



Contrast Analysis of Indonesian and Malay-Jawi Vocabulary: A Linguistic Study at Santwit Songkhla Technological College

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-02-28 Revised: 2026-06-29 Accepted: 2026-06-30 Keywords: Contrast analysis; Vocabulary; Jawi Malay DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.9810 Corresponding Author: Eli Marlina Harahap eli.marlina@um-tapsel.ac.id Muhammadiyah University of South Tapanuli	<i>This study aims to analyze the similarities and differences in vocabulary between Indonesian and Jawi Malay through a contrastive analysis approach in the educational context at Santiwit Songkhla Technological College, Southern Thailand. Although both languages have a close genealogical relationship as cognate languages in the Austronesian family, contrastive studies that specifically highlight the lexical variation of Jawi Malay in the educational context in Southern Thailand are still limited. This study uses a qualitative approach with a comparative descriptive method. Data in the form of 50 basic Indonesian vocabulary words matched with their representation of Jawi Malay in Jawi script, were obtained through written instruments from 25 bilingual Thai Malay respondents. The results show that most vocabulary words show lexical variation with equivalent core meaning, while Jawi script functions as a graphemic representation system and not as a structural differentiating factor of language. Variations found include form retention, minor phonological changes, total lexical substitution, and pronominal variation. This finding confirms that lexical variation in cognate languages is a form of natural divergence influenced by the social context and language habits of its speakers, and has important implications for learning cognate languages.</i>

1. Introduction

Language plays a central role in human life as a means of communication and as a means of forming and marking social and cultural identities. In linguistic studies, language is understood as a dynamically evolving system influenced by the historical background, social conditions, and cultural environment of its speakers (Crystal, 2008; Edwards, 2009). Therefore, the study of kinship relationships between languages, particularly related languages, is a crucial focus in linguistic studies.

The languages of Southeast Asia are closely related, especially those belonging to the Austronesian family. Indonesian and Jawi Malay are two related languages that developed in different social and geographical contexts. Indonesian serves as the national language in Indonesia, while Jawi Malay is used by the Muslim Malay-speaking community in Southern Thailand, primarily in educational, religious, and everyday social contexts. These differences in social environments and language policies contribute to the emergence of vocabulary variations, despite the shared linguistic roots of both languages.

The study of related languages aims not only to identify similarities in linguistic forms but also to understand the dynamics of language development in different social and cultural contexts. Vocabulary is a crucial aspect of this study because it reflects the cultural experiences, social customs, and communicative needs of its speakers. In the context of Indonesian and Jawi Malay, vocabulary studies provide an overview of the extent to which the two languages maintain lexical similarities and how vocabulary variations arise as a result of differences in the language usage environments. A relevant approach to studying these similarities and differences is contrastive analysis. Contrastive analysis is a linguistic approach that compares two or more languages to systematically identify similarities and differences in linguistic elements (Lado, 1957; Odlin, 1989).

In the study of related languages, contrastive analysis not only serves to trace the kinship relationships of languages, but also to understand the linguistic variations that develop due to the social and cultural influences of their speakers (Campbell, 2013; Crowley & Bown, 2010). A number of previous studies have examined the relationships and variations of vocabulary in Malay related languages by highlighting the influence of history, social, and educational context on their lexical development (Sneddon, 2003; Asmah Haji Omar, 2007; Zubir & Kamaruddin, 2025).

Previous studies have examined the relationship between Indonesian and Malay from historical and sociolinguistic perspectives (Sneddon, 2003; Asmah Haji Omar, 2007). However, contrastive studies specifically analyzing Jawi Malay vocabulary variation in the educational context of Southern Thailand are still relatively limited. Most previous studies have focused on phonological or syntactic

aspects, while contrastive analyses at the lexical level based on Jawi script representation have been limited.

Based on the description, this research is important not only to enrich the study of contrastive linguistics in related languages, but also to provide empirical contributions in understanding the vocabulary variations of Indonesian and Jawi Malay in the educational and socio-cultural contexts of their speaking communities. This research aims to describe the similarities and differences in vocabulary between Indonesian and Jawi Malay through a contrastive analysis approach and to understand the lexical variations that arise as a result of the differences in the social and cultural contexts of the use of the two languages.

