THE MAINTENANCE OF THE JAVANESE LANGUAGE IN YOWIS BEN FILM
Pemertahanan Bahasa Jawa dalam Film Yowis Ben

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Abstract
In this modern era, people cannot live without media because they provide information on social realities. Film is one of the media which includes information on social reality. A film entitled Yowis Ben talks about Javanese social reality in Malang. Furthermore, it uses the Javanese language in most of its dialogues. It depicts the social reality that the Javanese language is still widely used in Malang. Although Malang’s largest population is Javanese, as an urban city, it is visited by many people from different regions of Indonesia and abroad. Therefore, the Javanese language is not the only language used in Malang and research on the survival of the Javanese language is important. This article aims to analyze the survival of the Javanese language as depicted in Yowis Ben film descriptively. Data were gathered from the dialogue in the first Yowis Ben film. Then, data were analyzed using code-mixing, code-switching, and language survival theory. The analysis shows that the Javanese language can survive because the community realizes it as part of its identity. Moreover, it can survive because it is used in multilingualism.

Keywords: basa walikan; code-mixing; code-switching; language maintenance

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INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, media are important parts of people’s lives. People cannot separate themselves from media like television, YouTube, social media (WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, and so on), and online publications and articles on the internet. Through media, people get much information for academic, business, and leisure purposes. Media provide details on how the world works and how people interact with others. Drama, film, and advertisements are examples of media content that give information about current the condition of the world, the interactions between people, and other social realities (Gauntlett, 2008).

Like other media, film has transformed world knowledge through various categorizations, genres, domains of inquiry, various techniques of representation, intervention, and provocation. The film, with its diverse assumptions and goals, portrays and investigates how people think about things in the world, the interactions between people, and other social realities (Gauntlett, 2008).

Because film represents social reality and can develop knowledge, it can be used to see the social realities in certain countries. In Indonesia, the diversity of its society is reflected in Indonesian comedic films. This portrayal can be observed in issues such as socioeconomic distinctions and ethnic stereotypes. The living dynamics of Indonesians with diverse ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds provide a basis for the formation of interesting things in interactions among community members (Briandana & Dwityas, 2018).

Realizing that the diverse society in Indonesia is reflected in comedic films, this article takes a film entitled Yowis Ben as the object of the study. Yowis Ben is a comedic drama that consists of four films namely Yowis Ben which was produced in 2018, Yowis Ben 2 which was produced in 2019, and Yowis Ben 3 and Yowis Ben Finale which were produced in 2021. These four films focused on a band called Yowis Ben and the struggle of the band members to be successful. The most interesting thing about these films is the use of the Javanese language in the majority of the dialogue of the films. The setting of the films was in Malang, East Java so the Javanese language used in these films is Javanese with East Java dialects. An example of East Java dialects can be seen in using the pronoun koen which means you. This pronoun is sed in Surabaya, Malang, and the surrounding cities. Meanwhile, in Central Java, Yogyakarta, and cities on the border of Central Java and East Java, people use the pronoun kowe to say you (Prastiyono, Fahmilda, & Latief, 2021).

The use of Javanese language in most of the dialogue of those four Yowis Ben films is the reason for choosing Yowis Ben film, which was produced in 2018 (Yowis Ben I), as the object of the study. That film was chosen because it reflects the survival of the Javanese language with East Java dialects. The first film was chosen among all four films because this film portrayed the use of code-mixing, code-switching, and basa walikan. These three language phenomena show the way the Javanese language with East Java dialects survives in an urban city called Malang. Unlike the first film, the three other films only portrayed code-mixing and code-switching so the language phenomena depicted in the three films are not complete. Therefore, they cannot show the whole Javanese language phenomena in Malang.

There are a lot of studies on Yowis Ben films and ten are cited here. In 2019, Agustina & Pristiwiati talked about the violation of politeness principles in Yowis Ben film; Wicaksono & Qorib talked about moral messages in Yowis Ben film; Fatmawati & Setiawan talked about the translation process of cultural words in Yowis Ben I film. Next, in 2020, Tutik & Rivai talked about the deixis analysis in Yowis Ben II film. In 2021, Handayani talked about the representation of East Java society in Yowis Ben film;
Prastiyono, Fahmilda, & Latief talked about pronouns, personal titles, and varieties of Java-Indonesian Language in *Yowis Ben* the Series. In 2022, Priyanto, et al., talked about the diglossia and bilingualism analysis of *Yowis Ben* Film; Sari, Jupriono, & Danadharga talked about the textual analysis of the representation of Arek culture in *Yowis Ben III* film; Sulistyawati analyzed the code switching and code mixing in *Yowis Ben* 2018 movie. In 2023, Saputra & Hariyanto analyzed the representation of Suroboyoan Language in *Yowis Ben I* movie.

