

LANGUAGE ATTITUDE OF CINA BENTENG COMMUNITY TANGERANG

¹Queency ²Sonya Ayu Kumala

^{1,2} Universitas Buddhi Dharma

¹ Jl. Imam Bonjol No. 41, Karawaci Ilir, Tangerang-Indonesia

¹queencyphing@gmail.com ²sonyaaayuu@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

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This research examines the language attitudes of the Cina Benteng community in Tangerang, focusing on how its members perceive, value, and use their heritage language in comparison to dominant languages such as Bahasa Indonesia and English. Grounded in sociolinguistic theory, particularly the concept of language attitude, the study employs a qualitative descriptive method through interviews and questionnaires with respondents from different age groups to capture generational variations in language perception. The analysis, conducted through thematic categorization, highlights aspects such as language preference, cultural expression, language shift, and intergenerational transmission. Findings reveal a complex interplay between pride in cultural heritage and pressures of linguistic assimilation, where older generations show stronger positive attitudes toward preserving the native language, while younger members prefer more dominant languages for reasons related to education, employment, and social mobility. These insights emphasize the urgency of strategic efforts in language preservation, cultural education, and community engagement to sustain the linguistic identity of the Cina Benteng people.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Cina Benteng community is a Chinese ethnic group that has settled in the Tangerang area of Banten for a long period of time, dating back to several generations. They possess a strong history of adapting to the local culture while simultaneously striving to maintain their own language and cultural identity. This process of cultural adaptation and preservation illustrates the community's resilience in the face of social and linguistic changes over time. In sociolinguistic studies, the concept of language attitude becomes an important analytical lens to understand how a community makes decisions about the language they use, how they may experience a gradual language shift, or how they attempt to maintain their heritage language.

Indonesia itself, as a nation renowned for its remarkable ethnic and linguistic diversity, boasts more than 1,340 ethnic groups spread across its vast archipelago (BPS, 2020). This extraordinary diversity is reflected in a rich tapestry of distinct languages, customs, and cultural practices. Dominant ethnic groups, such as the Javanese, Sundanese, Batak, and Bugis, each contribute to the nation's cultural mosaic through their own traditions and values, while others such as the Batak in North Sumatra, Dayak in Kalimantan, and Toraja in Sulawesi maintain strong cultural identities through their distinctive rituals and social systems.

In this diverse national context, the Indonesian language (Bahasa Indonesia) serves as a crucial unifying tool that bridges various ethnic and linguistic groups. It functions not only as a medium for communication but also as a symbol of national unity. At the same time, more than 700 regional languages—such as Javanese, Sundanese, and various Batak dialects—remain deeply tied to the cultural heritage and identity of their respective communities. These regional languages act as mediums for preserving ancestral traditions, indigenous knowledge, and cultural ethos (Fishman, 1972; Crystal, 2000).

Within this dynamic environment, inter-ethnic interactions often lead to cultural fusions and acculturation processes. A compelling example is the Cina Benteng community in Tangerang, which has demonstrated a remarkable capacity for adapting to local culture while maintaining their language and cultural identity. This long history of interaction has resulted in a unique hybrid identity that blends ancestral Chinese culture with local Indonesian elements.

The Cina Benteng language itself is a product of this acculturation. It is a distinctive dialect that evolved from the interplay of Hokkien or Tiochiu—the original languages brought by their ancestors—and local Malay and Betawi languages. Over generations, the language became heavily influenced by Malay and Betawi, forming a unique dialect spoken exclusively by this community. This evolution mirrors their journey of adapting to Indonesian culture while preserving their heritage.

According to 2020 BPS data, the population of ethnic Chinese in Tangerang continues to grow, with the Cina Benteng community forming one of the largest heritage groups. Recent national surveys indicate a shift in language use among younger generations, with Bahasa Indonesia becoming more dominant. In sociolinguistics, language attitude is recognized as a pivotal concept in understanding how communities navigate language shift or maintain their heritage language (Garrett, 2010; Fishman, 1972).

Previous research shows that many Chinese communities in Indonesia have experienced language shift, typically from Chinese dialects to Indonesian, influenced by socio-political factors such as New Order restrictions on Chinese languages (Werhoru & Jhon, 2021). Social pressure and a desire to assimilate further encouraged this shift. Studies by Sonya Ayu Kumala (2022, 2023) also highlight how language continues to preserve Cina Benteng identity through place names, signage, and kinship terms despite pressures toward assimilation. Fishman (1985a) emphasizes the role of social institutions—family, school, and community—and collective attitudes in determining whether an ethnic group maintains its language.

Given the importance of language in shaping cultural identity and the socio-cultural dynamics faced by the Cina Benteng community, this study investigates how community members perceive and respond to their linguistic heritage within changing social contexts. The central research question is: *How do the language attitudes of the Cina Benteng community in Tangerang reflect their views and behaviors towards their mother tongue?* By addressing this question, the study aims to highlight patterns of language use, intergenerational differences, and factors influencing the maintenance or decline of their ancestral language.