Thus, this research is important not only to enrich the study of contrastive linguistics in related languages, but also to provide empirical contributions in understanding the vocabulary variations of Indonesian and Jawi Malay, especially in the educational and socio-cultural contexts of their speaking communities.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive-comparative method. This approach was chosen to describe and compare vocabulary in depth in the context of its use. The research instrument consisted of five questions, each containing fifty basic vocabulary words in Indonesian. These words were compared with their representations in Jawi Malay using the Jawi script. Of all the available data, this study presents only a portion of the vocabulary, purposively selected as representative examples. The vocabulary selection was based on its ability to clearly demonstrate patterns of similarities and differences.

The study subjects were 25 first-year students at Santiwit Songkhla Technological College, who speak Pattani Malay and use Thai as the official language of education. All respondents were bilingual in Malay–Thai.

Data collection techniques were carried out through document studies of the answers given by participants. The data were then analyzed using contrast analysis techniques, namely comparing Indonesian vocabulary with its representation in Jawi Malay to identify lexical equivalences and variations. The results of the analysis are presented in the form of tables and descriptive descriptions.

3. Results

Research result

The results of this study are presented in a table to show the similarities and differences in vocabulary between Indonesian and Jawi Malay. Data were obtained from a research instrument containing basic Indonesian vocabulary, then represented in Jawi script as a form of Jawi Malay. Malay equivalents in Latin script are included as explanations to clarify lexical differences in everyday use. The research instrument contains five questions, each consisting of twenty basic vocabulary words.

From the overall data, this study presents some of the vocabulary considered most representative to show the pattern of similarities and differences in Indonesian and Jawi Malay vocabulary, which is presented in the following table.

Table 1. Patterns of Similarities and Differences in Indonesian and Jawi Malay Vocabulary

No	Indonesian	Malay Jawi	Malay
1	Gunung	ڠونوڠ	buket (dibaca <i>bukit</i>)
2	Engkau	اڠكاو	Awok
3	Balik	باليق	kelek (dibaca <i>kelik</i>)
4	Malam	مالم	Male
5	Panjang	ڤنڠڠ	Panye
6	Ibu	ايبو	Mek
7	Kepala	كڤالا	Kepalo
8	Ini	ايني	Nih
9	Itu	ايتو	Tuh
10	Besar	بسا	Besa
11	Dorong	دوروڠ	Tolok
12	Hutan	هوٲن	Hutea
13	Basah	باسه	Basah
14	Benar	بنر	Betul
15	Putih	ڤوتيه	Puteh

Based on Table 1, all Indonesian vocabulary can be represented in Jawi script without changing its basic form. The word "mountain," for example, is written in Jawi script as⁹, while in Malay it is known as the equivalent of a bouquet. This shows that the difference between Indonesian and Jawi Malay does not lie in the representational capabilities of Jawi writing, but rather in the variety of vocabulary used by speakers.

Data analysis revealed four main patterns of lexical variation:

1. Lexical Form Retention

Example: basah-basah

The vocabulary retains the same form and meaning.

2. Minor Phonological Changes

Example: putih – puteh

The difference is only in the phonological realization without changing the core meaning.

3. Total Lexical Substitution

Example: gunung – buket

There is a replacement of lexical forms with relatively the same meaning.

4. Pronominal Variations

Example: engkau – awak

Shows differences in pronoun choices related to language usage habits.

Quantitatively, the majority of vocabulary shows lexical substitution, while form retention is only found in a small portion of the data.

To provide a clearer picture of the tendencies of similarities and differences in vocabulary between Indonesian and Jawi Malay, the results of this study are visualized in a bar chart. This presentation is intended to show the dominant lexical patterns found concisely and systematically.

