



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Regeneration Of The Besemah Language As An Effort To Weave Traditions Into Digital Media

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Abstract

Language and culture are related, as is society. In today's modern era, how the development of language and culture is interdependent and side by side, racing with the flow of technological progress and the development of knowledge. In millennial or urban societies, language and culture are increasingly eroded by the progress of the times (1). Regional languages are valuable assets of a nation, but the 21st century community paradigm considers that foreign languages have higher prestige than national languages and regional languages (2). The urgency of research is a shift in local wisdom, namely the decreasing interest in the use of the Besemah language used by the Besemah tribe in South Sumatra in local content lessons, because the Besemah language is a cultural heritage of the Indonesian nation. However, in the current digital era, the Besemah language faces a serious threat due to the dominance of the Palembang language, Indonesian and foreign languages, especially among the younger generation. With the advancement of technology and globalization, the Besemah language is increasingly being marginalized in everyday life. Therefore, it is important to find ways to preserve and develop the Besemah language by utilizing digital technology as a means that can reach the younger generation and the wider community. There are many factors that cause a language to persist or shift in both minority and immigrant groups (3). The purpose of this study is to identify the challenges and obstacles of the Besemah language in the digital era, and to find effective strategies to utilize technology such as digital media to preserve and develop the Besemah language. While the method used is a qualitative research method (4). With the case study method and digital content analysis. Where data is collected through interviews, observations and document analysis.

Keyword: Besemah Language, Digitalization, Globalization, Language Preservation, Preservation Strategy

Introduction

In the era of digitalization and globalization, the development of information technology has influenced many aspects of life. The massive influx of foreign languages poses a serious threat to the sustainability of local languages (Bahasa Daerah Berbasis Literasi Digital Bagi Masyarakat Desa, La Ode Sahidin et al., 2024). Local or regional languages are one of the nation's cultural treasures, as they enable communities to communicate effectively with one another. In the current era of globalization, the millennial generation tends to perceive foreign languages as more important than national or regional languages. As a result, regional languages are used the least, following foreign languages, and millennials prefer to communicate in either of the two (Bahasa et al., 2024). A distinctive characteristic of the Besemah language is its frequent use of the phoneme /e/, which differentiates it from Indonesian, where the corresponding sound is often /a/ (Pebrianti & Nopriani, 2021). One of the oldest provinces with the greatest linguistic diversity is Sumatra, with South Sumatra being the region that has the widest language distribution. Almost every regency in the province possesses its own distinct language (Afria et al., 2020).

The decline of Besemah oral literature—including *Rejung* and *Guritan*—began during the Japanese invasion of Pagar Alam in 1943. Various forms of traditional art, including oral literature, were suppressed as many artists perished during the war or were forced into labor (*romusha*) (Jurnal JSSH, Budi Agung Sudarmanto, n.d.). Although the digital era facilitates communication and access to information, it also presents significant challenges to the preservation of regional languages. The

dominance of Indonesian and global languages such as English across digital platforms has made the Besemah language increasingly rare, even in everyday online communication. On the other hand, digital technology offers great potential for preserving local languages through various digital platforms, such as social media, language-learning applications, and other digital content. The research problems addressed in this study are: (1) To identify the extent to which the use of digital media, applications, and other digital platforms influences language shift; (2) To examine how this affects the use of the Besemah language among younger generations; (3) To explore the challenges faced in preserving the Besemah language amid the dominance of Indonesian and global languages; and (4) To analyze strategies applied to preserve the Besemah language in the digital era.

The urgency of this research lies in the fact that language is one of the main elements in preserving culture and the identity of a community. With the decreasing use of the Besemah language, it is crucial to find effective ways to keep it alive and relevant amid modernization and globalization. With the right strategies, digital technology can serve as an effective tool to document and teach the language, thereby reducing the risk of its extinction. The functions of language in culture can be categorized into three: as a means of cultural development, as a medium for cultural transmission, and as an inventory of cultural characteristics (Dianita, 2020). Language shift occurs when a first language is replaced by a new one (Triandana et al., 2023). Interest in regional language education in elementary schools has significantly declined, and children rarely use their

local language in daily interactions. Most children now use the Palembang language instead.

The Besemah language is at risk of disappearing or being disrupted due to factors such as globalization, population migration, and cultural change. Therefore, the preservation of regional languages is essential. Efforts to preserve regional languages should aim to document them and increase the interest of younger generations. Since language is a vital element of communication, it serves as the primary means through which people can interact and connect effectively.

