



Linguistic hybridity between Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia in contemporary Javanese songs



Zulisih Maryani ^{a,1*}, Rafeah Legino ^{b,2}, Pibool Waijittragum ^{c,3}

^a Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta, Bantul, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta 55188, Indonesia

^b Department of Fine Art, Faculty of Art & Design, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

^c Visual Communication Design Department, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, 1 U-Thong Nok Road, Dusit, Bangkok 10300 Thailand

¹ zulisih_maryani@isi.ac.id; ² rafeahl@uitm.edu.my; ³ pibool.wa@ssru.ac.th

* Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the phenomenon of linguistic hybridity between Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia in contemporary Javanese songs. It aims to identify the linguistic forms, aesthetic and cultural functions, and the evolving patterns of language use that distinguish traditional from modern song compositions. Using a qualitative descriptive method grounded in a literature-based approach, the research analyses selected Javanese song lyrics that demonstrate hybrid linguistic structures. The findings reveal three major forms of hybridity at the levels of words, phrases, and clauses or sentences. These hybrid forms serve multiple functions: (1) aesthetic, through rhymic and phonetic harmony; (2) expressive, through creative expressions unattainable within a single language; and (3) cultural identity, by reinforcing Javanese characteristics amid the influence of Bahasa Indonesia. Comparison between traditional macapat compositions and contemporary songs highlights a shift from strict monolingual use to flexible bilingual creativity, reflecting an ongoing negotiation of cultural identity in an era of modernisation and globalisation. This study enriches the understanding of how linguistic hybridity contributes to the preservation and evolution of Javanese artistic expression.



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1. Introduction

Hybridity, as defined in cultural and linguistic studies, refers to the interaction between two or more linguistic or cultural systems that produces new forms while retaining traces of the originals [1]. In the Javanese context, linguistic hybridity arises from prolonged contact between Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia, especially in creative forms such as song lyrics. This phenomenon illustrates how traditional linguistic expressions coexist and adapt within modern communicative and artistic contexts. Javanese-Bahasa Indonesia hybridity appears at various linguistic levels, phonological, lexical, and syntactic, reflecting both linguistic innovation and sociocultural adaptation [2]. Examples include *bukane* (from *bukan* + *-e*) and *super resik* (*super* + *resik*), where grammatical and stylistic blending enhances aesthetic value and artistic expression. Such hybrid forms serve not merely as code-mixing but as deliberate artistic strategies that expand audience reach while preserving Javanese cultural identity. While numerous studies have explored hybridity in other contexts, such as English-based creoles and bilingual advertising, research on Javanese song lyrics remains limited. This study fills that gap by systematically identifying the forms and functions of linguistic hybridity in Javanese songs and comparing traditional and contemporary compositions [3]. It seeks to answer two questions: (1) How is linguistic hybridity expressed in Javanese song lyrics?; (2) How do patterns of hybridity differ between traditional and contemporary Javanese songs? The study contributes to understanding how Javanese artists negotiate between tradition and modernity. As globalization influences cultural production, linguistic hybridity in Javanese songs becomes an adaptive strategy, preserving ancestral values while embracing creative

innovation and audience diversity. Thus, Javanese songs function both as repositories of cultural memory and as evolving platforms for linguistic and artistic expression.