Those ten studies did not talk about the survival of the Javanese language. Unlike previous studies, this article aims to analyze the survival of the Javanese language as depicted in *Yowis Ben* film, so this article can give new knowledge on the existing studies. Although the setting of *Yowis Ben* film was in Malang, a city whose citizens speak Javanese, the study of the survival of the Javanese language is still important. It is because Malang can be considered an urban city. As an urban city, Malang is visited by people from various regions throughout Indonesia and abroad. Malang, the second largest city in East Java province, has several quality universities, making it a destination for young people to continue their higher education. Apart from that, Malang also maintains its cultural heritage since the colonial era. This also attracts domestic and foreign tourists to visit this city.

Even though the Javanese are still the largest population in Malang, the arrival of students and tourists from various regions means that the Javanese language, especially the East Java dialects of the Javanese language, is not the only language used in Malang. Apart from Bahasa Indonesia as the national and official language, English is also taught in schools and used when serving foreign tourists. Languages from other regions, including Mandarin, are also used by community groups living in Malang. The reality of the Javanese language which is not the only language used in Malang is portrayed well and presented hilariously in *Yowis Ben* film. The portrait of social reality regarding the use of the East Java dialects of the Javanese language in *Yowis Ben* film shows that this language can still survive along with other languages.

**Language Maintenance**

Before talking about language maintenance, knowing why language needs to survive is important. Language needs to survive because it can die. The languages that are critical or endangered are traditional or indigenous. There are four reasons why indigenous languages die or disappear. First, there are no more speakers of that language. It happens because the older generation does not teach the language to the younger generations. Second, the language speakers find that speaking indigenous languages puts them in unfortunate conditions. It is usually related to earn money for a living. Third, the language speakers do not believe that their traditional language is their unique identity. Fourth, when the indigenous languages are not transmitted from parents to children, the number of speakers decreases as time goes by. When the one and only speaker left passes away, the languages will automatically not be used (Almurashi, 2017).

Those four reasons happen because of three factors. First, they happen because of natural calamities like earthquakes, floods, and droughts. These disasters can cause death thereby reducing the number of speakers of indigenous languages. Second, they happen because of man-made calamities like an intervention of new equipment or weaponry, agricultural development, population expansion to new territory, or religious or secular imperialism. The third factor is colonization and globalization (Fernando, Valijärvi, & Goldstein, 2010). It can be seen clearly in the use of English as the international language because the United States is the leader in economic and political matters. Moreover, the long history of human civilization has proved that colonialization makes the native people forget and leave their native languages.

To prevent the extinction of the indigenous languages, some methods can be done namely creating orthographies, dictionaries, and language-learning materials,
promoting positive attitudes toward an endangered language both outside and within the community, planning linguistic programs, and introducing and enforcing linguistic policies. To protect the indigenous languages, every community should realize that they can survive if they can adapt to their surroundings, have means for achieving their goals, are integrated, and can protect their identity. Meanwhile, people outside the community can also preserve indigenous languages by documenting the languages, giving economic and political support, and practicing multilingualism (Fernando, Valijärvi, & Goldstein, 2010; Subiyantoro, 2014).

Five studies show that those methods can make indigenous languages survive. First, a study by Subiyantoro (2014) mentioned that the Javanese language can survive in New Caledonia in the form of linguistic hybridity. Linguistic hybridity can be seen in code-mixing and code-switching. Moreover, the influence of the official language of New Caledonia, French, creates a unique characteristic of the Javanese language used in New Caledonia that is different from the Javanese language used in Indonesia.

Second, in Singapore, the efforts to revitalize the Kristang language were started in 2016 by a non-profit community-based, intergenerational, multiracial project namely Kodah Kristang. It has successfully rekindled community and public interest in the language. There were more than 400 people, including heritage speakers, children, and many people from outside the Portuguese-Eurasian community, have taken part in ongoing free Kodrah Kristang classes, while another 1,400 attended the inaugural Kristang Language Festival in May 2017. The initiative and its associated Portuguese-Eurasian community are unique in that they are located in the highly urbanized setting of Singapore, have a relatively low reliance on financial support, have visible, if cautious, positive interest from the Singapore state, have a multiracial orientation and set of goals that embrace and move beyond the language's original community of primarily Portuguese-Eurasian speakers, and are led by a multiracial youth-led core team (Wong, 2019).

