of how pidgins and creoles contribute to Indonesia's linguistic richness, and how they help build bridges of communication between groups with different

mother tongues. As such, this research not only provides insight into the development of pidgin and creole languages, but also opens up a broader understanding of the social and cultural dynamics that exist within Indonesia's multicultural society.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a *descriptive qualitative* approach with a *library research* method. Qualitative method is one of method that is intended to understand, describe, and even explain existing social phenomena (Khoiriyah et al., 2023). This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore various relevant literature sources to understand the phenomenon of pidgin and creole as communication tools in a multicultural society. The library study provides a comprehensive framework to extract information from various references such as books, journal articles and previous research reports. The main focus of this research is to analyze the role of pidgin and creole in overcoming intercultural communication barriers, as well as shaping the social and cultural identity of Indonesian society.

Data collection in this research is by delving into the literature that includes linguistic theories related to pidgin and creole, as well as empirical cases from various communities that use both types of language. Data sources include scientific books, journal articles, and social reports that describe the dynamics of pidgin and creole usage. This research also utilizes visual documentation such as documentaries to obtain a

concrete picture of social interactions involving pidgin and creole. Case studies such as the use of Market Malay in Indonesia during the colonial period and the English pidgin that developed in Indonesia as well as other variations in various communities become one of the main references in understanding this phenomenon more deeply.

The data was analyzed by identifying the main patterns or themes that emerged from the sources. The researcher examined how pidgins and creoles came into being, their practical function in everyday communication, and their relationship to the culture and identity of the people who use them. In addition, the research also sought to uncover differences and similarities between the dynamics of pidgin and creole in different regions, to show how these languages adapt to local needs.

The data interpretation stage was conducted by explaining the contribution of pidgin and creole in building communication bridges amidst language differences. The researcher outlines how both languages facilitate cross-cultural social interactions, as well as their role in strengthening social relations in diverse societies. By comparing various case examples from different regions, this research aims to provide an in-depth picture of the flexibility, variation and adaptation of pidgin and creole in the context of intercultural communication. Through this approach, it is hoped that the research can provide new insights into the important role of pidgin and creole as inclusive communication tools in multicultural societies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research reveals that the pidgin and creole phenomenon plays an important role in building communication amidst the linguistic and cultural diversity in Indonesia. In Indonesia, where ethnic and linguistic diversity can lead to potential conflict, pidgin and creole languages act as bridges, promoting interactive cross-cultural communication and helping to maintain social harmony and national integrity (Sayoga, 2011). Through the analysis of literature and documentary trails, it was found that these two types of languages not only serve as practical communication tools, but also reflect the social, historical and cultural dynamics of the people who use them. Pidgin and creole languages play an important role in facilitating communication amidst Indonesia's linguistic and cultural diversity. With more than 300 different ethnic groups and languages, Indonesia presents a complex linguistic landscape where intercultural communication is essential to foster understanding and relationships among different cultural groups (Firmansyah & Abdurrahman, 2023) (Sewell, 2022). Some of the main findings from based on the results of the research that has been done, there are several main findings in this discussion; **1). The formation of Pidgin and Creole in Indonesia**, Pidgin and creole in Indonesia emerged as a response to communication needs in a heterogeneous society. According to Purawinangun and Wiharja (2019) Pijin language is a blend of Thai and Indonesian Malay. Pijin is a language that simplifies the

various forms of language used for communication interactions. In the Indonesian context, pidgins often emerge as a result of interactions between local residents and migrants, such as traders from various ethnicities. The process of pidgin formation involves several factors; Pidgins often develop in trading areas or heterogeneous communities where people from different linguistic backgrounds meet, then Pidgins tend to have reduced morphology and syntax, as well as the use of simpler vocabulary to facilitate communication, in addition, Pidgin vocabulary often reflects the cultural influences of both interacting groups. When a pidgin begins to be used by the next generation as a mother tongue, this process is known as **creolization**. A creolization process occurs when a pidgin becomes the native language of a community. This transformation involves the expansion and stabilization of the pidgin's structure, which is often influenced by the linguistic and cultural identity of its speakers (Hudson, 2019) (McWhorter, 2019). In this stage, the pidgin undergoes development in terms of grammatical structure and vocabulary, becoming more complex and stable. Creoles have native speakers and are often used in everyday contexts by specific communities. A relevant example is Pasar Malay which developed during the colonial period as a language of instruction between local and foreign traders. It became a pidgin form because it combined elements from various languages, such as Malay, Arabic, Portuguese and Dutch. Meanwhile, languages like Betawi

