

# Sociolinguistic Representation of The Culture of The Deli Java Community In North Sumatra Province

*by dikkimiswanda@gmail.com 1*

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Sutikno, Zulayti Bint Zakaria, Abdulroman Mahir, Rahmat Kartolo, Enny Fitriani,  
Lusi Selvia Fitri, Asnawi

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CULTURAL HERITAGE | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Sociolinguistic Representation of The Culture of The Deli Java Community In North Sumatra Province

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\*Corresponding author: Sutikno, Universitas Muslim Nusantara Al-Washliyah Indonesia, Third Floor of the Postgraduate Building, Jalan Arca Building Teladan Stadium Medan Indonesia 20217, ORCID ID : <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1884-1943> E-mail: [sutikno@umnaw.ac.id](mailto:sutikno@umnaw.ac.id)

Reviewing editor:  
Timothy Clack, School of Anthropology & Museum Ethnography, University of Oxford, UK

Additional information is available at the end of the article

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Sutikno<sup>1</sup>, Zulayti<sup>1</sup>, Bint Zakaria<sup>2</sup>, Abdulroman<sup>1</sup>, Mahir<sup>3</sup>, Rahmat<sup>4</sup>, Kartolo<sup>4</sup>, Enny Fitriani<sup>5</sup>, Lusi Selvia Fitri<sup>6</sup>, Asnawi<sup>7</sup>

**Abstract:** Javanese and Malay Communities in North Sumatra. Language contact occurs in Javanese society and Malay society it gives rise to various language phenomena such as " language codes " and " code switching and code mixing symptoms ". Acculturation Javanese and Deli Malay culture that occurred resulted in a mixing of language understanding and belief values in the cultures of both parties. Furthermore, the location of this research was carried out in the province of North Sumatra in Deli Serdang district, Serdang Bedagai district, Langkat district and Batubara district, which are the largest places where the Malay tribe lives and has social contact with the Javanese tribe. This research method uses a qualitative paradigm with 112 resource persons, however, for efficiency and accuracy of research in this study, 60 resource persons were taken based on their expertise and character. The aim of the research is explained into several specific objectives which describe as follows: (1) Sociolinguistics of the culture of the Javanese Deli community seen from language symptoms. (2) Sociolinguistics of the culture of the Javanese Deli community seen from social symptoms. This research was carried out thoroughly with the following research results: (1) Deli Javanese is experiencing a language shift process. (2) The number and quality of Deli Javanese usage has decreased from its successors. (3) A shift occurred from the Ngoko language level to Indonesian. (4) There is a strong relationship between the decline in people's attitudes in North Sumatra towards cultural values and the use of the Deli Javanese language.

**Subjects:** Culture; History; Cultural Studies

**Keywords:** sociolinguistic representation, culture, Deli Javanese society, language and social phenomena



## 1. Introduction

The development of culture on the dynamics of people's lives is complex. It has existence, is sustainable, and also becomes a social heritage. The culture of a community group will not be protected from the influence of the culture of other groups, through contacts between groups or through a diffusion process. A social group will use a certain culture if that culture is useful for overcoming or meeting the demands it faces.

According to Koentjaraningrat (in Sumarto, 2019), the development of culture or culture is aimed at fulfilling the interests of human life because it is made by humans and also for humans. The definition further explained by EB Taylor (in Sumarto, 2019) is the complexity of knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and all the abilities and habits acquired by individuals as a unit of society. Every region, country, and wherever people live who come from various ethnic groups, races, and groups, should face assimilation to achieve change. When native or local communities and immigrants face this, all these situations will give rise to the phenomenon of majority and minority groups which will ultimately lead to cultural clashes with each other.

In sociology, cultural integrity is called assimilation. In the process, this creates a fusion of cultures, so that people from two or three groups that are being assimilated will experience the emergence of a single culture that is considered to be a common property. Assimilation will actually lead to the disappearance of several existing differences and will be replaced by the same cultural understanding, and will also be replaced by the same thoughts, behavior, and actions.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Representation

Representation is a thought or concept that links meaning and language. Representation can also be considered as the use of language to convey something that has a comprehensive meaning or convey insight to other people with a comprehensive meaning. Representation can also be considered an important part of the process of producing meaning and being changed by societal groups. (Stuart Hall, 1997 in Pranata, 2020).