Previous research has examined similar linguistic hybridity in other languages and cultural contexts. Caroline et al. [4] analyzed hybrid language in GO-JEK's "*Munculnya Gozali*" advertisement, while Saharudin et al. [5] discussed hybridity in the poetic text *Wasiat Renungan Masa Pengalaman Baru* (WRMPB). Lewin [6] studied phonological and lexical hybridity in Manx, and Spitulnik [7] investigated linguistic heteroglossia in Urban Bemba. Sanchez-Stockhammer [2] identified hybridization processes across language levels, and Demska [3] examined multilingual co-existence in linguistic landscapes. Hopkins et al. [8], Stenzel [9], and Puttaert [10] explored similar phenomena in English, East Tukano, and West Flemish, respectively. This research, therefore, advances existing knowledge by situating linguistic hybridity within Indonesian cultural production. It demonstrates that the interweaving of Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia enriches creative expression and sustains cultural continuity in the contemporary era. The hybridity of Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia presents new opportunities for cultural hybridization that can enrich and renew Javanese song lyrics without compromising the essence of Javanese cultural values. With this linguistic hybridity, creativity can emerge to produce new forms of expression that fulfil functions and aesthetics rich in cultural meaning. As stated by Humaedi [11], language provides its own interactive and creative space. Thus, through this linguistic hybridity, Javanese song lyrics in the contemporary era will become more open to achieving beauty, understanding, and a wider audience while still paying attention to Javanese cultural values. Theoretically, this research is important for filling the gap in the study of language hybridity, which has so far focused more on the contexts of conversation and social media. Through an interdisciplinary approach that combines linguistics, sociolinguistics, and cultural theory, this research presents a new understanding of how song lyrics function as cultural texts, serving as a hybrid space where identity negotiation occurs. This research shows that the mixing of Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but also a socio-cultural one in the realm of contemporary art. This research is expected to broaden the scope of hybridity studies into the local Indonesian context and enrich the theoretical discourse on identity in multilingual societies.

Hybridity is the occurrence of two or more cultural, linguistic, or identity elements mixing, producing a new form that is not entirely identical to any of its original elements [12]. Meanwhile, language is a symbolic system used by humans to communicate, reflecting the social and cultural reality of the community that uses it [13]. In his study, Gaibrois describes linguistic hybridity as a phenomenon that occurs when two or more languages interact and mix in a particular context, resulting in a form of communication that contains elements from various languages [7]. In the context of songs, linguistic hybridity occurs when the lyrics combine aspects from two or more languages, whether through word choice, sentence structure, or expressions characteristic of the various languages used [14]. This phenomenon is not only a sign of linguistic diversity, which enriches the artistic expression in the song, but also reflects the social and cultural dynamics behind the creative process [15]. The use of various languages in song lyrics may be a response to encounters and interactions between different cultures, where artists attempt to bridge or even celebrate these differences [16].

Several studies have explored the characteristics of language hybridity. Language hybridity has several factors, including flexibility and dynamism in language use [17]. Three trends were found in the study. First, language hybridity often shows a transition from one language to another, whether in vocabulary, grammar, or sentence structure, reflecting the speaker's ability to move between different language codes [18]. Second, language hybridity tends to emerge in the context of social interaction, namely, encounters between different cultural groups, creating space for linguistic innovation [19]. Third, linguistic hybridity can also be seen as a reflection of the multicultural identity of individuals or groups, whereby elements from various languages are used simultaneously to express complex and diverse social realities [20]. Songs are a form of artistic expression that use sound and melody to convey feelings, thoughts, or stories to listeners [21]. In the context of Javanese culture, Javanese songs refer to songs that are traditionally or contemporarily rooted in Javanese values and

aesthetics, in terms of melody, lyrics, and instruments used [22]. Javanese songs often serve as a medium for conveying profound moral messages, in which ethical values, local wisdom, and wise teachings are passed down from generation to generation through their lyrics [23]. In addition, these songs often feature mythological stories rich in symbolism and philosophical meaning, depicting ancestral tales laden with life lessons and reflections on the relationship between humans, nature, and the divine [24]. Not only that, but Javanese songs also serve as a reflection of the daily lives of the Javanese people, depicting the activities, customs, and social interactions that occur within the community [25]. Thus, Javanese songs not only serve as entertainment but also as a means of passing on Javanese culture and identity to future generations.