can be categorized as creole forms because they developed naturally from cross-cultural interactions between Betawi, Chinese, Arabic and Dutch communities in Jakarta. The Betawi language is not only a means of daily communication, but also reflects the long history of cultural assimilation that occurred in the region. **2). The Function of Pidgin and Creole in Daily Communication**, Pidgin and creole in Indonesia have a very important function in cross-cultural communication. These languages serve as a bridge of communication between groups of people who have different linguistic backgrounds. For example, the English pidgin that developed in Indonesia is used in certain contexts, such as tourism and international trade. This practical function of pidgin and creole allows for effective communication without requiring full mastery of the more complex native or official languages. Pidgin serves as a communication tool for individuals from different linguistic backgrounds to adjust to a new environment in the local community, and is also very important in trade transactions as a means of communication between traders. Creole serves as the first language for new generations, thus becoming part of a community's cultural identity as it reflects its own users who are symbolic of their historical and social heritage.

Table 1. Overview of creole languages spoken in different parts of Indonesia.

Creole	Usage Area	Language Origin	Main Features	Main Functions
Ambon Malay Language	Ambon and surrounding areas	Malay + Portuguese + Local	- Use of typical particles such as "dong" to express "mereka". - Vocabulary influenced by Portuguese and Dutch.	- The daily language of the Ambon people. - Used in inter-ethnic communication in Maluku.
Malay Betawi Language	Jakarta and surrounding areas	Malay + Arabic + Dutch + Chinese	- Pronunciation of "e" as in "gue" or "lu". - A lot of Dutch vocabulary (e.g. "kantor", "kompur").	- An everyday communication tool in Jakarta. - Representation of Betawi culture in arts such as lenong.
Malay Manado Language	Manado and North Sulawesi	Malay + Portuguese + Local	- Simple sentence structure. - Lots of Portuguese vocabulary (e.g. "bensa" from "bênção" meaning prayer).	- Used in daily conversation and as a unifying language in North Sulawesi.
Kupang Malay	Kupang and NTT	Malay + Portuguese + Local	- The use of "beta" for "saya" and "sonde" for "tidak". - Portuguese and Dutch influence in vocabulary.	- Inter-ethnic language in Kupang and surrounding areas.
Malay Pontianak Language	West Kalimantan	Malay + Chinese + Local	- Distinctive pronunciation, such as the use of "aku" and "kitak". - Much of the vocabulary is from Hakka Chinese.	- A means of communication between tribes in West Kalimantan, especially in trade.

Pidgins and creoles play an important role in establishing effective communication amidst Indonesia's linguistic diversity. They not only serve as communication tools but also reflect the cultural and social identity of the people who use them. This shows that pidgin and creole are not just communication tools but also representations of the cultural adaptation, history, and social needs of the Indonesian people. **3). Link to Cultural and Social Identity**, Pidgin and creole languages in Indonesia not only function as a means of communication, but also become part of the cultural identity of the people who use them. Pidgins and creoles reflect the cultural diversity in Indonesia and symbolize the

identity of a community, strengthening the sense of community among its speakers. They also reflect a history of intercultural interactions, including colonialism and migration. Over time, these pidgins and creoles have become languages used in everyday life by new generations of people of different linguistic origins, strengthening social ties between them. The Betawi language, for example, reflects the identity of the Betawi people formed from a long history of cross-cultural interaction, so that today Betawi has turned into a mother tongue. By using this language, the Betawi people not only maintain their cultural heritage, but also demonstrate their ability to adapt to social and cultural changes. Similarly, the use of Pasar Malay during the colonial period reflects the socio-economic dynamics of the time, where relations between local and foreign communities were crucial in trading activities.

4). Variation and Adaptation of Pidgin and Creole in Different Regions, Pidgin and creole in Indonesia show unique variations that reflect the influence of culture, history and local communication needs in different regions. These languages developed in response to cross-cultural interactions, resulting in communication systems that are functional and reflect the identity of the people who use them. Each creole language has different characteristics and vocabulary, influenced by the history of interaction between groups. For example, Ambon Malay

was born from the relationship between the local population and Portuguese, Dutch and other traders. It was later used as a lingua franca in the Maluku region. In contrast, Betawi language reflects the influence of various ethnic groups such as Malay, Chinese, Arabic and Dutch living in Jakarta, making it a symbol of the cultural identity of the Betawi people.

Pidgins and creoles not only serve as communication tools, but also reflect flexible linguistic adaptation to social change and multicultural environments. Through the use of elements from different languages, these languages create a unique cultural identity. Here is an example sentence that shows the variety of creole languages in Indonesia:

Tabel 2. Sentences that show creole language variation in Indonesia.

