

Language Reception and Implementation of Serang Javanese among University Students in Banten

¹Darnolis, ²Indah Sapira Zahra, ³Imas Mastoah, ⁴Fithri Meiliawati, ⁵Habudin

^{1,2,3,4}Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten

¹darnolisnolis612@gmail.com, ²indahsafira838@gmail.com,

³imas.mastoah@uinbanten.ac.id, ⁴fithri.meiliawati@uinbanten.ac.id,

⁵habudin@uinbanten.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse students' responses to Serang Javanese (BJS) in the campus environment of UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten. Regional languages are an important part of cultural identity, which is now being eroded by the influences of globalisation and modernisation. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through questionnaires and interviews with 18 students from various faculties. The data obtained was then analysed descriptively to describe students' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences regarding the use of Serang Javanese in academic and non-academic contexts. The results of the study show that most students are familiar with Serang Javanese, but its use on campus is still limited. Indonesian and slang are more dominant in everyday interactions. Nevertheless, students' awareness and positive attitudes towards the importance of preserving Serang Javanese are quite high. Students view BJS as having important cultural value and playing a role in strengthening the identity of the Banten community. This study emphasises the important role of educational institutions, particularly universities, in supporting the preservation of regional languages through cultural activities, seminars, and local-based learning. Thus, Serang Javanese can continue to thrive and be passed on to future generations as a symbol of pride and cultural wealth in the Banten region..

Keywords: *Serang Javanese-language; Student perceptions; Language reception; Cultural identity.*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country rich in diversity, including language. Language is inseparable from everyday life because it plays an important role in convey information and expressing thoughts and feelings. In fact, the Indonesian language not only functions as a means of communication, but also as a symbol of modernity and accessibility (Rahmat et al., 2024). One of the languages spoken in Indonesia with the most speakers is Javanese. According to Launder (Dan et al., 2020), Javanese is the language with the most speakers and is among the thirteen largest languages in Indonesia, as it has 75.2 million speakers.

Language is also an expression of cultural values, which is why language is considered a form of interaction in socialising with individuals and communities. In communication, each individual has a variety of languages based on customs, ethnicity, and region, so that to unite all languages, the national language, Indonesian, is used. Indonesian has a broader influence, namely as a unifying and strengthening tool for the nation. In addition to being a means of communication,

language has the power to become the identity of a nation (Suhartini & Winangsih, 2022). Banten is not only known for its intellectual scholars, but also for its rich history. This region has a wealth of historical stories to tell. This region, known for its traditional debus dance, has been widely discussed in foreign literature. Claude Guillot, a French historian and archaeologist, could not hide his admiration for the wealth of historical sources in Banten. He said, "... Banten is a land rich in historical sources. This kingdom has not only written its own history, but has also inspired many writings from foreign visitors, especially Europeans (Assyifa et al., 2025).

Serang Javanese is a regional language spoken in the Banten Province, particularly in the city of Serang and the district of Serang. Serang Javanese has existed since the time of the Sultanate of Maulana Hasanudin Banten. Therefore, Serang Javanese is a regional cultural heritage in Banten Province that must be preserved by future generations, especially in the Serang area (Putri et al., 2025). Serang Regency is one of the regions in Banten Province that has a long history in the development of Banten society, from the heyday of Hindu-Buddhist civilisation and the sultanate to the current government. Constitutionally, the formation of the Serang Regency government is part of the implementation of the regional autonomy law. History records that Serang Regency was the centre of government in Banten during the Sunda Kingdom and the Sultanate of Banten. The process of social and cultural development was significant in this region, which is so vast that it encompasses many smaller areas. Serang Regency underwent four transitions of power, with 32 changes of regional leader/regent. In the historical book written by H. Milwani Microb and H. M. Mudjahid Chudari, titled "Catatan Masa Lalu Banten" (Records of Banten's Past), this transition process is documented from the Sunda Kingdom era through the Dutch and Japanese colonial periods up to the present day.

Before the 16th century, there were not many historical records about Banten. On 19 December 1948, during World War II, Dutch soldiers were able to enter the Banten/Serang area for one year. After 1949, the Dutch left the Banten/Serang area again, and Serang became part of the Banten/Serang region. Dutch soldiers were able to enter the Banten/Serang area for one year, and after

1949, the Dutch left the Banten/Serang area again. The Serang area then became one of the regencies in the province of West Java. Since 4 October 2000, with the formation of the province of Banten, the Serang regency has officially become part of the province of Banten.

The Javanese dialect used in Serang is known as Serang Javanese, and consists of two variations, namely Serang Javanese and Babasan Javanese. In Serang Javanese, words usually end with the sound /a/, as in the word 'kita', which means 'I'. However, in the Banten region, people usually pronounce the end of words with

the sound /ê/, for example 'kitê', which also means 'I'. Meanwhile, Babasan Javanese is often referred to as a more polite language because it belongs to the krama language category. For example, the word "katah" means "many" (Camila et al., 2025).