Javanese songs have distinctive characteristics, both in terms of musicality and lyrics. Musically, Javanese songs often use pentatonic scales known as *slendro* and *pelog* [26], [27]. This gives the melodies a unique and distinctive feel. Traditional instruments such as *gamelan*, *sitar*, and *rebab* are employed, lending these songs their own texture and color [28]. In terms of lyrics, Javanese songs tend to be rich in symbolic meaning, with the use of metaphors, similes, and traditional expressions being very dominant [29]. In addition, the lyrics often describe Javanese values, such as simplicity, modesty, and local wisdom, which reflect the Javanese people's outlook on life [30]. Contemporary society refers to social groups in the modern era characterized by the dynamics of globalization, technology, and rapid social change [31]. A study by Widiastuti reveals that contemporary society in the Javanese context faces various challenges arising from modernization, such as globalization, urbanization, and rapid technological development [32]. However, this society has not entirely abandoned its cultural roots [33]. Instead, they strive to preserve and maintain traditional elements that characterise Javanese identity, such as values of politeness, cooperation, and rituals and customs inherited from their ancestors [34]. Amidst the ever-flowing tide of change, contemporary Javanese society is engaged in a process of adaptation, whereby it accepts and integrates external influences into its lives, while carefully considering which ones are compatible with its cultural values [35]. This reflects the balance they continue to maintain between welcoming innovation and change, and preserving the cultural heritage that has been their collective identity from one generation to the next [36]. Contemporary Javanese society exhibits complex characteristics, reflecting a blend of tradition and modernity [37]. Firstly, there is a tendency to preserve traditional values and local culture, such as politeness, cooperation, and respect for ancestors, which are still highly regarded [38], [39]. Second, contemporary Javanese society is also open to innovation and change, as reflected in the adoption of modern technology, increased social mobility, and participation in the global economy [40]. Third, a dynamic identity emerges as a result of interaction with outside cultures, namely that contemporary Javanese society must navigate between maintaining its Javanese identity and adapting to the new realities brought about by globalization and modernization [41].

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach supported by a literature-based research design to analyse linguistic hybridity between Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia in contemporary Javanese song lyrics. The literature study method was selected as it facilitates mapping and classification of hybrid linguistic patterns through textual interpretation. According to Webster and Watson, this approach enables researchers to identify patterns, commonalities, and differences across previous works while revealing conceptual and empirical gaps that warrant further exploration [42]. The primary aim of this design is to interpret language use as a form of artistic and sociocultural expression, rather than to quantify linguistic occurrences. Thus, the focus rests on the semantic, morphological, and sociolinguistic features of hybridity within artistic texts.

2.2. Unit of Analysis and Data Sources

The unit of analysis comprises linguistic elements that exhibit hybridity, including words, phrases, and clauses, within Javanese song lyrics. These hybrid units represent the integration of Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia in both traditional and contemporary songs. Data were obtained from publicly available Javanese song lyrics sourced from YouTube videos and verified through the lyric database on <https://lirik.kapanlagi.com>. The *Bausastra Jawa* (Javanese Dictionary) and the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI) were used to identify and distinguish linguistic origins and structures from both languages. This selection ensures representativeness across different stylistic eras, traditional compositions (*e.g.*, *macapat*), and modern songs, reflecting evolving linguistic creativity and cultural adaptation.

2.3. Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using listening (*simak*) and note-taking (*catat*) techniques, as established in linguistic research methodology. The process followed three main stages:

- Listening (*Simak*): Researchers listened to Javanese songs available on YouTube, focusing on lyrics that displayed linguistic mixing. The tapping (*sadap*) and free-listening (*simak bebas libat cakap*) techniques were employed to observe hybrid linguistic usage without direct participant interaction.
- Verification and Transcription: Each lyric was cross-checked between the YouTube source and the lyric website to ensure textual accuracy. Variations in dialect, spelling, or pronunciation were standardised based on the prevailing Javanese and Indonesian orthographic systems.
- Note-taking (*Catat*): Hybrid linguistic units were systematically documented on data cards, noting their structural level (word, phrase, clause) and contextual meaning. This documentation formed the foundation for classification and analysis.

The listening and note-taking methods ensured objectivity by maintaining fidelity to authentic language use within song contexts, free from researcher bias.

2.4. Data Analysis Procedure

Data were analyzed qualitatively through three systematic phases. First, the identification stage involved a careful examination of the transcribed lyrics to detect hybrid linguistic units, with particular attention to phonological, morphological, and syntactic features. Second, in the classification stage, the identified data were organized into three main categories: hybridity at the level of words, phrases, and clauses or sentences, each of which was further analyzed in terms of its linguistic form and functional purpose, including aesthetic, expressive, and cultural identity functions. Finally, the interpretation stage focused on examining the meanings and sociocultural implications of these hybrid forms by comparing their use in traditional and contemporary songs, thereby revealing patterns of continuity and transformation in linguistic practice. To enhance understanding, data presentation combined informal description and formal visualisation. Following Jati Kesuma [43], informal presentations employed descriptive language accessible to readers, while formal presentations used systematic tables, charts, and diagrams. The integration of both approaches allowed a clear depiction of linguistic patterns while maintaining analytical depth.