The Cina Benteng community in Tangerang is facing a critical point in preserving its heritage language—a unique creolized dialect shaped by the fusion of Hokkien/Tiochiu and local Malay/Betawi—which was once used in daily life but is now mostly limited to older generations and traditional ceremonies as younger members increasingly adopt Indonesian for practicality and

social advancement. The dominant role of Indonesian in education and public life has marginalized the Cina Benteng language and placed it at risk of disappearance, threatening the continuity of the community's cultural identity. Although language shift among Indonesian Chinese communities has been widely observed, research specifically examining how the Cina Benteng community navigates the intersection of their heritage language, Indonesian, and English remains limited, leaving complex attitudes toward these languages and their influence on identity and cultural values insufficiently explored. To address this gap, this study aims to identify the dominant language(s) used by young members of the Cina Benteng community across various domains, examine their attitudes toward the Cina Benteng dialect in comparison to Bahasa Indonesia and English, and analyze the extent of language maintenance or shift currently taking place.

Based on the background presented, the research questions for this study are as follows:

1. How does the language use of Cina Benteng in each domain ?
2. How does the language attitude of the Cina Benteng community in Tangerang towards their mother tongue?

Purpose of this study is to conduct an in-depth analysis of language use patterns within the Cina Benteng community in Tangerang, particularly across various domains of daily life such as family settings, educational institutions, workplaces, and social interactions. This research aims to find out which languages are most commonly used by community members—whether it is the Cina Benteng dialect, Bahasa Indonesia, or other foreign languages—and to see how this usage changes based on factors like age, generation, social context, and educational background. In addition, the study aims to explore the community's language attitudes toward their mother tongue by examining emotional attachment, a sense of cultural identity, perceived utility of the language in modern life, and their willingness to preserve and pass it on to future generations. By combining these focuses on language use practices and language attitudes, this research is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the linguistic dynamics within the Cina Benteng community and to contribute to a better understanding of language shift or maintenance in the midst of modernization and national integration.

This study offers practical insights into the language attitudes of the Cina Benteng community, particularly in relation to their native dialect and its position alongside dominant languages such as Bahasa Indonesia and English. These insights are useful for policymakers, educators, and community leaders in formulating communication and education strategies that are inclusive and culturally responsive to the needs of the local community. Moreover, as a university student, the author hopes this research can raise awareness about the importance of preserving local languages, especially the increasingly marginalized Cina Benteng dialect, and encourage younger generations to value local languages as an essential part of cultural identity. The findings are also expected to serve as an academic reference in sociolinguistics, language policy, and cultural studies, especially through the application of Fishman's Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory (1972), which explores intergenerational transmission, societal attitudes, and institutional support. This research is hoped to become a foundation for further, more in-depth, or interdisciplinary studies in similar contexts.

This research study is focused on sociolinguistics, specifically analyzing the language attitudes of the Cina Benteng community in Tangerang, Indonesia. It explores how the community views and uses their native language by considering factors such as age, education, social environment, economic status, and exposure to dominant languages like Bahasa Indonesia and English. The study also investigates how socio-cultural factors—including urbanization, globalization, and national

language policies—influence language practices and how the mother tongue contributes to cultural identity and a sense of belonging. The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between sociolinguistics and language attitudes, drawing on how individuals' feelings, beliefs, and behaviors shape their responses to specific languages. Within the Cina Benteng community, language attitudes appear in both positive forms—such as pride, maintenance efforts, and valuing the dialect as cultural identity—and negative forms, such as embarrassment, preference for dominant languages, and reluctance to use the dialect in public. This framework connects the sociolinguistic theory of language shift (Fishman, 1991) to real-life language behavior and beliefs of the younger generation across daily communication and social domains.

The topic Language Attitude of the Cina Benteng Community in Tangerang falls under sociolinguistics, focusing on the community's positive and negative perceptions toward their heritage language and other languages they use. The framework begins by collecting language data from the community, examining how they feel about and use different languages—especially their native language compared to Bahasa Indonesia and English—through cultural expressions, generational differences, and indications of language change or replacement. These aspects help explain how attitudes influence communication patterns and cultural interaction. The findings of this study are intended to shed light on the language attitudes of the Cina Benteng community and are expected to support efforts in preserving their native language, reinforcing cultural identity, and encouraging stronger community participation and a deeper sense of belonging.

II. METHODS

In this chapter, the researcher explains the theories that support the analysis, which serve as the basis for finding answers about family relationships in the Cina Benteng community. Research on language attitude and language choice in the process of learning another language is widely explored because many aspects still do not have concrete explanations and remain open for further investigation. In this research, the researcher used several previous studies to analyze and develop the concept of language attitude in sociolinguistics to support the study.

The first study is “Language Attitude of Undergraduate Students Towards English at English Education Department” by Wati (2016), which focuses on students' attitudes toward English based on gender and length of study. The findings show that male students demonstrate more positive attitudes than female students, and beginning students have more positive attitudes than advanced students. The second study, “Language Attitude and Language Choice in Bilingual Academic Learning Environment” by Dewi and Setiadi (2018), highlights that students have a positive attitude toward English because it is considered an international language that offers more career opportunities, with usage influenced by lecturers and academic exposure.