Method

This study employs two approaches. The first is a **qualitative approach**, which is used to obtain in-depth data (Aljamaliah & Darmadi, 2021). The second is a **digital technology approach**, which aims to explore the use of digital technology as a medium for preserving the Besemah language. This includes examining the utilization of social media, language learning applications, websites, and other digital platforms that can assist in documenting, teaching, and disseminating the Besemah language. This approach will identify both the potential and the challenges of using technology in the preservation of local languages. The flow of globalization, accompanied by rapid technological development, has inevitably brought changes to local community structures, leading to a decline in the existence of regional languages (Purnama et al., 2023). In general, there are four main causes of language extinction. First, parents no longer teach their native language to their children at home. Second, communities tend to use other languages for daily communication. Third, there is pressure from dominant languages within bilingual or multilingual societies. Fourth, globalization affects various aspects of life, further accelerating language loss (Mantri, 2021). The strategies implemented to address these issues include raising awareness of the importance of using the Besemah language, developing digital content in Besemah, fostering collaboration with the government and educational institutions, and utilizing social media as a platform for interaction and communication. Another important strategy is the use of **instructional media**. Instructional media is a system consisting of various interconnected components, including objectives, materials, methods, and evaluation (Setiawati et al., n.d.).

Results and Discussion

The Influence of Digital Media Use on Language Shift

The findings of this study indicate that digital media, communication applications, and other online platforms have a significant influence on language use patterns, particularly among Besemah youth. Field data obtained through in-depth interviews show that most teenagers and young adults tend to use Indonesian and Palembang languages when communicating through social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok. The Besemah language is rarely used, even in informal contexts, as it is perceived to be less practical, unpopular, and not easily understood by a wider digital audience.

This phenomenon reflects a **language shift**, in which local languages gradually lose their communicative function in public and digital spheres, being reduced merely to symbols of cultural identity within domestic or traditional spaces. The shift is accelerated by the penetration of digital technology, which prioritizes dominant languages—particularly Indonesian as the national lingua franca and English as the global lingua franca. These findings align with Crystal (2000), who asserts that minority languages tend to lose vitality when they lack representation in modern media. Among the Besemah youth, the presence of digital media has reinforced a preference for more “universal” languages, which are considered more relevant for cross-regional and international communication needs.

The Impact on the Use of Besemah Language Among Youth

Furthermore, interview results show a clear **shift in language attitudes** toward the Besemah language among younger generations. Most respondents expressed greater confidence in using Indonesian and Palembang languages in digital spaces, as these languages are viewed as more modern, flexible, and prestigious. In contrast, the Besemah language is perceived as outdated, difficult to integrate into digital formats (such as content creation), and limited to familial communication.

However, a small portion of young people still maintain the use of Besemah in daily life, although its digital presence is often restricted to certain words or unique expressions. For instance, traditional Besemah greetings or humorous phrases can still be found in WhatsApp status updates or social media comments. This demonstrates that, despite strong pressure

from dominant languages, there remains a **symbolic effort** to preserve Besemah as a marker of local identity. In other words, while the Besemah language is undergoing a shift, digital spaces can also serve as an opportunity for revitalization—provided they are utilized creatively.

Challenges in Preserving the Besemah Language

Based on qualitative data analysis, several key challenges in preserving the Besemah language in the digital era can be identified:

- Dominance of Indonesian and Palembang Languages**
Indonesian holds a strong position as the language of education, governance, and inter-ethnic communication. Meanwhile, English is considered essential for global education and career advancement. Consequently, young people tend to allocate more time to mastering these two languages, leaving Besemah less frequently used.
- Lack of Digital Content in Besemah Language**
The scarcity of Besemah-language digital content presents a significant obstacle. There are almost no YouTube channels, learning applications, or popular social media platforms that use Besemah as the primary language. As a result, young people lack engaging references to use their local language in digital spaces.
- Social Stigma Toward Local Languages**
The Besemah language is often regarded as “old-fashioned” or “unrefined” by some young people. This stigma confines the use of local languages to family or traditional ceremonies, further reducing their relevance in public life.
- Lack of Proactive Local Government Policies**
Currently, government support for the digitalization of the Besemah language remains limited. There are no digital dictionary applications, online learning platforms, or teacher training programs designed to teach Besemah through technology-based approaches.
- Dependence on Mainstream Media**
Besemah youth are more exposed to content from national and global media outlets, most of which use Indonesian. This dependency restricts the space for local languages to flourish within mainstream digital ecosystems.