One of the Javanese dialects used is the Banten dialect (Serang Javanese). Serang Javanese has two variations, namely Bebasan and Pergaulan (Standard). Bebasan is more refined than Pergaulan, so Bebasan is usually used to communicate with older people, while Pergaulan is used to communicate with peers (Fauzan et al., 2022). In the Serang Javanese language in Banten Province, there is a polite language that is commonly used. This polite language in Banten Javanese is called Bebasan. Bebasan is a language that is spoken and can be used to measure a person's level of politeness in communication. Banten Bebasan is considered a polite language. People feel valued and respected when their communication partners use Bebasan. The perception of Bebasan Banten as a polite form of communication is still strong today. However, with the progress of the times, people now use Indonesian more than Bebasan (Ramadinatha et al., 2021).

The diversity of regional languages in Indonesia is an invaluable cultural treasure, serving as a marker of identity and a reflection of the history and civilisation of a community. In the national context, regional languages play a vital role in preserving ancestral heritage and strengthening cultural resilience amid the tide of globalisation. This phenomenon is not only about verbal communication, but also encompasses value systems, local wisdom, and community perspectives. Therefore, studies on the dynamics of interaction and perceptions of regional languages are crucial, especially in environments that are miniatures of this diversity: university campuses.

Unfortunately, users of Banten Javanese are beginning to be eroded by the progress of time, with society favouring slang, Jaksel language, and the influence of other foreign languages, so that users of Banten Javanese have also begun to decline in recent years. According to the data obtained, there are three million speakers of Serang Javanese, with the largest number of Jaseng (Serang Javanese) speakers in Cilegon, Serang and a small number in Tangerang, Banten Province. If the number of speakers decreases from what it was before, it is possible that in the next few years, the Jaseng language will become extinct, resulting in the loss of the local identity of the people of Serang Regency (Fauzi et al., 2025).

The decline in enthusiasm for preserving the nation's heritage, including regional languages, has become a serious problem in recent years. However, only a few Indonesians are aware of this. Regional languages, especially the Serang Javanese language, are on the verge of extinction. The Banten Javanese language is one example of a successful fusion between the two major cultures of Java and

Sunda. Speakers of the Serang Javanese dialect are found in parts of Banten Province, particularly in the northern part of Banten, namely Serang Regency, Serang City and Cilegon City. Meanwhile, another opinion states that the naming of Serang Javanese (hereinafter abbreviated as BJS) is related to a language that indicates ethnic designation (Lestiyani & Muhyidin, n.d.).

The province of Banten, as a region rich in cultural and ethnic diversity, has one of the most interesting regional languages to study, namely Serang Javanese (BJS) or also known as Banten Javanese. BJS is not just an ordinary Javanese dialect; it has distinctive linguistic characteristics, lexicon, and system of etiquette (language manners), which distinguish it from standard Javanese (Central Java/Yogyakarta). As the dominant language used in the Serang area and its surroundings, BJS interacts directly with the daily lives of the local community, including in the realm of higher education. The presence of BJS in the centre of studies makes it a relevant subject for analysis in relation to social change and the perceptions of the younger generation.

Although there have been many studies discussing the linguistic description of BJS, studies that focus specifically on sociolinguistic and social psychology aspects of language, particularly in the context of responses, attitudes, and acceptance by the student population, are still limited. The lack of data on the direct perceptions of student groups, both from Banten and outside Banten, has created a knowledge gap that needs to be bridged. This study aims to fill this gap by providing an empirical description of the interaction between BJS and the linguistic identities and preferences of students amid the development of Indonesian as an academic lingua franca.

Based on the above background and urgency, this article aims to present an in-depth analysis of students' responses to Serang Javanese. The main focus of this study includes the level of understanding (competence), frequency of use, and affective attitudes (views, interests, and assessments) of students towards Serang Javanese in various communication contexts on campus. The results of this study are expected to contribute significantly to the development of regional language preservation policies, particularly at the university level, and to serve as a basis for further sociolinguistic studies on language dynamics in Banten.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive method. This approach was chosen to objectively describe the phenomena related to the perception and usage of the Serang Javanese language among students at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia. The descriptive design is suitable for illustrating existing conditions and trends, focusing on quantifying students'

knowledge, usage frequency, and assessment of the language's importance based on questionnaire data, rather than testing hypotheses.

Subject of Research

The subjects of this research were the principals of three different levels of madrasahs in Serang City: MI Ats Tsauroh, MTs Darul Irfan, and MA Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah. The sample was selected purposively based on practical considerations of affordability and effectiveness in data collection (Eric, 2016). The data source includes primary data obtained through direct interviews with these principals and secondary data gathered from related literature.