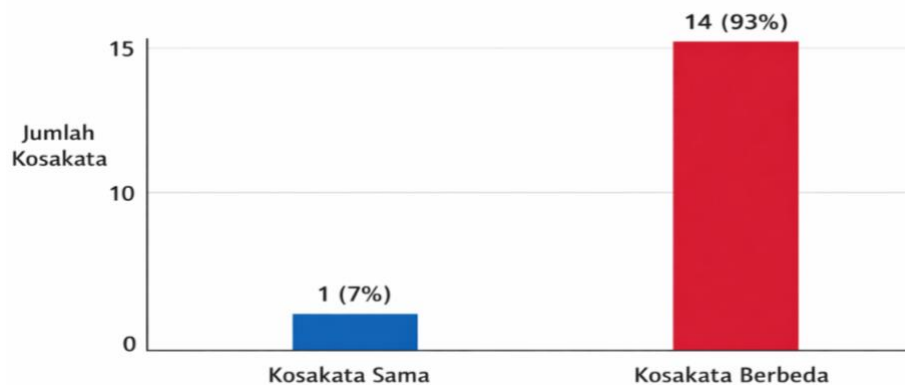


Figure 1. Patterns of Similarities and Differences in Indonesian and Jawi Malay Vocabulary

Based on Figure 1, it can be observed that vocabulary differences between Indonesian and Malay are more common than similarities in lexical forms. Of the total vocabulary analyzed, the majority shows lexical variations in Malay usage, while only a small number of words maintain the same form. This finding indicates that the contrast between Indonesian and Jawi Malay primarily lies in the lexical aspect. In this context, the Jawi script serves as a written representation system capable of visualizing vocabulary.

Indonesian consistently, while differences arise in the lexical choices used in the linguistic practices of Malay-speaking communities. These lexical differences indicate that vocabulary divergence is not always related to shifts in meaning, but can be understood as lexical variations that develop naturally in cognate languages due to social factors and the habits of language use by their speakers. This phenomenon is in line with the historical linguistic view which states that cognate languages maintain the same core meaning even though they experience variations

in lexical form in their development (Campbell, 2013; Crowley & Bowern, 2010).

In the adjective and verb classes, the differences are also quite clear. Large vocabulary is represented in Jawi script as *Very*, while the Malay equivalent is *besa*. The vocabulary of push is written as *Pushin* in Jawi script, with the equivalent *tolok*. However, there are also words that show similarities in form, such as *basah* which is represented in Jawi script as *discussion* and is used in the same form in Malay.

Overall, the research results show that Indonesian and Jawi Malay have a close genealogical relationship, but still show vocabulary differences in a number of basic words. These differences are particularly evident in lexical variations in Jawi Malay, while the Jawi script serves as a writing system that represents Indonesian vocabulary in the context of contrastive analysis. This finding confirms that the contrast between Indonesian and Jawi Malay is more dominant in the lexical aspect than in the graphemic aspect.

4. Discussion

The research results show that Indonesian and Jawi Malay have a close lexical relationship as related languages, but still exhibit vocabulary variations in a number of basic words. These similarities and differences can be systematically identified through a contrastive analysis approach that allows researchers to reveal lexical equivalences and divergences between related languages (Lado, 1957; Odlin, 1989).

This comparative approach to vocabulary between related languages is in line with Haspelmath's (2001) view, which emphasizes that typological and comparative analysis allows for the disclosure of patterns of linguistic similarities and differences in a structured manner, including at the lexical level.

The vocabulary differences found, such as *gunung* being paired with *buket* and *balik* with *kelek*, show that lexical variation is not always accompanied by shifts in meaning. This phenomenon reflects the natural divergence process in the development of cognate languages. The vocabulary variations found in this study show that lexical differences in cognate languages are not always related to changes in core meaning.

These differences are more accurately understood as the result of language development influenced by the social context, language habits, and cultural background of the speaking community. Lexical meaning is formed through the relationships between lexicon elements and their use in the language system, so that vocabulary is flexible and contextual (Cruse, 2011).