Strategies for Preserving the Besemah Language in the Digital Era

To address these challenges, several strategies can be implemented by integrating qualitative and digital technology approaches:

- Digitalization of the Besemah Language**
The first step is the documentation and digitalization of the Besemah language, such as developing a Besemah–Indonesian digital dictionary accessible via websites like *kamusbesemah.com*. Digitalization allows the language to be easily accessed, learned, and disseminated among younger generations.

Kamus Besemah Beranda Kumpulan Kata Kosonon Peribahasa Menu

Selamat datang di Kamus Bahasa Besemah

Cari kata atau arti...

Cari

Silahkan masukkan kata atau arti untuk mencari kamus Besemah.

Tentang Website

Kamus Bahasa Besemah adalah aplikasi online yang dirancang untuk memudahkan pengguna dalam mencari, mempelajari, dan memahami kosakata dalam Bahasa Besemah—bahasa daerah yang merupakan bagian dari warisan budaya masyarakat Besemah di Sumatera Selatan, Indonesia.

Website ini menyajikan beragam fitur yang interaktif dan informatif, seperti kamus kata, gator budaya, peribahasa, serta fitur pencarian kata yang memudahkan navigasi. Data kata yang tersedia dilengkapi dengan arti dalam Bahasa Indonesia, penjelasan tambahan, dan konteks penggunaannya, sehingga sangat bermanfaat bagi pelajar, peneliti, budayawan, maupun masyarakat umum yang tertarik mempelajari Bahasa Besemah.

Dengan tampilan antarmuka yang sederhana dan mudah digunakan, website ini diharapkan menjadi jembatan digital untuk menjaga eksistensi Bahasa Besemah di era modern.

Kamus Besemah Beranda Kumpulan Kata Kosonon Peribahasa Menu

Kumpulan Kosa Kata Besemah

Agh	Ambugh	Ampagh	Aryng	Baghi	Bahase	Baje	Beaghu
Behangkut	Behawas	Behuasan	Behyie	Behngat	Behuuk	Behajak	Belagham
Blagh	Bise	Bubugh	Budaye	Bute	Care	Cobagh	Cete
Centre	Cine	Die	Engle	Dighi	Dingbehangling	Dose	Duaghe
Duke	Gembugh	Ghancang	Ghaguh	Ghagadu	Ghemuk	Ghampit	Ghundu
Ghuteh	Ghuma	Ghunih	Gile	Gure	Igh	Ipagh	Jage
Jase	Jugh	Kaghat	Kate	Keghe	Kite	Kuase	Lame
Lebagh	Lime	Lupe	Mighis	Muare	Mude	Muke	Name
Nubsemah.com/home/kumpulan_kata.php?ake	Nyate	Pengpghit	Perase	Perike	Puase	Rase	

learning modules, and the government can provide support through regulation and funding.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study aims to identify the extent to which the use of digital media, applications, and other online platforms influences language shift, as well as how this phenomenon affects the use of the Besemah language among the younger generation. In addition, the study explores the challenges faced in preserving the Besemah language amid the dominance of Indonesian and global languages, while also examining strategies that can be implemented to maintain the continuity of this local language in the digital era.

Using a qualitative approach combined with a digital technology perspective, the research produced several important findings. First, the use of digital media has a significant impact on youth communication patterns. Messaging applications, social media, and creative content platforms encourage young people to use Indonesian and Palembang languages more frequently, resulting in the marginalization of Besemah, which is now limited to family or traditional contexts. This indicates the occurrence of a language shift. Second, the study found that young people's attitudes toward the Besemah language are ambivalent. Most perceive Besemah as less relevant to modern digital life, while a small number still maintain it as part of their cultural identity by inserting Besemah words or expressions into online interactions. These findings highlight that although the Besemah language is under pressure, there remains potential for revitalization if creative spaces are provided that align with the interests of the younger generation.

Third, the challenges of preserving the Besemah language are complex. The dominance of Indonesian and English, the lack of digital content in Besemah, the social stigma toward local languages, and the absence of proactive government policies are the main factors accelerating language shift.