The third study, “Language Attitudes among Chinese-Indonesians in Jakarta” by Tian and Yao (2018), investigates perceptions of Chinese-Indonesian communities toward their native language compared to Bahasa Indonesia and English. The study found that although many Chinese-Indonesians retain positive attitudes toward their heritage language, social pressures and national language policies significantly influence language shift toward Bahasa Indonesia. Together, these studies show that language attitudes are shaped by social context, identity, and pragmatic goals.

Sociolinguistics is derived from the combination of sociology and linguistics, each with different origins, branches, and methods, yet connected through their focus on language and human interaction. Roucek and Warren (1968) state that sociology studies relationships between

individuals and groups, while Lyons (1981) defines linguistics as the scientific study of language. According to Janet Holmes (2013), sociolinguistics studies the relationship between language and society, including how people acquire new languages, new cultures, and how they respond to language in society.

Fishman (1972) describes sociolinguistics as the study of the characteristics of speakers and speech communities as these aspects intersect and change. This means sociolinguistics analyzes differences in language use, spelling, pronunciation, speech patterns, and community responses. Based on these definitions, sociolinguistics examines how people use language differently in social contexts by considering backgrounds such as gender, age, race, and education level.

People naturally communicate using their own languages, and when individuals use more than one language, this phenomenon is known as bilingualism or multilingualism (Wardough, 2006). Multilingualism refers to the ability to use two or more languages, and multilingual speakers outnumber monolinguals worldwide. Code-switching occurs frequently among bilinguals and multilinguals, especially in contexts involving local, national, and international languages. Globalization, migration, and technological advancements further encourage multilingual practices across communities.

Language attitude refers to individuals' or groups' feelings, beliefs, and behavioral tendencies toward particular languages. Garrett (2010) states that language attitude involves cognitive and emotional aspects that influence preference, usage, and identity. Fishman (1991) emphasizes that language attitudes play a crucial role in language maintenance or shift. Positive attitudes, as described by Chamber (1999), make language learning easier, while negative attitudes may lead to reluctance and reduced motivation (Baker, 2001).

Language choice is the selection of a language in a communication context. Holmes (2013) explains that people who master more than one language can choose the most appropriate language based on comfort and confidence. Domain, which relates to participants, setting, and topic, influences language choice. Domains such as family, neighborhood, education, friendship, workplace, and religion each shape different language behaviors and norms, contributing to language maintenance or shift within communities like the Cina Benteng.

In the family domain, intergenerational transmission supports language maintenance, while neighborhood and community interactions reinforce social norms. The education domain promotes national and international languages, reducing local dialect use. Friendship and peer-group domains often reflect generational trends and social belonging, while workplace environments prioritize formal communication in Bahasa Indonesia. Religious domains may support heritage languages depending on ritual practices. Overall, these domains help explain how the Cina Benteng community navigates language use and attitudes in daily life.

Furthermore, understanding language attitudes and choices within the Cina Benteng community provides valuable insights into the broader processes of cultural preservation and identity formation in multilingual societies. By examining how individuals navigate between their heritage dialect, the national language, and global languages such as English, researchers can identify patterns of language maintenance, shift, and adaptation. These insights are not only significant for academic purposes but also have practical implications for designing educational programs, community initiatives, and policy interventions aimed at supporting minority language vitality.

Moreover, the study of language use across multiple domains—family, community, education, peers, workplace, and religion—reveals the complex interplay between social pressures, personal preferences, and cultural values. This holistic approach highlights how language functions as both a tool of communication and a marker of cultural identity, demonstrating that efforts to sustain the Cina Benteng dialect require coordinated engagement across generational, institutional, and social levels.

Throughout this chapter, the researcher aims to clarify how the research was conducted. The discussion in this chapter covers various aspects of the research methodology, including the research approach, types of data used, sources of data, techniques for data collection, and methods for data analysis. Each section provides a clear outline of the steps and strategies employed to ensure the research process is systematic, thorough, and aligned with the study's objectives of exploring the language attitudes of the Cina Benteng community in Tangerang.

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore the language attitudes of the Cina Benteng community in Tangerang. This approach is considered appropriate because it is able to explore the subjective experiences, personal perceptions, and cultural settings that shape the language habits of a group. Unlike quantitative approaches that rely solely on numerical data, qualitative research focuses on understanding the attitudes, beliefs, and drives of individuals through in-depth analysis of their language and behavior in real-life contexts. Qualitative research allows for a deeper examination of the nuances of social interaction, communication patterns, and the ways in which language embodies cultural values. It is particularly useful for uncovering the motivations behind language use, the emotional attachments people have to their heritage language, and the influences of surrounding social and cultural environments on these behaviors (Mack, 2005:1).