Representation must be understood from the active and creative role of individuals who make sense of the world around them. Representation is a way to convey meaning to several things depicted through images or other forms on the screen or in several words. Representation is a linguistic event that is still valid today. In what way an individual is described can be explained using a language. With language, all types of representational actions are described by the media and broadcast through the news. Therefore, what deserves criticism is the use of language presented by the media. This process must be related to the use of language in writing facts and realities so that they are understood by the public (Eriyanto, 2011 in Fadul, 2019).

### 2.2 Culture

Culture in the anthropology dictionary is the same as customs, namely the magical-religious habits of the life of a native population which include cultural values, norms, laws, and interrelated rules, and then become a system or system. regulations that are established and cover all conceptions of the cultural system of culture to regulate social actions (Putra & Herbody, 2018). Culture is a similarity of material objects and ideas that originate from a long time ago but are still found today and have not been abandoned, damaged, or destroyed. Culture can also be understood as an accurate heritage or legacy of the past. On the other hand, a culture that occurs continuously is not implemented

intentionally or suddenly. Ideally, culture can produce new culture.

### 2.3 Deli Javanese Community

Malayan (in Harum, 2018) explains that the Javanese Deli Tribe sometimes called "Ja-del" is a group of people who since colonial times have been transported from the island of Java as contract laborers on plantations in North Sumatra. Meanwhile, Pelly (in Harum, 2018) emphasized that since 1931 Javanese tribes have been coming out of plantation areas while inhabiting villages and cities in East Sumatra, including Medan, the capital of North Sumatra Province.

Pelly (in Harum, 2018) said that in the new context and history called Deli, it is a means of communicating culture expressed in grammar, as well as norms that are considered as living guidelines for the Javanese Deli community in living life in their environment which is the result of adaptation to social life situations while on the plantation. This is also a way for the Javanese tribe to adapt, and assimilate in maintaining social relations and behavior as immigrants who migrate to other areas, and should uphold the norms and customs that apply in Deli or North Sumatra as the largest Malay community base in the archipelago.

The Javanese community in North Sumatra is better known as Java-Deli. The deli is not only a Malay cultural area but rather a meeting of various heterogeneous cultures and gave birth to a multicultural culture in the regions of North Sumatra, including Deli Serdang Regency, Serdang Bedagai Regency, Langkat Regency, and Batubara Regency which is the largest center of Javanese and Malay tribes that continue to grow, experiencing social contact in the province of North Sumatra. In line with its cultural meaning, Deli is considered a new location for giving birth to a new, cosmopolitan lifestyle, free from the ties of national cultural ties. Coming to Deli is considered to be coming to a dynamic, multicultural, open location, without the supervision of a particular culture and cosmopolitan at that time (Pelly in Harum, 2018).

Javanese society is one of the societies that is much liked by the Malay people, this is because the Javanese people have very good social behavior in adapting to the Malay society in North Sumatra. In principle, the Javanese people who live in North Sumatra always apply and implement the order of values. Javanese noble values, namely: personal order, harmonious order, harmonious order, polite order, respectful order, respectful order.

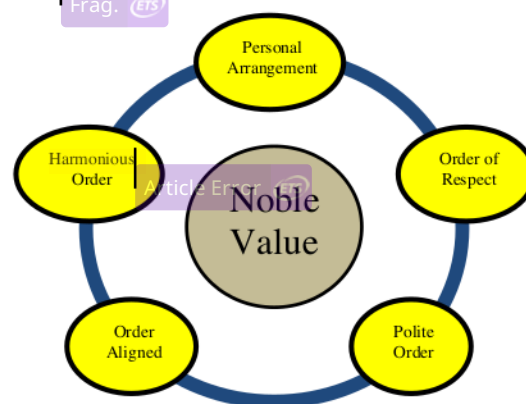


Figure 1: Concept of Javanese Life Order According to M. Suryadi

## 2.4 North Sumatra

Deli Serdang Regency, Serdang Bedagai Regency, Langkat Regency, and Batubara Regency are within the government area of North Sumatra Province in Indonesia. The residents of Deli Serdang Regency, Serdang Bedagai Regency, Langkat Regency, and Batubara Regency come from several ethnic groups including Javanese, Malay, Batak, and Karo. The majority of the population living in these four districts comes from the Javanese tribe. Most of them earn a living as farmers working on Perkebunan Nusantara (PTPN) IX land, but some work as laborers, traders, private employees, civil servants, and others.