Fourth, the study emphasizes that digital media should not only be viewed as a challenge but also as an opportunity for the preservation of the Besemah language. Strategies that can be implemented include language digitalization (through the creation of online dictionaries and applications), the development of creative content via social media, integration of the Besemah language into education through digital project-based learning, and collaboration among communities, academics, and local governments. Through these strategies, the Besemah language can be revitalized within digital spaces and reestablished as a cultural identity relevant to the needs of the younger generation.

Recommendations

1. **Local Government and Cultural Institutions**
The local government of Pagar Alam City and local cultural institutions are encouraged to provide more concrete support for the preservation of the Besemah language through policies and language digitalization programs. For example, by developing online learning platforms, digital dictionaries, or educational content on social media that can be easily accessed by young people.
2. **Community Involvement**
The Besemah community should actively participate in language revitalization efforts through engagement in cultural activities, language training, and the creation of digital content using Besemah. This ensures that the language is not only preserved in formal settings but also continues to thrive in daily communication.
3. **Educational Integration**
Schools and universities in the Besemah region should integrate local language and cultural studies into local content (*muatan lokal*) curricula or extracurricular activities. Technology-based learning approaches, such as interactive learning applications and educational videos, can help increase students' interest in regional languages.
4. **Further Research**
Future research is recommended to explore the effectiveness of specific digital media platforms—such as TikTok, YouTube, or podcasts—in promoting the use of the Besemah language among young people. Additionally, more in-depth linguistic studies on the

Kamus Besemah

Daftar Peribahasa

<p>44 Kalimat Besemah</p> <p>Lughus Tali Belandar papan, Niat iku Tertib Lugas, Rusak adak binase Dide</p> <p>Terjemahan Indonesia: Jujur, Terus terang, sikap dan perbuatan sama, Niat baik perbuatan baik tidak akan musnah</p>	<p>44 Kalimat Besemah</p> <p>Naisu kecil tulang dilanggit, awak nderake sedut payah</p> <p>Terjemahan Indonesia: Mencerminkan orang yang kurang kemampuan dalam usaha atau perjuangan, tak ada kemungkinan untuk maju</p>
<p>44 Kalimat Besemah</p> <p>Mintak Siak ngah Kali</p> <p>Terjemahan Indonesia: Minta pertolongan kepada orang yang tidak mampu, baik dari segi materi maupun tenaga dan usaha</p>	<p>44 Kalimat Besemah</p> <p>Ame kebau dipegang tali, manuse ye dipegang katense</p> <p>Terjemahan Indonesia: Jangan sekali-sekali ingkar janji, kalau orang tidak percaya, hidup kita hancur</p>

Kamus Besemah Beranda Kumpulan Kata Konsonan Peribahasa Menu * Admin

Daftar Konsonan

Pilih Kategori Konsonan:

-- Pilih Kategori --

-- Pilih Kategori --

Konsonan in bertemu dengan Suku Kata Pak, Pang, dan Bah

Konsonan in bertemu dengan suku kata dak, duk, dik, jadi, de, dan dah

Konsonan Rangkap/Fonem gh/ghain pada awal kata

Konsonan Rangkap/Fonem gh/ghain di tengah kata

Konsonan Rangkap/Fonem gh/ghain di akhir kata

Konsonan Rangkap/Fonem gh/ghain berawalan be, te, dan se

Pesan Puyang Dikale

Kamus Besemah Beranda Kumpulan Kata Konsonan Peribahasa Menu * Admin

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Kamus Besemah Beranda Kumpulan Kata Konsonan Peribahasa Menu * Admin

Galeri



2. **Creation of Social Media Content Using Besemah Language**
Youth can be encouraged to create creative content using Besemah, such as short videos on TikTok featuring local expressions or traditional songs presented in modern formats (for example: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSD1A3qHy/>).
3. **Integration of Besemah Language in Education**
The Besemah language can be included as a local subject in schools through engaging digital-based project learning. Students could be tasked with creating vlogs, blogs, or digital comics using Besemah. This approach helps bridge local language preservation with the digital world familiar to young learners.
4. **Collaboration Between Communities, Academics, and Government**
Cross-sector collaboration is crucial for the preservation of the Besemah language. Local communities can act as key advocates, academics can contribute through the development of digital

structure and variations of Besemah are needed to ensure comprehensive documentation and revitalization efforts.

5. Creative Content Development

Local creative content developers are encouraged to produce digital works—such as short films, animations, comics, or songs—that use the Besemah language. This creative approach can increase the appeal of the local language while serving as a medium for transmitting cultural values to future generations.

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