2.5. Presentation and Validation of Finding

The results of the data analysis were presented in charts, tables, and textual descriptions, highlighting the occurrence of hybrid forms. Each visual representation was supported by accompanying explanations in standard Indonesian for clarity. Foreign terms and Javanese lexical items were written according to official orthographic conventions. Validation was ensured through data triangulation, cross-referencing hybrid linguistic findings with both dictionaries and repeated listening. This process verified the authenticity of linguistic mixing and minimised interpretation bias. Overall, this methodological design provides a comprehensive framework for understanding linguistic hybridity in Javanese song lyrics as both a linguistic and cultural phenomenon, reflecting the interplay between tradition and modernity in contemporary Javanese expression.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Overview of Findings

The analysis identified three primary forms of linguistic hybridity between Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia found in contemporary Javanese songs: (1) hybridity at the word level; (2) hybridity at the phrase level, and (3) hybridity at the clause or sentence level. These categories reflect how hybrid linguistic expressions function as creative strategies that merge cultural identity with linguistic innovation. The study examined a representative corpus of Javanese songs from YouTube, revealing the dynamic interplay between traditional linguistic norms and modern communicative tendencies. Traditional compositions (*e.g.*, *macapat*) show linguistic consistency and cultural preservation, while contemporary songs integrate Bahasa Indonesia expressions to enhance accessibility, rhythm, and emotional tone.

3.2. Word-Level Hybridity

At the word level, hybridity occurs when Javanese root words combine with Bahasa Indonesia affixes or vice versa. Examples include *bukane* (*bukan* + *-e*) and *gawean* (*gawe* + *-an*). These forms indicate syntactic fusion and semantic adaptation. This type of hybridity demonstrates grammatical blending and creative simplification, serving as a linguistic bridge between younger speakers familiar with both languages. It also mirrors sociolinguistic shifts where Bahasa Indonesia increasingly influences informal communication among Javanese communities. The blending enhances the songs' rhythmic structure and creates a familiar linguistic identity that resonates with bilingual audiences. This aligns with Ferguson's theory of diglossia, where language mixing functions pragmatically to connect speakers of diverse proficiency levels.

3.3. Phrase-Level Hybridity

Phrase-level hybridity is characterized by collocations or compound phrases combining elements of both languages, such as *super resik* (*super* + *resik*, meaning "super clean") and *anti-laler* (*anti* + *laler*, meaning "fly repellent"). These hybrid phrases illustrate how foreign prefixes (*super*, *anti*, *ekstra*) are absorbed into Javanese structures to express modern ideas within a traditional idiom. The creative incorporation of Bahasa Indonesia (and in some cases, global loanwords) conveys urban modernity while maintaining local expressiveness. Culturally, this level of hybridity reveals a linguistic democratization, a shift where Javanese artists adopt national and international linguistic influences without erasing their cultural essence. The hybrid phrases serve as a metaphor for cultural negotiation between local authenticity and global identity.

3.4. Clause-Level Hybridity

Clause or sentence-level hybridity occurs when an entire phrase or sentence alternates between Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia. For instance, the switch in songs from Javanese expressions like *aku ora ngerti* (I don't understand) to Indonesian phrases such as *aku tidak tahu* (also "I don't know") demonstrates functional code-switching. This alternation is not arbitrary; it signifies emotional modulation and stylistic emphasis. In musical performance, shifting to *Bahasa Indonesia* often underscores universal sentiments, while reverting to Javanese adds intimacy and locality. Thus, clause-level hybridity contributes to both aesthetic diversity and identity expression, confirming that linguistic hybridity in song lyrics is as much an artistic decision as it is a communicative one. [Table 1](#) is a representative example of linguistic hybridity in contemporary Javanese songs.