The majority of Javanese live in Deli Serdang Regency, Serdang Bedagai Regency, Langkat Regency, and Batubara Regency as a result of the opening of tobacco plantations in the Deli Sultanate region, East Sumatra by foreign private companies collaborating with the Deli Sultanate. They came as coolies on tobacco plantations. Since then, tobacco plantations have been opened in the Martubung, Sunggal, Sunggal Beras, and Kelumpang areas (Sinar, 2019:25-26).

The Javanese Deli community is currently one of the majority ethnic groups in North Sumatra and its surroundings. Many Deli Javanese people live in the Medan city area and suburban areas such as Deli Serdang Regency, Serdang Bedagai Regency, Langkat Regency, and Batubara Regency.

## 2.5 Sociolinguistics

Humans as social creatures need to always interact with each other using language. Sociolinguistics studies language as it relates to the community of speakers. Chair and Leoni (in Ramadhan, 2020) stated that sociolinguistics is an interdisciplinary field of science that studies language about the use of that language in society.

Kridalaksana (in Afsan, 2020) states that sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that studies the relationship and mutual influence between language behavior and social behavior. As an object in sociolinguistics, language is not seen or detected as a language as is done by general linguistics, but is seen or detected as a means of interaction or communication in human society (Chair and Leoni in Pande, 2021). Thus, sociolinguistics is a study that combines two interdisciplinary fields of science and studies the use of language in the speaking community.

Sociolinguistics looks at all problems related to social groups of language behavior, not only including language behavior but also several language attitudes, behavior toward language, and language use. For sociolinguistics, individuals can move from social problems and then connect them to language, but it can also happen, on the contrary, to move from language and then connect with social phenomena.

Sociolinguistics can be guided by the use of a linguistic corpus and look into other sciences related to social life, and vice versa, it can be guided by the social corpus and look into linguistics. For example, individuals can first see the existence of two varieties of language that are not the same in one language and then relate it to social phenomena such as gender differences, then conclusions can be drawn, for example, variation/variety of language (A) is supported by women, variation or variety of language (B) is then supported by men in that society. Or vice versa, individuals can move by separating society from gender into male-female, then examine the language or speech that can be used by women or the speech that can be used by men. Sociolinguistics as an applied science in linguistics which was born due to social contact between society and society which is equated with culture is a science that continues to develop to this day, this is due to social contact, cultural contact which makes the concept of sociolinguistics play an increasingly important role and continues to change.

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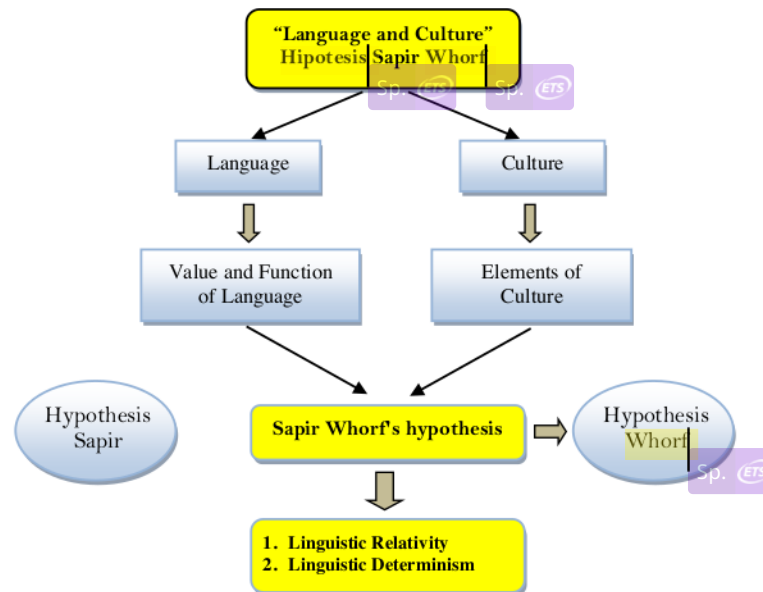