Qualitative research is very useful for obtaining comprehensive information about the nature, feelings, behavior, and social context within a particular group, making it ideal for studying minority language communities such as the Cina Benteng. This approach focuses on the collection, analysis, and interpretation of non-numerical data, such as speech, conversation, and written responses, which reflect the participants' true attitudes and perceptions. By examining these data in context, researchers can gain insights into the complexities of language choice, including the social, cultural, and psychological factors that influence whether individuals maintain or shift from their heritage language to dominant languages.

In addition, this study also takes into account the domains of language use, which refer to the specific social settings or contexts in which a particular language or dialect is typically used. These domains may include the home, workplace, religious activities, educational institutions, and community interactions. By analyzing how and where the Cina Benteng dialect and Bahasa Indonesia are used across different domains, the study can better understand the factors that influence language choice, maintenance, and shift within the community. The exploration of domains helps reveal whether certain languages are reserved for intimate family settings, while others are preferred for formal, educational, or official interactions, thereby providing a more detailed picture of linguistic behavior across generations and social contexts.

Meanwhile, quantitative research is a method commonly used to study social phenomena by collecting data in the form of numbers, which are then analyzed using statistical techniques (Gunderson, 2002). Quantitative data allows for broad generalizations and the identification of patterns among larger populations. In contrast, qualitative research provides rich, contextualized information that explains why individuals behave or think in certain ways, offering depth and

meaning that numerical data alone cannot capture. Thus, the combination of understanding the contexts of language use through qualitative methods offers a more holistic perspective on language attitudes and sociolinguistic dynamics within the Cina Benteng community.

In this research, two types of data are employed: primary data and secondary data. Primary data refers to information that is directly collected by the researcher from firsthand sources, through methods such as interviews, surveys, focus groups, or direct involvement in the study context. Secondary data, on the other hand, consists of pre-existing information that has been gathered by other individuals or organizations, such as reports, articles, or publicly accessible databases. For the investigation of language attitudes within the Cina Benteng community in Tangerang, the primary focus is on collecting primary data, as it allows for the direct observation and understanding of participants' personal experiences, perceptions, and attitudes regarding their heritage language and its interaction with dominant languages.

The primary data in this study is gathered from community members through a structured questionnaire distributed online via Google Forms to ensure accessibility and reach. The questionnaire is written in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure clarity and comprehension for all respondents, regardless of their level of English proficiency. Respondents are selected based on specific criteria: they must be born and raised in Tangerang, come from Cina Benteng families whose parents were also born and raised in Tangerang, have never lived abroad for an extended period, and are currently attending or have attended a university. By focusing on these criteria, the researcher ensures that the data collected accurately reflects the attitudes and experiences of the local Cina Benteng community. The data is then analyzed using descriptive qualitative methods, complemented by observations during online Zoom classes, focusing on language attitudes and choices, and noting how participants use their native language, Bahasa Indonesia, and English, as well as their willingness to engage in communication in different linguistic contexts (Sugiyono, 2008:225; Given, 2008:803).

Historically, the Cina Benteng community traces its roots back to the 17th century during the Dutch colonial period, when Chinese migrants first arrived in the Tangerang area. These migrants, primarily from southern China—especially Fujian and Guangdong provinces—were brought in by the Dutch to develop agriculture, trade, and craftsmanship in the region. Many settled along the Cisadane River due to its strategic role in transportation and irrigation. Over decades, they established permanent settlements in areas such as Pasar Lama, Karawaci, and Sewan.

The prolonged coexistence with local Betawi and Sundanese populations led to intermarriage, cultural exchange, and the emergence of a hybrid identity marked by distinctive customs, culinary traditions, and a mixed dialect incorporating Hokkien, Malay, and local linguistic elements. This syncretic culture set the Cina Benteng apart from other Chinese communities in Indonesia, who tended to retain more distinct linguistic and cultural boundaries.

In the present day, the Cina Benteng community remains a significant part of Tangerang's demographic and cultural landscape, yet their linguistic practices have undergone notable changes. While older generations still actively use the Cina Benteng dialect in daily conversations, especially within the family and community gatherings, younger generations increasingly prefer Bahasa Indonesia in both formal and informal settings. This shift is largely influenced by the role of Bahasa Indonesia as the national language and its dominance in education, media, and public life.

At the same time, English is gaining popularity among the youth due to its prestige and relevance in higher education, technology, and global communication. Although cultural heritage is still celebrated through festivals like Cap Go Meh, Ceng Beng, and traditional wedding ceremonies, the use of the Cina Benteng dialect is gradually being replaced, indicating a potential language shift consistent with broader patterns of modernization and socio-economic integration.

The data source for this study was collected through primary data using a quantitative approach. The main instrument used was a structured questionnaire designed to measure the language attitudes and language use of members of the Cina Benteng community in Tangerang. The questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions and was distributed using digital platforms such as Google Forms to ensure accessibility and reach.

Respondents were selected based on specific criteria to ensure the relevance and validity of the data. All participants were born and raised in Tangerang, came from Cina Benteng families whose parents were also born and raised in Tangerang, had never studied or lived abroad for a long period of time, and were aged between 17 and 30 years old. Additionally, all respondents had either attended or were currently attending a university, ensuring the data reflected generational language attitudes and the local linguistic environment.