Third, the Bajo language in the Tinanggea coast of Konawe Selatan regency still survived because it is still used in the home setting, Bajo people have language loyalty, the coastal environment is well conserved and used as a source of life, and the Bajo community has conservative conduct (Badara, et al., 2019). Fourth, research in the Philippines shows that indigenous languages extinction might happen if they are not preserved and maintained. Moreover, indigenous languages’ preservation and maintenance are needed to achieve diversification and cultural awareness of various communities in this country (Lantaya, et al., 2021). Fifth, research shows that the Panjabi language may be preserved in the Sikh community in Malaysia if parents make an effort to guide their children and stress the importance of speaking their mother tongue. The Panjabi language is an essential but endangered aspect of cultural heritage that must be preserved for future generations. Researchers predict that if aggressive actions to preserve the language are not taken, the Panjabi language will decline to the point of extinction (Kaur, Kaur, & Kaur, 2023).

Besides those five studies, Almurashi (2017) mentioned that media and technology can be used to preserve a language. This statement is suitable with the fact that Yowis Ben films use Javanese language in most of the dialogues in the films. The use of the Javanese language in the films depicts the social reality that the Javanese language can survive in an urban city called Malang. In this case, the film is the media used to preserve the Javanese language, Javanese with East Java dialects in particular.

**Code-Mixing and Code-Switching**

The phenomenon of code choice happens in two forms namely code-mixing and code-switching. The code here refers to the method of communicating a thing through language utilizing a specific dialect, style, register, or variation of language. Code-mixing and code-switching occur in everyday life, such as discussions, events such as speeches, media (including mass and electronic media),
seminars, and others (Wibowo, Yuniasih, & Nelfianti, 2017).

The phenomenon of blending various languages within a single talk is known as code-mixing (Pratapa & Choudhury, 2021). According to Pieter Muysken, there are three types of code-mixing namely insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization. Insertion is the process of inserting lexical elements or complete constituents from one language into the structure of another. This is an example of one-way language influence. The changing between structures from other languages is referred to as alternation. On a solely observational level, congruent lexicalization is the combination of terms from various lexical inventories into a common grammatical structure. The grammatical structure of the sentence is influenced by both languages and is frequently shared (Moyer, 2002).

The study of code-switching refers to changes in a spoken language that occur both across and within sentence boundaries (Panhwar & Buriro, 2020). Gumperz (1982) proposed six functions of code-switching namely quotation, addressee specification, interjections, reiteration, message qualification, and personalization versus objectification. Moreover, according to Gardner-Chloros (2009), three factors cause code-switching to occur. First, are the independent factors which are not tied to specific speakers and circumstances in which code-switching is used. Here, the speakers of all relevant varieties in a given community are impacted by factors such as economic market forces, prestige and covert prestige, power relations, and the associations of each variety with a particular context or way of life. Second, are dependent factors that are tied to the speakers, both as individuals and as members of specific groups, namely skill in each language variety, social networks and interactions, attitudes and ideologies, self-perception, and perception of others. Third, are factors within the conversation in which the code-switching occurs. Code-switching is a crucial conversational technique for speakers, giving them additional options beyond those provided to monolinguals to shape their speech.

**Basa Walikan**

*Basa walikan* is found in Jogja and Malang. However, *basa walikan* in Malang is different from *basa walikan* in Jogja because *basa walikan* in Malang does not simply reverse syllables. According to the history, *basa walikan* in Malang was founded during the Gerilya Rakyat Kota (GKR) struggle to defend the proclamation of Indonesian independence. At that time, *basa walikan* functioned as a secret communication tool between fellow fighters and at the same time served as an identity to know who was a friend and who was an enemy. *Basa walikan* turned out to be effectively used during the proclamation struggle because a lot of Dutch spies also used Javanese. The use of *basa walikan* would minimize the leakage of the guerrillas’ struggle strategies into the hands of the Dutch colonialists (Rachmawaty, 2012).