Figure 2: Language And Culture

According to Trudgill (in Purwanti, 2021:7) emphasizes that sociolinguistics is a part of linguistics that deals with language as a social and cultural phenomenon. Language is not only seen as a social phenomenon but also as a cultural symptom. The effect is that language is linked to culture and remains in the realm of sociolinguistics, and this can be understood because each society of course has a different culture. As a sociolinguistic community group, they are linked by the cultural values of the community, including the values when they use language. Values are often linked to what is considered good and what is considered not good, and this situation is manifested in several rules that are generally not written but are followed by community groups. Whatever the type of boundary, sociolinguistics includes three things, namely language, society, and the relationship between language and society.

Referring to several limitations regarding sociolinguistics above, it can be concluded that sociolinguistics includes four things, namely language, society, culture, and the relationship between language and society. Sociolinguistics examines or investigates language as it relates to language speakers as a community group. In what way is language used to interact between groups of people with each other to exchange information and communicate between one person and another?

### 3. Methods

Research "Sociolinguistic Representation of Deli Javanese Culture in North Sumatra Province" is research using a qualitative paradigm. Qualitative research can use a variety of approaches. There are three reasons why qualitative methods were chosen in this research:

First, reality in a cultural context is constructed as a whole, not in separate parts. Through realistic qualitative research, it can be explored completely, focused, and according to the context in which the cultural event occurred.

Second, through qualitative research, the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the

subject under study can be presented more sensitively, and a sharpening of existing cultural patterns can be carried out.

Third, Sugiyono (in Pahleviannur et al., 2022:151) concluded that (1) qualitative research is carried out in natural conditions, the researcher goes directly to the data source, and the researcher is the key instrument, (2) is more descriptive, (3) research Qualitative emphasizes the process rather than the product or outcome, (4) inductive data analysis, (5) places more emphasis on meaning (the data behind what is observed).

The basic issue of data validity relationships is simple. How the researcher persuades the participants (including himself) that the research findings can be trusted or can be considered. The following table provides a comparison between quantitative research and qualitative research in terms of constructs.

**Time and Place of Research** The location of this research was strategic in Deli Serdang Regency, Serdang Bedagai Regency, Langkat Regency, and Batubara Regency in the province of North Sumatra. The presence of researchers in this research setting is needed as a key research instrument (key human instrument).

This qualitative research was carried out for 6 (six) months actively and 4 (four) months independently, meaning that the researcher could come to the research location at any time if the data was needed again.

### 3.1 Population and Sample

The population taken by this research were residents of the Malay ethnicity in Deli Serdang Regency, Serdang Bedagai Regency, Langkat Regency, and Batubara Regency in the provinces of North Sumatra and Java who experienced an acculturation process in the North Sumatra region.

The population of resource persons in this study was 112 people who were considered to have knowledge and understanding of sociolinguistic representations of Javanese and Malay culture. The samples used in this research were parties involved in the cultural acculturation process between ethnic Javanese and ethnic Malays, totaling 60 people, namely village leaders who were believed by residents to be people who had a big role in society and had broad insight, village officials who have administrative duties and authority, village residents who have entered into inter-ethnic marriages and residents of the Malay and Javanese ethnic groups who have experienced the acculturation process directly in Deli Serdang Regency, Serdang Bedagai Regency, Langkat Regency and Batubara Regency in the province of North Sumatra.

### 3.2 Data Collection Techniques

As explained in the research approach section, this research uses a natural setting as a data source and the researcher himself as a key instrument. The aim is for data to be collected and conclusions to be drawn not just from one source but from various sources. Namely from what is said, and done, and from the artifacts that people use. To support this research, several data collection techniques were used which included observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. In general, the data analysis process begins when the researcher enters the research setting by examining all the data collected, whether data obtained through participant observation in the form of field notes, in-depth interviews transcribed into computer typing, official documents, results of informal conversations and photos. All data that has been collected has been read, studied, and analyzed carefully and in-depth. Next, the data is reduced using abstraction containing a summary of the core, processes, and



statements so that they remain in context and have a clear meaning. The next step is to arrange the data in the form of units so that categorization can be made.