The research focused on two main areas: attitudes toward various languages, including Bahasa Indonesia, the Cina Benteng dialect, Mandarin, and English, and the actual use of these languages across different social domains such as family, education, neighborhood, friendship, work, and religion. The collected data were categorized and analyzed to identify patterns of language preference, language maintenance, and possible language shift across generations.

The data collection was conducted through a structured questionnaire distributed online via Google Forms and shared with the Chinese Benteng community WhatsApp group (Cide Kode Benteng). A total of 60 responses were collected, 50 of which met the sampling criteria. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: Section I focused on respondent background, Section II explored language use across various domains, and Section III assessed language attitudes toward the Cina Benteng dialect, Bahasa Indonesia, and English.

Data analysis involved several steps. First, all completed questionnaires were reviewed and verified for completeness and clarity. Responses were then entered into a spreadsheet and organized based on variables such as age, education, language preference, and domain of language use. The frequency and percentage of responses were calculated to determine patterns of language use and attitudes, while responses were categorized into positive and negative attitudes to facilitate interpretation.

Thematic analysis was conducted to identify recurring themes, including cultural pride and identity preservation, the perceived practicality of Bahasa Indonesia for education and professional success, limited functional use of the heritage language in public domains, and intergenerational transmission. Findings were interpreted using Fishman's (1991) theory of language shift and maintenance, and Garrett's (2010) perspective on language attitudes. Descriptive statistical methods, particularly percentage analysis, were applied to summarize responses, compare patterns across domains, and highlight trends in language use and attitudes within the Cina Benteng community.

III. RESULTS

This subchapter discusses the language attitudes of the younger generation of the Cina Benteng community in Tangerang, based on the analysis of data collected through questionnaires. The questionnaire was written in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure that all participants could fully understand each question and respond accurately. This decision was made to avoid potential misunderstandings due to varying levels of English proficiency among respondents, thereby preserving the reliability and validity of the collected data.

The study involved 50 respondents who were all born and raised in Tangerang, came from Cina Benteng families whose parents were also born and raised in the same area, and had either pursued or were currently pursuing higher education. None of the respondents had ever participated in student exchange programs or lived abroad for an extended period. These criteria were set to ensure that the data accurately reflected the local linguistic environment and authentic language attitudes of the Cina Benteng community.

Analysis of the questionnaire responses revealed a clear predominance of positive language attitudes among the respondents. A total of 86% (43 out of 50 respondents) demonstrated a positive attitude toward the Cina Benteng dialect, while only 14% (7 respondents) exhibited negative attitudes. This distribution highlights a strong emotional and cultural attachment to the dialect, despite the increasing dominance of Bahasa Indonesia in public and formal domains, such as campuses, workplaces, and interactions with neighbors. The data suggest that the Cina Benteng dialect continues to hold relevance in intimate and informal settings, particularly within families and close community networks, where it functions not merely as a means of communication but as a medium for expressing shared identity and heritage.

Positive language attitude refers to an individual's or group's favorable views, feelings, and appreciation toward a language or dialect. It encompasses pride in using the language, recognition of its cultural and symbolic significance, and a desire to maintain it through active use and intergenerational transmission. Among the younger generation of the Cina Benteng community, this positive attitude is demonstrated through both emotional and behavioral markers: pride in daily use, acknowledgment of its role in shaping cultural identity, and the intention to ensure its continuation among future generations. Such attitudes are crucial indicators of potential language maintenance, even in contexts where functional utility may favor a more dominant language.

Based on the collected data, 100% of respondents stated that they are proud to use the Cina Benteng dialect and consider it an essential part of their ethnic identity. This unanimous pride underscores the dialect's symbolic and emotional importance within the community. It is not merely a tool for communication; rather, it serves as a repository of cultural knowledge, traditional practices, and intergenerational narratives that define the unique character of the Cina Benteng people. The respondents' pride also reflects a conscious recognition of their linguistic heritage as a source of identity, reinforcing the role of the dialect as a cultural emblem that distinguishes the community from others.

Furthermore, 96% of respondents agreed that the younger generation should continue learning the Cina Benteng dialect. This overwhelming consensus points to a strong community awareness of the importance of intergenerational transmission. It suggests that while the practical use of the dialect may be declining in certain formal and public domains, the community values its preservation as a critical component of cultural continuity. By advocating for the learning of the

dialect among younger members, respondents demonstrate a proactive effort to safeguard linguistic heritage, ensuring that the dialect remains a living, functional, and socially meaningful aspect of their communal identity.

In addition to intergenerational learning, 90% of respondents expressed a strong intention to pass the Cina Benteng dialect on to their future children. This indicates a deliberate commitment to language maintenance that goes beyond mere acknowledgment of its cultural significance. It reflects an understanding of the role that family, early socialization, and daily interactions play in sustaining a language across generations. The respondents' intention to transmit the dialect to their children demonstrates a recognition that emotional attachment and active practice are both necessary to counterbalance the pressures of modernization and language shift toward Bahasa Indonesia and other dominant languages.