Creole	Example of Sentences	The Meaning in Indonesia
Malay Ambon Language	"Dong su pergi pigi pasar."	"Mereka sudah pergi ke pasar."
	"Beta tra tahu itu barang ada di mana."	"Saya tidak tahu barang itu ada di mana."
Malay Betawi Language	"Gue mau makan di warung sebelah."	"Saya mau makan di warung sebelah."
	"Lu udah bilang sama dia belum?"	"Kamu sudah bilang sama dia belum?"
Malay Manado Language	"Torang mo pigi pantai besok."	"Kita akan pergi ke pantai besok."
	"Kita sonde tahu kapan dia datang."	"Saya tidak tahu kapan dia datang."

Malay Kupang Language	"Beta su makan tadi pagi."	"Saya sudah makan tadi pagi."
	"Sonde ada orang di rumah."	"Tidak ada orang di rumah."
Malay Pontianak Language	"Kitak nak pigi ke mana?"	"Kamu mau pergi ke mana?"
	"Aku dah habis belanja tadi."	"Saya sudah selesai belanja tadi."

These sentence variations show how pidgin and creole are adapted to meet the communication needs of different multicultural communities. Differences in vocabulary, sentence structure and pronunciation reflect the cultural and historical diversity of local communities. Pidgin and creole are clear evidence that language evolves in line with social needs, creating an inclusive shared space amidst diversity. **5). The Contribution of Pidgin and Creole in Building Communication Bridges,** Results of this study confirm that pidgin and creole contribute significantly to building communication bridges in a multicultural society. Although Indonesian itself is not classified as a pidgin or creole language, it has evolved by incorporating elements from various languages due to historical contact, such as Dutch, English, and Arabic, reflecting creole-like adaptability in its lexicon (Pratika, 2016). These languages are able to overcome intercultural communication barriers by offering simple and practical solutions. In addition, the existence of pidgin and creole reflects the spirit of inclusivity and the ability of people to adapt to cultural diversity. This adaptability has facilitated communication between different ethnic groups, promoting a

sense of unity and national identity, especially in postcolonial Indonesia where creole identity contributed to cross-ethnic integration (Knörr, 2014). The historical context of pidgin and creole languages, which often emerge from colonial interactions, aligns with Indonesia's colonial past, where they served as tools for trade and early contact, thus becoming the basis for more complex linguistic and cultural exchanges. In the Indonesian context, pidgin and creole help create a shared space that allows for harmonious social interactions amidst differences. In Asia, including Indonesia, pidgins and creoles have emerged as important communication tools in trade and commerce, highlighting their role in bridging linguistic gaps in multicultural environments (Schaarschmidt, 2016). Overall, although Indonesian is not a pidgin or creole language, the influence of these language forms is evident in its development and function as a unifying medium in diverse societies.

Thus, this study provides new insights into the role of pidgin and creole as communication tools that not only serve to overcome language differences, but also strengthen people's social and cultural identities. The findings show the importance of understanding and appreciating the existence of pidgin and creole in building social cohesion in a multicultural society.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the above discussion, the researcher concludes that pidgin and creole have an important role in supporting

communication amid the cultural and linguistic diversity of Indonesian society. This phenomenon reflects dynamic linguistic adaptation, not only as a practical communication tool but also as a reflection of history and socio-cultural identity. The process of pidgin and creole formation in Indonesia illustrates the complex interaction between various ethnic and cultural groups, both during the colonial period and the modern era

Pidgin emerged as a simple communication solution between different linguistic groups, while creole developed into a stable language with a more complex grammatical structure when passed on to the next generation. Concrete examples of this dynamic can be seen in Ambon, Betawi, Manado and Kupang Malay, which not only bridge cross-cultural communication but also strengthen the social and cultural identity of the community. These languages reflect the flexibility of Indonesian society in the face of global change and diversity. The influence of colonial history, trade and migration has shaped the development of pidgin and creole in Indonesia. These languages not only facilitate cross-ethnic communication but also symbolize inclusivity and unity in a multicultural society. In the context of a diverse Indonesia, pidgin and creole prove the ability of communities to adapt and create inclusive shared spaces.

Through this research, it is evident that pidgin and creole contribute greatly to enriching

Indonesian linguistics and creating inclusive social interactions. In addition to overcoming communication barriers, these languages also serve as bridges that strengthen the sense of unity in a multicultural society, while reflecting the unique social and cultural dynamics of Indonesia.

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