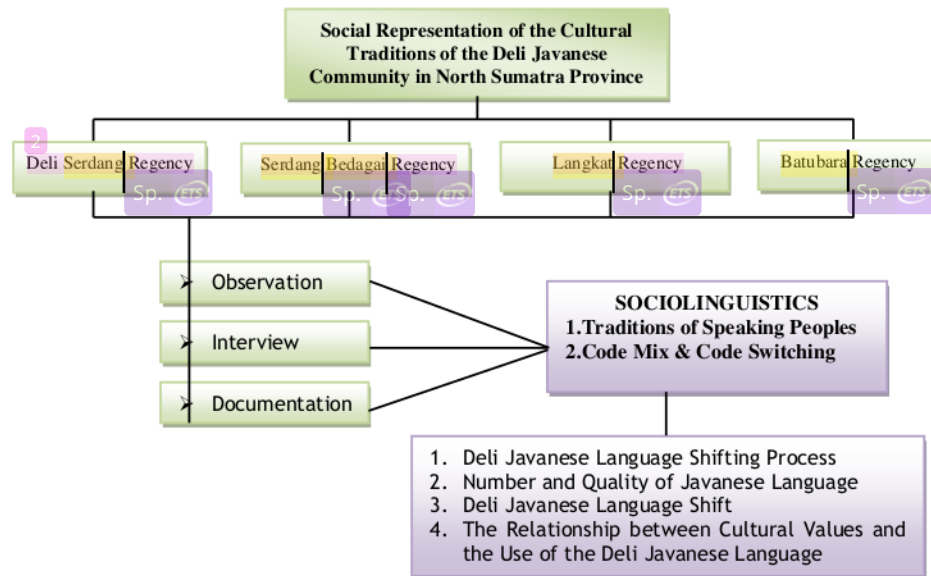


Figure 3. Research Process Framework

#### 4. Research Results And Discussion

##### 4.1 Results

The use of Javanese by people in Deli Serdang Regency, Serdang Bedagai Regency, Langkat Regency, and Batubara Regency is experiencing gradual changes. Based on the recognition of the Javanese people, the language used in Deli Serdang Regency, Serdang Bedagai Regency, Langkat Regency, and Batubara Regency was originally pure Ngoko Javanese. Over time, as the rate of community growth increased more rapidly, the Javanese language began to shift and even become mixed (assimilated) with languages from local ethnic groups such as Malay and Indonesian. The graph below is data from research that has been combined.

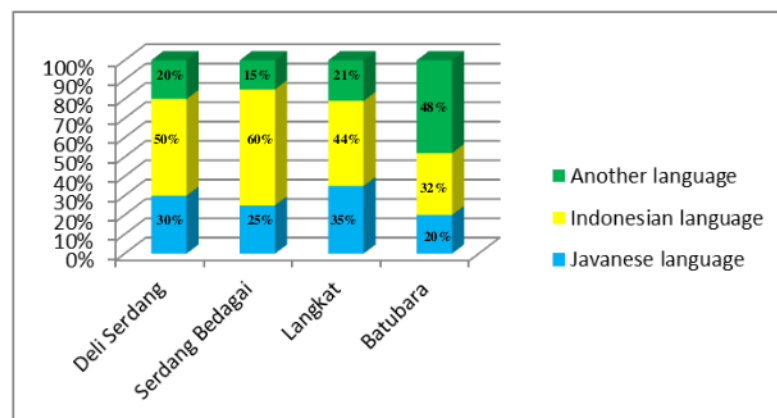


Figure 4 . Graph of the use of Deli Javanese in North Sumatra

Currently, the use of Javanese is very rarely found anymore, Javanese is only used by people

who have entered old age when communicating with other Javanese people. This does not always happen because the dominant language currently is Indonesian.



#### 4.2 Discussion

##### **a. The culture of the Javanese Deli community in North Sumatra Province contains a mixture of cultures which leads to the globalization of speakers when communicating**

The conversations that are spoken arise from the thoughts and ideas of the speakers. Furthermore, in delivering the speech the speaker uses Indonesian (BI) and a foreign language (BA) with absolutely no intervention from either speaker. The delivery of a mixture of speakers' languages in communication between community groups is formed from the awareness of each speaker.