After the independence struggle until the present day, Malang people still use *basa walikan* in their daily communication. It has four functions for Malang people: an identifier that a person is a Malang person, a distinction between Malang people and Javanese people from other regions, a unifier of Malang society, and a Malang-an identity. Malang’s typical *basa walikan* has a special characteristic, namely reversing every word backward. The words reversed can come from the Javanese language and/or Bahasa Indonesia. Basa Walikan is used by reversing each word in the sentence while the sentence structure remains the same as the original (Hanggoro, 2016). Table 1 below shows some words from *basa walikan*.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Original Words</th>
<th>Basa Walikan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sepeda (Bahasa Indonesia)</td>
<td>Adepes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Motor (Bahasa Indonesia)</td>
<td>Rotom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rumah (Bahasa Indonesia)</td>
<td>Hamur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Surabaya (Bahasa Indonesia)</td>
<td>Ayabarus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Malang</td>
<td>Ngalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bakso (Bahasa Indonesia)</td>
<td>Oskab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Roti (Bahasa Indonesia)</td>
<td>Itor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tidur (Bahasa Indonesia)</td>
<td>Rudit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Makan (Bahasa Indonesia)</td>
<td>Nakam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In sentences, it is common to use *basa walikan* words that come from both the Javanese language and Bahasa Indonesia. An example is *Nakam di rayabi, utapes nyelang, helom nunut, lha umak apais?* The original sentence of that *basa walikan* sentence is *Makan dibayari, sepatu nyelang, moleh nunut, lha kamu siapa?* or in standard Bahasa Indonesia *Makan dibayari, sepatu pinjam, pulang nebeng, lha kamu siapa?* or in English is more or less *Who are you to ask someone to pay for your food, to lend you his/her shoes, to take you home?* Although reversing words to form *basa walikan* is common in Malang, not all words can be reversed backward. To be able to reverse the words, the aesthetic factor should be maintained, so that they remain comfortable when heard. For example, *rawon* if reversed into *nowar* is uncomfortable to listen to. Therefore, it remains with the original words, namely *rawon* (Fiaji, 2021).

About the aesthetic factor when reversing words backward, the word *saudara* or brother in English, cannot be reversed into *araduas*. The *basa walikan* word for *saudara* is *arades*. Next, *Basa Walikan* develops in line with the development of its speakers. One example is the word *bohong* which means lie in English. The *basa walikan* word *ngohob* was originally used. However, in the early 1970s, the word *pesi* and *awad* appeared. Since then, the word *ngohob* is no longer used and replaced by the word *pesi* or *awad* so that to say you are lying in basa walikan is *umak pesi* or *umak awad*, not *umak ngohob* (Rachmawaty, 2012). Therefore, when someone says *araduas* instead of *arades*, or *umak ngohob* instead of *umak pesi* or *umak awad*, Malang people can know that the person who says it is not a native person of Malang. In these two cases, *basa walikan* can show the identity of the Malang people.
that no more person speaks that language. To prevent that from happening, it is important to ensure that the young generation learn and speak the traditional language. In the case of Bayu Skak and its film, *Yowis Ben*, the language being taught to the young generations is the Javanese language. In Bayu Skak’s words on his personal YouTube video, he said that he does not want the young generation to forget Javanese culture.

Following Bayu Skak’s motivation in writing the script and producing the film, *Yowis Ben* indeed shows Javanese culture in the daily life of the Malang people. In the context of the Javanese language used in Malang, is different from the Javanese language used in Yogyakarta and Central Java. In the film, the difference can be seen from the use of typical vocabularies like *koen*, *lambemu*, *mbois*, and *jancuk*.

These words are typical words of East Java dialects because in Yogyakarta and Central Java, the word *mbois*, which means cool to talk about boys’ appearance in English, is not used and the word *kowe* is used instead of *koen* to say you. Moreover, the word *jancuk* is often considered a bad word because it is used to swear to others. However, for East Java people, the word *jancuk* is considered the most important word in communication. On one side, that word is a part of speech that has a bad meaning and is intended to say bad things or to swear. However, the meaning of *jancuk* itself changes when the pronunciation has a different emphasis and has a lot of meanings such as expressing admiration and a sign of closeness between two people (Saputra & Hariyanto, 2023).

The film portrays that the typical vocabularies of the Javanese language used in East Java exist together with other languages namely Bahasa Indonesia and English. It fulfills the theory on language survival mentioned by Fernando, Valijärvi, & Goldstein (2010) and Subiyantoro (2014) that practicing multilingualism can prevent the extinction of a language.

Besides those typical vocabularies, the film also portrays code-mixing and code-switching. Table 2 below shows code-mixing and code-switching from the first *Yowis Ben* film.