The combination of these positive attitudes—pride, acknowledgment of identity, support for intergenerational learning, and commitment to teaching the next generation—paints a picture of a community that deeply values its linguistic heritage. It also suggests that the Cina Benteng dialect is more than a marginal or ceremonial language; it is actively integrated into the social and cultural life of the community, particularly in private and informal contexts. These findings reinforce the importance of viewing the dialect as a living language that contributes to social cohesion, communal solidarity, and cultural continuity.

Despite the dominance of Bahasa Indonesia in education, professional life, and public communication, the Cina Benteng dialect maintains a significant symbolic and emotional presence. The positive attitudes reflected in the data demonstrate that cultural pride and identity can coexist with the practical adoption of a national language for functional purposes. This duality illustrates a common phenomenon in sociolinguistics, where heritage languages retain emotional and symbolic value even as their everyday functional use may decline in broader societal domains.

The data further reveal that positive language attitudes can play a critical role in fostering resilience against language shift. When speakers value their heritage language, they are more likely to engage in activities that support its maintenance, such as using it in family interactions, participating in cultural events, or teaching it to younger generations. In the case of the Cina Benteng community, the strong sense of pride and responsibility among respondents serves as a foundation for potential revitalization and sustainable preservation strategies, even in the face of external pressures from dominant languages.

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight that positive language attitudes are widespread among the younger generation of the Cina Benteng community in Tangerang. The dialect is deeply valued as a symbol of cultural identity, intergenerational continuity, and communal solidarity. Respondents' pride, commitment to teaching the dialect to their children, and support for younger generations learning it demonstrate the potential for sustaining the language despite the increasing functional dominance of Bahasa Indonesia in public and formal contexts. These attitudes underscore the importance of cultural awareness, active practice, and intentional transmission as key factors in the long-term preservation of the Cina Benteng dialect. Conversely, negative language attitudes reflect feelings of embarrassment, rejection, or undervaluing a language.

In the context of the Cina Benteng community, 18% (9 respondents) admitted feeling embarrassed to speak the dialect in public. This attitude is likely influenced by perceptions that the heritage dialect is outdated or less prestigious compared to dominant languages such as Bahasa

Indonesia and English. Such attitudes, even if held by a minority, have the potential to accelerate language shift if younger speakers increasingly prefer more dominant languages.

The respondents' attitudes indicate a complex balance between cultural pride and pragmatic considerations. While they emotionally value their heritage dialect, practical needs and social norms often drive them to use Bahasa Indonesia in formal, educational, and public domains. English is viewed primarily as a tool for educational and professional advancement, whereas Mandarin retains symbolic importance rather than functional use in daily life. This duality aligns with Fishman's (1991) theory of language shift, highlighting the risk of heritage languages declining when they are not consistently used or transmitted across generations.

Summary Table: Language Use Across Domains

Domain	Bahasa Indonesia	Cina Benteng Dialect	Other
Extended Family	18	32	0
Nuclear Family	24	26	0
Neighbors	35	15	0
Neighborhood Friends	35	15	0
University Friends	40	10	0
Co-workers	46	4	0
Places of Worship	33	17	0
Social/Leisure Group (Tongkrongan)	28	21	1

The analysis of language use across different social domains further illustrates these patterns (see Table 2). In interactions with extended family members, 32 respondents reported primarily using the Cina Benteng dialect, while 18 respondents used Bahasa Indonesia. This shows that the dialect is still actively maintained within intergenerational family environments, where older family members serve as custodians of traditional language use.

Within nuclear families, the distribution was relatively balanced: 26 respondents used the Cina Benteng dialect, while 24 preferred Bahasa Indonesia. This indicates that even in intimate family settings, Bahasa Indonesia is increasingly influential, reflecting the impact of education, media exposure, and broader societal norms on language choice. Nonetheless, the continued use of the dialect by a slight majority shows that intergenerational transmission remains significant in households valuing cultural preservation.

The remaining domains, including neighborhoods, peers, campus, workplaces, religious spaces, and social groups, show patterns summarized in Table 2. Bahasa Indonesia dominates public and formal domains, while the Cina Benteng dialect persists primarily in private or informal contexts. Religious settings and tongkrongan environments offer more opportunities for heritage language use, highlighting how context, social norms, and peer relationships influence language choice.

In summary, Table 2 and the data indicate that Bahasa Indonesia dominates formal, public, and professional domains, whereas the Cina Benteng dialect maintains its significance in family and

some informal social contexts. These findings support Fishman’s (1991) theory of language shift, demonstrating how heritage languages tend to retreat to private domains unless strong intergenerational transmission and institutional support are maintained. The younger generation of the Cina Benteng community shows a complex balance between cultural pride in their dialect and pragmatic use of dominant languages, reflecting both resilience and gradual transformation in linguistic practices.