##### **b. The language of the Javanese Deli Community in North Sumatra Province seen from Cultural Elements**

Before explaining more broadly about the Javanese language (BJ), it is necessary to first define culture, although if you explore the meaning of the term culture you will get various understandings of culture. Koentjaraningrat (in (Sumarto, 2019) emphasizes that culture is the entire system of ideas, actions, and results of human work in the context of social life which are considered to belong to humans through learning, which is then explained by the seven elements of culture in researching language. In other words, culture is the result of human creativity, feeling, and initiative. Culture can also be classified into static culture; not subject to change, for example, the remains of historical objects, and dynamic culture; subject to several changes. For example, language can at any time be subject to reconstruction and deconstruction. Therefore it can be concluded that the Jade language (Deli Javanese) is part of the culture of the society in North Sumatra which is dynamic in nature, namely being exposed to several changes which in the end can also lead to language shifts if it is not maintained carefully.

The Deli Javanese language has strong similarities to the culture of language-speaking communities in North Sumatra Province. These similarities can be language tones, language rules, and even language levels. In the Javanese Deli community, for example, the Javanese Deli language has a smooth tone and sounds polite, showing that the basic personality of the Javanese Deli community in North Sumatra is a society that prioritizes politeness and civility. This phenomenon also occurs at the language level in the original Javanese language on the island of Java where a division in the use of Ngoko, Madya, and Krama accent types is found, which explains that in the early basic culture of Javanese society, social class differences were found and prioritized mutual respect or tepo seliro. The language of the Deli Javanese people is evidence of the existence of a civilization from an ancient society which in this context can be verbal or written. So, Jade language can be considered as a scientific system in which the values held firmly by society are found which influence the behavior of society itself. However, the Jade language has shifted and this phenomenon has indicated a shift in the values held firmly by the people of North Sumatra, including changes in outlook on life, social behavior, and even other conditions which are special characteristics of the culture of the Deli Javanese people in North Sumatra.

a) Deli Javanese in North Sumatra Province is experiencing a language shift process. The result of the widespread influence of Indonesian in the family domain is evidence of a language shift process. This situation often occurs in several Javanese Deli communities living in North Sumatra where informal varieties of Indonesian are used in the family sphere. Furthermore, in North Sumatra, it was found that there was non-formal use of Indonesian at joint events such as greetings at weddings and cooperation events to clean up villages. This language shift is due to the widespread influence of the use of Indonesian. This phenomenon illustrates that the influence of the Indonesian language is very broad compared to the influence of the existence of several accents or dialects that occur around the use of Deli Javanese.

b) The number and quality of use of Deli Javanese in North Sumatra has decreased over the successors

In line with this context, what is understood by quality is the quality of each language spoken through reading, structure, vocabulary, degree of formality, and spelling or punctuation. The cause of the decline in the quality of Deli Javanese speakers in North Sumatra Province is the influence of contemporary culture. This cultural influence has given rise to young successors who prefer to communicate using Indonesian, and sometimes interspersed with the use of foreign languages, rather than Deli Javanese, which essentially influences the use of Deli Javanese itself. Some of these errors occur in the context of vocabulary, namely the choice of *Ngoko* in Javanese Deli, for example, "*Jenenge ae high class, apa galem blanja neng pasar senen, ya mesti neng supermarket. It's also called upper class, so if you want to shop at the Senen market, it's definitely at the supermarket*". The more the younger generation of Javanese Deli in North Sumatra Province, the less the quality of the Javanese Deli language they use. Apart from quality, it turns out that the use of Deli Javanese among the younger generation tends to decrease and even be abandoned in quantity. This phenomenon is caused by a lack of diglossia, namely, in the family domain the main language is used, namely Indonesian. Language phenomena are becoming increasingly well-known and must be revitalized urgently. Apart from the family domain, it turns out that in other domains such as trade, especially in several modern markets, Indonesian is the main language in supermarkets such as *Alfamart*, *Indomart*, and the like. Even though the place is located in a community in North Sumatra, it is best to stick to the use of Deli Javanese, but the language of trade transactions used is Indonesian.