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Utterance</th>
<th>Code-Mixing/Code-Switching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Malah ‘nasehatin’ aku. (07:04)</td>
<td>Code-Mixing (Insertion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>‘Department store’ iku dimulai teko diskon sing gede-gedean. (10:54-10:57)</td>
<td>Code-Mixing (Insertion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Pertama-tama dalam band, ‘yo kudu onok personil e’. (18:01-18:04)</td>
<td>Code-Switching (Message Qualification)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sangar, sangar.. ‘welcome to the band. (20:09-20:13)</td>
<td>Code-Switching (Message Qualification)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Kamu lagi ngapain kok</td>
<td>Code-Mixing (Insertion)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It can be seen from the table above that code-mixing happens in three different codes namely Javanese language, Bahasa Indonesia, and English. One Bahasa Indonesia word is inserted into a Javanese sentence in utterances
number 1 and 5. English words are inserted into a Javanese sentence in utterances number 2 and 3. A Javanese word is added to a Bahasa Indonesia sentence in utterances number 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, and 16. An English word is added to a Javanese sentence in utterance number 11.

The table above also gives information about the code-switching used in the first Yowis Ben film. Utterances number 4, 8, and 9 show code-switching which functioned as a message qualification. In utterance number 4 the speaker changes from Javanese to Bahasa Indonesia, in utterance number 8 the speaker changes from Bahasa Indonesia to Javanese, and in utterance number 9 the speaker changes from Bahasa Indonesia to English. These three changes function as a message qualification because the changes made by the speaker complete the utterances by providing extra information to make the listener understand the message of the utterances.

Next, in utterance number 14 the speaker changes from Bahasa Indonesia to Javanese to yield to his friend. Therefore, the code-switching in utterance number 14 functions as an interjection. In utterance number 16 the speaker uses Javanese language to respond to the utterance of the previous speaker. The speaker says nggih which means yes to give his agreement. Therefore, the code-switching here functions as a reiteration because an agreement shows that the speaker has the same opinion as the previous speaker. In other words, the speaker reiterates what the previous speaker said. In dialogues 17 and 18, the speakers change from Bahasa Indonesia to Javanese when they talk to other members of Yowis Ben band. Dialogues 17 and 18 also show that the changes happen when they talk about someone else named Susan. Therefore, the code-switching in dialogues 17 and 18 functions as an addressee specification.

At last, to represent the Javanese language used by the Malang people, this film uses basa walikan. Basa walikan is the language variety that appears the least in the first Yowis Ben film. There are only three basa walikan words in this film namely tilis (03:08, 65:51), trencem (62:22, 62:30, 65:52), and tahes (62:44, 65:54). Those words come from the words silit, mencret, and sehat. In English, they mean anus, diarrhea, and healthy. The word sehat is good and has a positive meaning. However, the words silit and mencret are dirty and disgusting when they are uttered in daily conversation. However, for Malang people, reversing these words into tilis and trencem is common and they do not feel disgusted or impolite. It is common for them to say tilis trencem instead of diare or mencret. Although the film only portrays three basa walikan words, they represent the existence of basa walikan in Malang.

Based on the explanation above, it can be seen that Yowis Ben film portrays the Javanese language used by Malang people in three ways namely typical vocabulary, code-mixing, code-switching, and basa walikan. The typical vocabulary and basa walikan become distinguishing characteristics that differentiate the Javanese language used in Malang from the Javanese language from other regions. Meanwhile, code-mixing and code-switching in the Javanese language, Bahasa Indonesia, and English show a mechanism of vitality. This follows Gardner-Chloros’s (2009) statement that code-switching can occur as a mechanism of vitality. Moreover, practicing multilingualism has shown its ability to make a language survive. Code-mixing and code-switching are two ways to practice multilingualism to prevent the extinction of a language.

Last but not least, a language is the identity of a community. As portrayed in the first Yowis Ben film, the Javanese language in East Java dialects, typical vocabulary, and basa walikan are the identity of the Malang people. They are the identity of the Malang people because they do not appear in other regions whose people speak Javanese. The portrayal of these language phenomena in the film shows that the Malang people, as a community, can protect their identity. It is in line with the language survival theory which states that a community can survive if the community can protect its identity, including its language.
CONCLUSION

The discussion above shows that Yowis Ben film represents Javanese culture in everyday life in Malang. The representation of Javanese culture that is specifically highlighted in the film is the use of Javanese with East Java dialects which is indicated by typical vocabularies that are not used by Javanese speakers from other regions. Apart from that, there is also the basa walikan. It is a typical language variation from Malang. Finally, the film shows the use of code-mixing and code-switching in Javanese, Bahasa Indonesia, and English. These language phenomena show how the Javanese language survives in an urban city called Malang. The success of the Javanese language in surviving occurred because the Malang people realized that the typical vocabularies and basa walikan are their identity. In addition, Javanese with East Java dialects can survive because its speakers use the language in a multilingual situation through code-mixing and code-switching.

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