The differences in vocabulary that emerge in related languages can be understood as a form of lexical innovation that develops in line with the communication needs and social context of their speakers. This is in line with the view of Geeraerts (2010), who emphasized that lexical variation in a language

cannot be separated from the factors of usage and the social dynamics of the speech community. Within this framework, vocabulary is seen as part of an integrated meaning system, as stated by Croft and Cruse (2004), who stated that the lexicon does not stand autonomously, but is closely related to cognitive processes and conceptualization of meaning.

The findings of this study also strengthen the sociolinguistic perspective which states that vocabulary variation in closely related languages is related to social practices and the context of language use, considering that lexical elements are the aspects of language that are most sensitive to social variation (Tagliamonte, 2012). In addition, the vocabulary variation reflects the differences in how each related language represents and conceptualizes meaning, as explained by Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2015) that the study of the lexicon allows for an understanding of the differences in meaning representation in genealogically related languages.

Studies on Malay and Indonesian show that social and environmental factors play a significant role in shaping vocabulary choices across different language-speaking regions. These variations in vocabulary are closely related to differences in social context and the language habits of the communities in which they are spoken (Sneddon, 2003; Asmah Haji Omar, 2007; Trudgill, 2000). From a modern historical linguistic perspective, variations in vocabulary among related languages are not seen as an indication of a break in their ancestral ties, but rather as part of a natural divergence process that maintains genealogical relationships between languages (Gray & Atkinson, 2003; List et al., 2017; Bower & Evans, 2015).

This view is reinforced by François (2014) who explains that differences in vocabulary among related languages can maintain their genealogical relationships while simultaneously displaying lexical differences as a result of different innovation and retention processes in language development. This finding is in line with the opinion of Haspelmath and Tadmor (2009) who emphasized that differences in vocabulary in genealogically related languages are not a form of deviation, but rather a natural consequence of the social and cultural dynamics of their speakers which influence the lexical development of each language.

Lexical variation in related languages can also be understood through a sociocognitive perspective. Evans and Green (2006) state that lexical meaning is formed through the interaction between a speaker's cognitive structure and their surrounding social experiences. Thus, the lexical variation that emerges is closely related to differences in linguistic experience and the speakers' language habits, as the lexicon develops in response to communication needs in specific social contexts (Divjak, 2019).

The vocabulary differences found between Indonesian and Jawi Malay indicate that lexical variation in cognate languages is not always accompanied by shifts in core meaning, but rather develops as variations in language use within different speech communities. This view is supported by linguistic studies that

state that vocabulary variation in genealogically related languages is the result of language development influenced by differences in social environments and the history of their use. This variation does not eliminate the kinship of the languages, but reflects a process of lexical adaptation that occurs systematically within different speech communities (Nichols, 1992; Dunn et al., 2011).

Furthermore, language differences within kinship communities can also be understood as the result of sociocultural transmission, namely the process of passing on language habits between generations. Tomasello (1999) emphasizes that language forms persist and change through social learning processes, not solely determined by internal linguistic structures.

The variation of language forms within a speech community is closely related to the conventionalization process that occurs through repeated language use in social interactions. Keller (1994) explains that a language form can develop and survive if it is consistently chosen and maintained by its speaking community as part of a shared language habit. From a sociolinguistic perspective, vocabulary variation is understood as the result of differences in social context, language use environment, and the identity of the speech community. The choice of vocabulary in Jawi Malay reflects the linguistic practices that develop within its speaking community and cannot be separated from the social and cultural background of the local Malay community (Trudgill, 2000; Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015).

This view aligns with the usage-based approach proposed by Bybee (2010), which asserts that lexical form and meaning develop through patterns of language use in social interactions. Thus, vocabulary variation in cognate languages reflects differences in the language habits of their speakers. This lexical variation demonstrates that vocabulary is adaptive and develops according to the communication needs of the speech community, as explained by Murphy (2010) who states that the lexicon is an open system that is constantly influenced by language use in specific social contexts. Changes and variations in vocabulary are also related to the meaning-making process that develops through language use in social contexts, so that lexical meaning is dynamic and contextual (Traugott & Dasher, 2002; Geeraerts & Kristiansen, 2015; Hilpert, 2014).