c) A shift occurred from the *Ngoko* language level to Indonesian

The age level of language use is decreasing, namely, the *ngoko* language is more mastered by Javanese Deli people who are older in age, and when they reach a young age they more often master or are fluent in Indonesian. The shift from *Ngoko* to Indonesian itself is often caused by reduced parental direction and guidance and the reduced role of Javanese Deli in several other domains. This phenomenon is reinforced by findings in society in North Sumatra where an elementary school teacher taught mathematics to his students using Indonesian rather than Javanese Deli (*Ngoko*) as follows "... *Mudah kan? Terus contohnya, contoh yang berikutnya, duapuluh sembilan dikali duabelas. Tinggal disusun saja, duapuluh sembilan, duabelas. Terus disilangkan*

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*dari belakang. Sembilan dikali dua delapanbelas, yang ditulisdelapannya saja, yang satunya disimpan, terus dua kali dua samadengan empat,ditambah simpanannya tadi satu, jadinya lima, ditulis di sini....”.*

d) A strong relationship between the decline in people's attitudes in North Sumatra towards cultural values and the use of the Deli Javanese language.

In the customs of the Deli Javanese people in North Sumatra Province, something that is considered culture or custom will usually be upheld and preserved. For example, in the Javanese Deli community, there is a ceremony to reject evil, therefore it is a very important and noteworthy situation. In line with the Javanese language context, there is a positive relationship between respect for Javanese cultural values and the use of Deli Javanese in North Sumatra Province. On the other hand, research findings show that respect for Javanese Deli cultural values in North Sumatra Province has decreased in the lifestyle of the younger generation, which has influenced the decline in the use of Javanese Deli. Several Javanese Deli cultural values should be preserved and maintained, namely.

The Java Deli community in North Sumatra Province adheres to Tepo Seliro, namely that when doing something to other people, they must think about how to protect other people's feelings if the action is directed at them.

Their obligation to give respect to others is aligned with every behavior and dignity.

The people of Java Deli in North Sumatra Province are humble.

The Java Deli people in North Sumatra Province always behave with consideration of place and position.

Based on the findings at the research location, from the humble attitude they have, it can be concluded that attitudes towards Javanese Deli cultural values depend entirely on age parameters where the younger generation of the Javanese Deli community always has a negative view of the above cultural values. In short, these values are considered normal by the younger generation and are considered nothing special or sacred. Furthermore, the attitude of Deli Javanese speakers in North Sumatra Province from the older generation to the younger generation is increasingly declining. In this case, the Deli Javanese language, which is considered a high culture, cannot be fully accepted by the younger generation when communicating with their group.

Based on this phenomenon, it can be concluded that the decline in the attitude of the Deli Javanese people in North Sumatra Province towards their cultural values is considered relevant to the decline in attitudes towards the Deli Javanese language. In other words, there has been a strong relationship between the decline in respect of the Deli Javanese people for their cultural values and their language attitudes, such as the shift in the use of Deli Javanese in North Sumatra Province, a sense of pride in using Deli Javanese, and concern for the preservation of Deli Javanese.

## 5. Conclusion

The use of Javanese by people in Deli Serdang Regency, Serdang Bedagai Regency, Langkat Regency, and Batubara Regency is experiencing gradual changes. Based on the recognition of the Javanese

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people, the language used in Deli Serdang Regency, Serdang Bedagai Regency, Langkat Regency, and Batubara Regency was originally pure *Ngoko Javanese*. The culture of the Javanese Deli community in North Sumatra Province contains a mixture of cultures that leads to globalization. When communicating, the speaker conveys the speaker's speech using Indonesian (BI) and a foreign language (BA) with absolutely no intervention from each speaker.

The language of the Deli Javanese people in North Sumatra Province is seen from the cultural elements. In the Javanese Deli community, for example, the Javanese Deli language has a soft tone and sounds polite, showing that the basic personality of the Javanese Deli community in North Sumatra is a society that prioritizes politeness and politeness.