Table 1. Table Representative Examples of Linguistic Hybridity in Contemporary Javanese Songs

Hybrid Expression	Type	Linguistic Composition	Meaning / Translation	Function
Bukane	Word	bukan (Ind.) + -e (Jav.)	"Not / it's not"	Cultural Identity – maintains Javanese suffixation while using the Indonesian root.
Gawean	Word	gawe (Jav.) + -an (Ind.)	"Work/task"	Aesthetic – blends root and affix to suit rhythm and rhyme.
Super resik	Phrase	super (Ind.) + resik (Jav.)	"Super clean"	Expressive – conveys modern

Hybrid Expression	Type	Linguistic Composition	Meaning / Translation	Function
				tone within traditional vocabulary.
Anti-laler	Phrase	anti (Ind.) + laler (Jav.)	"Fly repellent"	Aesthetic – creative collocation with playful modern imagery.
Aku ora ngerti, tapi aku tetap berjuang	Clause	Switch between Javanese (aku ora ngerti) and Indonesian (aku tetap berjuang)	"I don't understand, but I keep fighting."	Expressive & Identity – code-switching emphasizes emotion and resilience.
Kali iki kowe mesti bisa	Phrase	kali (Ind.) + iki (Jav.)	"This time, you can do it."	Cultural Identity – merges motivation with local tone.

3.5. Functional and Cultural Implication

From the analysis, three principal functions of linguistic hybridity emerge:

- Aesthetic Function: Enhances rhythm, rhyme, and sound harmony; hybrid constructions improve lyrical flow.
- Expressive Function: Allows artists to articulate emotions and ideas unavailable in a single language, enriching creative expression.
- Cultural Identity Function: Serves as a marker of contemporary Javanese identity, negotiating between tradition and modernity.

This triadic framework aligns with Bhabha's theory of hybridity, which views cultural expressions as third spaces, arenas where innovation and negotiation coexist. Javanese songs exemplify this by balancing traditional linguistic forms with national and global influences.

3.6. Comparison of Traditional and Contemporary Usage

A comparison between traditional and contemporary Javanese songs shows a gradual linguistic evolution.

- Traditional songs maintain *monolingual integrity*, emphasizing classical diction and fixed poetic forms.
- Contemporary songs, by contrast, exhibit fluidity, adopting Bahasa Indonesia vocabulary for accessibility and emotional nuance.

This transition illustrates how hybridity functions as cultural adaptation, ensuring the survival and relevance of Javanese music in the modern era. Linguistic innovation thus becomes a vehicle for both preservation and transformation of cultural identity.

3.7. Discussion Summary

Overall, linguistic hybridity in Javanese songs demonstrates how local cultural systems engage dynamically with national linguistic trends. Rather than eroding traditional identity, hybridity redefines it, enabling a dialogue between past and present. This phenomenon underscores that hybridity in Javanese songs is not merely a linguistic occurrence but a reflection of broader sociocultural resilience, where language becomes a living medium through which artists express continuity, creativity, and change.

4. Conclusion

This study examined the linguistic hybridity between Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia in contemporary Javanese songs, revealing that hybridity manifests at three levels, word, phrase, and clause. The findings show that the interaction of these two languages produces hybrid forms that are not merely linguistic innovations but also represent cultural negotiation and creative adaptation. At the word level, hybridity appears through affixation and blending that generate new lexical forms combining Javanese and Indonesian grammatical elements. At the phrase level, hybridity demonstrates how loanwords and Indonesian modifiers enrich Javanese expressions without eroding their local identity. Meanwhile, at the clause level, code-switching between Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia serves as an expressive and aesthetic tool to convey nuanced meanings, emotions, and rhythms. These linguistic practices collectively illustrate the aesthetic, expressive, and cultural identity functions of hybridity. They affirm that the fusion of Javanese and Indonesian elements contributes to lyrical beauty, emotional

diversity, and the preservation of cultural authenticity. This linguistic creativity not only enhances audience engagement but also ensures that traditional cultural values remain relevant in modern musical expression. Theoretically, this study strengthens Bhabha's concept of hybridity by demonstrating that the "third space" also exists within the domain of language and song. Contemporary Javanese songs become a cultural arena where tradition and modernity coexist, allowing artists to redefine identity while embracing linguistic flexibility. In conclusion, hybridity in Javanese songs represents more than language contact; it is a symbol of cultural resilience and creative transformation. The blending of Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia ensures that local cultural identity continues to evolve dynamically within the broader context of globalization and digital communication. Future research may extend this study by exploring hybridity across other regional languages or examining its reception among younger audiences as part of cultural continuity and innovation.

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