Instruments and Interview Questions

The study's target population comprised all enrolled students across the various faculties and departments at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten. The sample was strategically selected using a purposive sampling technique, prioritizing participants who met specific criteria pertinent to the research objectives, namely demonstrating experience and knowledge of the Serang Javanese language, whether as proficient active speakers or receptive listeners. A total of 18 students constituted the final sample size. Although numerically small, this deliberate selection was deemed sufficient to provide nuanced and in-depth perspectives, effectively reflecting the students' views regarding the sociolinguistic existence and functional role of the Serang Javanese language within the specific academic environment.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection for this study was executed entirely through the distribution of a digital questionnaire, delivered via Google Forms, to the selected purposive sample comprising 18 students. Subsequently, the collected data were subjected to a combined quantitative and qualitative analytical approach. The Quantitative Data derived from closed-ended questions were processed using descriptive statistical analysis. This involved the calculation of the percentage for each response option to objectively delineate student trends regarding the perception and usage of the Serang Javanese language. The ensuing quantitative results were systematically presented in tabular format, complemented by narrative descriptions to facilitate comprehensive interpretation of the findings. Conversely, Qualitative Data, gathered from the single open-ended question requesting suggestions or comments, underwent descriptive thematic analysis. Responses were categorized and grouped based on the recurrence of common themes or semantic similarity. This dual-methodological approach was intentionally employed to furnish a comprehensive and nuanced picture of students' linguistic attitudes, views, and usage patterns concerning the Serang Javanese language within the specific context of the UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten campus environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Student Linguistic Perception and Usage

Based on the descriptive quantitative data gathered from 18 student respondents at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, a clear pattern regarding the perception and usage of the Serang Javanese Language (BJS) emerged. Overall findings indicate a dichotomy: high awareness and positive valuation of BJS as cultural heritage, but low rates of active daily usage both at home and within the campus environment.

The quantitative analysis of language use showed that the majority of students admitted to rarely using BJS in daily conversation or academic settings. Usage is largely restricted to specific, informal contexts, primarily when interacting with peers originating from Serang or the immediate Banten area. This trend suggests that BJS is undergoing a functional shift among the student population, where Indonesian or colloquial language has superseded the regional language as the primary medium of communication. This phenomenon highlights a common challenge faced by regional languages in environments dominated by lingua franca and modern communication styles.

Attitudes and Valuation of Serang Javanese

Despite the low frequency of use, students demonstrated a remarkably high awareness and positive attitude toward the preservation of BJS. The vast majority of respondents agreed that BJS is a fundamental component of Banten's cultural identity and holds significant cultural value that warrants preservation. Furthermore, students largely believed that proficiency in the regional language enriches general communication skills and strengthens a crucial sense of community (*sense of belonging*) among local community members.

This finding is critical as it indicates that students understand the symbolic and social capital embedded within BJS, even if they are not active speakers. Their perspective suggests that BJS functions less as a mandatory daily communication tool and more as a powerful symbol of identity.

Context of Usage on Campus and Diversity

Regarding the campus environment, the data revealed that while most students have heard BJS used at UIN SMH Banten in informal conversations and non-formal activities, its presence in academic or formal settings is highly limited. This demonstrates an implicit domain restriction for BJS on campus.

Furthermore, the influence of student diversity was noted; several respondents who originated from outside the Banten region admitted they did not understand BJS, which complicated their ability to fully participate in conversations where the regional language was employed. This finding emphasizes the campus's role as a meeting point for diverse linguistic backgrounds, inevitably influencing the dominant communication patterns.

Recommendations and Qualitative Input from Respondents

The open-ended suggestions provided rich qualitative data regarding BJS preservation efforts on campus (See Table 1).

Table 1. Respondents' suggestions regarding the use of Serang Javanese

Participants	Students' Suggestions (Thematic Grouping)
Number 1 & 4	Identity and Promotion: BJS is part of Banten's identity and must be supported. Campus should hold events or create content in BJS to increase familiarity and pride.
Number 2	Preservation and Pride: BJS must be preserved and should be used during campus events to instill pride in the language.
Number 3	Contextual Limitation: BJS use is acceptable for increasing familiarity and preserving culture, but its use must be limited; Indonesian should remain the standard for academic and formal activities.

The suggestions confirm students' positive attitudes and translate them into concrete recommendations for institutional intervention. The recurring themes center on formal promotion (events/content) and contextual preservation, aligning with the need to maintain BJS as a cultural symbol while respecting Indonesian as the academic language.

CONCLUSION

Based on the descriptive quantitative and thematic analysis, this study concludes that students at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten exhibit a complex linguistic profile regarding the Serang Javanese Language (BJS). Although the level of active usage is low—with students predominantly favoring Indonesian or slang in daily and academic communication—the awareness and positive attitude towards BJS preservation remain remarkably high. Students overwhelmingly recognize BJS as a vital symbol of Banten's cultural identity. The research successfully described that while BJS's function has shifted away from being the primary daily medium, its potential as a cultural and identity resource is strongly acknowledged by the younger generation. These results underscore the urgent need for educational institutions, particularly universities, to play an active role in creating dedicated spaces and cultural activities that support regional language preservation. By taking proactive steps (such as those suggested by the students—cultural events and focused promotion), BJS can be ensured to survive not only as a means of informal communication but, more importantly, as a resilient symbol of local pride and identity amidst the pressures of globalization and linguistic diversity.

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