- (a) The Deli Javanese language in North Sumatra Province is experiencing a language shift process. This phenomenon illustrates that the influence of the Indonesian language is very broad compared to the influence of the existence of many accents or dialects that occur around the use of Deli Javanese.
- (b) The number and quality of Deli Javanese language use in North Sumatra has decreased over time. The cause of the decline in the quality of Deli Javanese speakers is the influence of contemporary culture. For example, "*Jenenge ae high class, apa gelem blanja neng pasar sener, yo mest neng supermarket. It's also called upper class, so if you want to shop at the Sener market, it's definitely at the supermarket*".
- (c) The shift occurred from the *Ngoko* language level to Indonesian reinforced by findings in society in North Sumatra where an elementary school teacher taught mathematics to his students using Indonesian rather than Javanese Deli (*Ngoko*) as follows "... *Mudah kan? Terus contohnya, contoh yang berikutnya, duapuluh sembilan dikali duabelas. Tinggal disusun saja, duapuluh sembilan, duabelas. Terusdisilangkan dari belakang. Sembilan dikali dua delapanbelas, yang ditulisdelapannya saja, yang satunya disimpan, terus dua kali dua sama dengan empat, ditambah simpanannya tadi satu, jadinya lima, ditulis di sini....*"
- (d) There is a strong relationship between the decline in people's attitudes in North Sumatra towards cultural values and the use of the Deli Javanese language. The research findings show that respect for Javanese Deli cultural values in North Sumatra Province has decreased in the lifestyle of the younger generation, which has influenced the decline in the use of Javanese Deli.

**Author details**

Sutikno<sup>1</sup>  
 ORCID ID : <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1884-1943>  
 Email: [sutikno@umnaw.ac.id](mailto:sutikno@umnaw.ac.id)  
 Zulayti Bint Zakaria<sup>2</sup>  
 ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9352-1937>  
 Email: [zulaytizakaria@ums.edu.my](mailto:zulaytizakaria@ums.edu.my)  
 Abdulromani Mahir<sup>3</sup>  
 Email: [romaniamahar@gmail.com](mailto:romaniamahar@gmail.com)  
 Rahmat Kartolo<sup>4</sup>  
 Email: [rahmatkartolo@umnaw.ac.id](mailto:rahmatkartolo@umnaw.ac.id)  
 Lusi Selvia Fitri<sup>5</sup>  
 E-mail: [lusisilvia447@gmail.com](mailto:lusisilvia447@gmail.com)  
 Asnawi<sup>6</sup>  
 Email: [asnawi@umnaw.ac.id](mailto:asnawi@umnaw.ac.id)

<sup>1</sup> Al-Washliyah Nusantara Muslim University – Indonesia- Third Floor of the Postgraduate Building  
<sup>2</sup> Universiti Malaysia Sabah – Malaysia  
<sup>3</sup> Jamia Islam Sheikh Daud al-Fathoni -Yala-Southern Thailand  
<sup>4</sup> Al-Washliyah Nusantara Muslim University-Indonesia- Third Floor of the Postgraduate Building

<sup>5</sup>Usman Safri Kutacane Teacher Training and Education College. Pulaunas Baru, Lawe Bulan District, Kutacane, Aceh, Indonesia

<sup>6</sup>Al-Washliyah Nusantara Muslim University-Indonesia -Third Floor of the Postgraduate Building

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**P/V** You have used the passive voice in this sentence. Depending upon what you wish to emphasize in the sentence, you may want to revise it using the active voice.



**Missing ", "** You may need to place a comma after this word.



**Confused** You have used **A** in this sentence. You may need to use **an** instead.



**P/V** You have used the passive voice in this sentence. Depending upon what you wish to emphasize in the sentence, you may want to revise it using the active voice.



**Run-on** This sentence may be a run-on sentence. Proofread it to see if it contains too many independent clauses or contains independent clauses that have been combined without conjunctions or punctuation. Look at the "Writer's Handbook" for advice about correcting run-on sentences.

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**P/V** You have used the passive voice in this sentence. Depending upon what you wish to emphasize in the sentence, you may want to revise it using the active voice.



**Confused** You have used **through** in this sentence. You may need to use **though** instead.

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**Prep.** You may be using the wrong preposition.



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**S/V** This subject and verb may not agree. Proofread the sentence to make sure the subject agrees with the verb.



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