Within the framework of cognitive linguistics, this finding confirms that variation in lexical meaning cannot be separated from the experience-based conceptualization process of speakers. Langacker (2008) emphasizes that the structure and meaning of the lexicon directly reflect how speakers construct and interpret their linguistic reality. The dynamics of vocabulary use are also in line with Ellis's (2002) view, which states that the frequency and experience of language use play an important role in the formation and consolidation of lexical forms and meanings in the language system.

The use of Jawi script in this study is positioned as a means of graphemic representation for Jawi Malay vocabulary. The results of the analysis show that Indonesian vocabulary can be translated into Jawi script without experiencing changes in its basic lexical form. In linguistic studies, the writing system is understood as a visual medium for representing language and does not function as a determinant of structural differences between languages, but rather as a form of graphemic representation of the same linguistic system (DeFrancis, 1989; Rogers, 2005).

Therefore, the main difference between Indonesian and Jawi Malay lies not in the writing system, but in the vocabulary variations that develop in everyday language use practices. This view is in line with the study of writing systems that position the script as a tool for language representation, not as a factor in differentiating linguistic structures. Thus, the use of Jawi script in this study functions as a medium for writing Jawi Malay vocabulary and is not the main factor in differentiating between Indonesian and Jawi Malay (Coulmas, 2013; Daniels & Bright, 1996; Sampson, 2015).

In the educational context at Santiwit Songkhla Technological College, these findings are relevant to applied linguistic studies that emphasize the importance of understanding the differences in vocabulary of cognate languages to reduce the potential for negative transfer and increase learners' linguistic awareness (Odlin, 1989; Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

Research Implications

The findings of this study have theoretical implications for linguistic studies, particularly in the comparative study of cognate languages. A contrastive analysis of the vocabulary of Indonesian and Jawi Malay shows that lexical variation can be understood as the result of language development influenced by social and cultural factors without eliminating the genealogical relationship between the languages.

Practically, this research has implications for language education. Understanding the similarities and differences between Indonesian and Jawi Malay vocabulary can be used as learning material to increase learners' linguistic awareness and reduce the risk of misunderstandings in communication. Thus, this research contributes not only to the theoretical realm but also to the practice of learning cognate languages. Understanding the similarities and differences between cognate vocabulary can help learners reduce negative transfer and increase linguistic awareness. Therefore, relevant contrast analysis is used as a basis for developing more effective language learning strategies (Odlin, 1989; Richards & Schmidt, 2010; Brown, 2007).

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of a contrastive vocabulary analysis between Indonesian and Jawi Malay, it can be concluded that the two languages share a close kinship. This similarity is reflected in several basic vocabulary words that share similar meanings, although in some cases they exhibit differences in lexical form. The vocabulary differences found primarily involve variations in lexical form with relatively similar meanings and do not indicate a shift in core meaning.

These lexical variations are the result of language development influenced by social and cultural factors, as well as the habits of language use within the Jawi Malay-speaking community. Therefore, the resulting differences in vocabulary cannot be viewed as linguistic deviation, but rather as a natural divergence process in the development of related languages that maintain their genealogical relationships.

Furthermore, the use of Jawi script in this study serves as a graphical representation system for Jawi Malay vocabulary and is not the main factor distinguishing between the two languages. Overall, this study confirms that vocabulary contrast analysis is an effective approach to understanding the similarities and differences of cognate languages and provides an important contribution to linguistic studies and language learning, particularly in the educational and socio-cultural contexts of the speaking community.

Suggestion

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that students learning related languages, particularly Indonesian and Jawi Malay, pay attention to potential similarities and differences in vocabulary, particularly in terms of meaning and usage. Understanding these differences can help students avoid misunderstandings in communication and increase their linguistic awareness.

For future researchers, this study could be expanded by expanding the number of respondents, educational level, or other linguistic aspects such as phonology and syntax to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between Indonesian and Jawi Malay. Furthermore, the use of a corpus-based approach or oral data could also be considered to enrich the findings of this study.

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