Questionnaire Summary Table

Question	Yes	No
Proud to use Cina Benteng dialect	50	0
Dialect as part of identity	50	0
Should be learned by younger generation	48	2
Bahasa Indonesia more useful for success	46	4
Feel close to community using dialect	43	7
Bahasa Indonesia accepted in society	49	1
Ashamed to speak dialect publicly	9	41
Important to teach mother tongue	45	5
Language = cultural identity	49	1

All 50 respondents (100%) stated that they are proud to use the Cina Benteng dialect in their daily life. This unanimous response indicates a strong sense of cultural pride and a deep-rooted connection to their ethnic identity. Despite the declining use of the dialect in certain formal or professional domains, the expressed pride suggests that the dialect still holds significant symbolic value within the community. It represents more than just a means of communication—it serves as a marker of heritage, history, and belonging. This sense of ownership over the dialect may also reflect a growing awareness among community members of the importance of preserving their unique linguistic and cultural legacy in the face of modernization and language shift.

Similarly, all 50 respondents agreed that the local dialect is an essential part of their identity as members of the Cina Benteng community. This unanimous agreement reinforces the dialect’s symbolic value as more than just a tool for communication—it serves as a cultural emblem that embodies the community’s shared history, traditions, and sense of belonging. The dialect functions as a key marker of ethnic identity, helping to distinguish the Cina Benteng community from other cultural groups. Even if its everyday use is declining in some domains, the strong emotional and identity-based attachment to the dialect highlights its enduring role in shaping personal and collective identity.

As many as 96% of respondents (48 out of 50) believe that the Cina Benteng dialect should still be learned by younger generations. This strong consensus reflects a deep concern for the continuity

and preservation of the language within the community, demonstrating that the respondents are not only aware of the cultural significance of their heritage language but are also committed to actively ensuring its survival. It suggests that while the use of the dialect may be declining in daily interactions—especially among younger speakers—there remains a collective understanding of its historical, social, and emotional value. By advocating for intergenerational transmission, respondents demonstrate a desire to ensure that the dialect does not disappear over time, but instead continues to function as a living part of the Cina Benteng identity, heritage, and tradition. This proactive stance indicates that the community sees language as inseparable from cultural continuity and as a bridge connecting past, present, and future generations.

A total of 46 respondents (92%) believe that Bahasa Indonesia is more useful for achieving success in Indonesia, particularly in the realms of education and the workplace. This perception highlights the instrumental value of the national language in enabling upward mobility, access to academic opportunities, and professional advancement. In a country where Bahasa Indonesia functions as the primary medium of instruction and formal communication, fluency in the language is often viewed as essential for navigating institutional systems, gaining recognition, and integrating effectively into broader society. While the Cina Benteng dialect holds immense cultural and symbolic significance, Bahasa Indonesia is clearly regarded by the majority of respondents as the practical key to future success and socio-economic participation. This duality underscores the balancing act that members of the younger generation must perform—maintaining pride in their ancestral language while also embracing a national language for broader societal opportunities.

A total of 86% of respondents (43 out of 50) reported feeling a closer bond to their community when using the Cina Benteng dialect. This response underscores the crucial role the dialect plays in fostering a sense of solidarity, familiarity, and mutual understanding within the community. Language is not only a means of communication but also a powerful connector that reinforces social ties and shared identity. The use of the dialect in interactions among community members can create a strong sense of belonging and emotional closeness, strengthening communal bonds and preserving cultural cohesion. This finding highlights that, despite shifts in language use across formal and public domains, the dialect continues to serve as a vital tool for maintaining intra-community unity. In essence, the dialect functions as both a symbolic and practical instrument for sustaining social networks and reinforcing cultural loyalty among members of the Cina Benteng community.

Nearly all respondents (98%, or 49 out of 50) agreed that using Bahasa Indonesia makes it easier to be accepted in wider society. This overwhelming agreement highlights the unifying and integrative function of the national language in a multicultural nation like Indonesia. Bahasa Indonesia acts as a common linguistic bridge, enabling communication across diverse ethnic, cultural, and regional groups. Its use is associated not only with practical social mobility but also with a sense of national identity and inclusivity. For members of the Cina Benteng community, fluency in Bahasa Indonesia facilitates broader societal acceptance, participation in national discourse, and access to economic, educational, and social opportunities. This perception reinforces the dual role of language—while the dialect maintains emotional and cultural significance, Bahasa Indonesia ensures practical integration and functional communication in the wider context of Indonesian society.

Interestingly, only 9 respondents (18%) reported feeling embarrassed to speak the Cina Benteng dialect in public, while the remaining 82% expressed comfort and confidence in doing so. This suggests a positive shift in perception, indicating that the dialect is increasingly accepted as a

legitimate and meaningful expression of cultural identity. The low level of embarrassment may reflect growing cultural pride, changing attitudes among younger generations, or a broader societal trend toward valuing linguistic diversity and heritage. Such positive perception is critical for revitalization, as it encourages the use of the dialect beyond private or familial spaces and strengthens its visibility and relevance in public life. It demonstrates that the stigma historically associated with minority or local languages is diminishing, creating opportunities for proactive language preservation and community-based cultural initiatives.

A significant portion of respondents, 90% (45 out of 50), expressed their intent to pass on their mother tongue, including the Cina Benteng dialect, to their future children. This strong intention signals a proactive attitude toward sustaining language transmission across generations. It reflects not only a sense of personal responsibility to preserve cultural and linguistic heritage, but also an awareness of the critical role of family, early education, and social modeling in maintaining the vitality of a language. By emphasizing intergenerational transmission, respondents position the dialect as a living tradition rather than a fading relic, highlighting the community's commitment to safeguarding its heritage amid the pressures of modernization and the dominance of national and global languages. This finding reinforces the idea that while functional use in formal contexts may be declining, the symbolic, emotional, and identity-based value of the Cina Benteng dialect ensures its continued relevance within the community.

An overwhelming 98% of respondents agreed that language, whether it is Bahasa Indonesia, Mandarin, or the local Cina Benteng dialect, is a key part of their cultural identity. This consensus underscores the deep connection between language and one's sense of self and belonging. It reflects an understanding that language is not merely a communication tool, but also a carrier of history, values, and cultural memory. Whether through the national language, ancestral heritage languages, or local dialects, respondents recognize that linguistic expression plays a central role in shaping and affirming their identity as individuals and as members of the Cina Benteng community.

These findings demonstrate a clear contrast between the functional dominance of Bahasa Indonesia and the enduring emotional and symbolic value of the Cina Benteng dialect. While Bahasa Indonesia is widely favored for its practicality in education, professional settings, and broader social integration, the Cina Benteng dialect continues to be deeply cherished as a marker of identity, heritage, and community belonging. This divergence between emotional attachment and actual daily use highlights a common pattern observed in language shift dynamics, where heritage languages face gradual decline not due to a lack of value, but due to limited functional relevance in key domains of life.

The strong emotional attachment to the Cina Benteng dialect reflects its symbolic importance as a vessel of shared history and communal identity. It represents the continuity of cultural practices, oral traditions, and intergenerational narratives that define the unique character of the community, encompassing not only linguistic expression but also values, customs, and social norms passed down through generations. Even as its practical use declines in public spheres, the dialect continues to hold a special place in the hearts of the younger generation, who recognize its role in maintaining connections to their ancestry and heritage. This emotional resonance underscores the dialect's significance beyond mere communication, positioning it as a cultural anchor that strengthens communal cohesion, fosters a sense of belonging, and reinforces the collective memory of the Cina Benteng people. Moreover, the dialect serves as a marker of identity, allowing younger members to differentiate themselves within Indonesia's multicultural society while retaining pride in their unique lineage and traditions.

Conversely, Bahasa Indonesia serves a clear instrumental function in the lives of the community members. Respondents overwhelmingly recognize its utility in formal, educational, and professional contexts, where effective communication, standardization, and broader social acceptance are essential. It enables effective participation in broader society, facilitates social mobility, and ensures inclusivity in interactions with people from diverse linguistic backgrounds, allowing the younger generation to access educational opportunities, career advancement, and civic engagement. The practical necessity of Bahasa Indonesia in these domains explains why the younger generation increasingly prioritizes its use in environments where the Cina Benteng dialect is less functional or widely understood, reflecting a conscious adaptation to modern societal demands and the pressures of integration.

The observed trends suggest a complex interplay between cultural pride and functional necessity. While pride and cultural identity strongly favor the Cina Benteng dialect, the pressures of modern life, education, and professional expectations drive a gradual language shift toward Bahasa Indonesia. Without deliberate and sustained measures to maintain daily usage of the dialect—particularly in public, educational, and semi-formal domains—its functional decline could continue, potentially leading to reduced intergenerational transmission over time. To counteract this, proactive preservation strategies are necessary, combining emotional reinforcement, practical opportunities for use, and structured language programs. Such efforts would not only help sustain the heritage language but also ensure that the younger generation can navigate the dual demands of cultural continuity and societal participation, balancing their symbolic attachment to the Cina Benteng dialect with the functional benefits of Bahasa Indonesia. To counteract this shift, proactive preservation strategies are essential and must be thoughtfully designed to address both the emotional and functional dimensions of language use.

These strategies could include community-based language programs that provide structured opportunities for learning and practicing the Cina Benteng dialect, not only for children but also for teenagers and young adults who may have limited exposure in daily life. Integrating the dialect into cultural events, such as traditional festivals, religious ceremonies, and community gatherings, can also reinforce its symbolic and cultural significance, allowing participants to experience the language in meaningful, socially rich contexts. Formal teaching initiatives in schools or local education centers can complement these efforts by offering systematic instruction in reading, writing, and conversational skills, ensuring that the dialect is passed on in a manner that preserves its linguistic integrity. Additionally, encouraging intergenerational communication within families—where parents, grandparents, and older community members actively engage younger generations in conversation using the dialect—can strengthen emotional bonds and instill a sense of pride in linguistic heritage. By promoting active use of the dialect across multiple contexts, including educational, familial, social, and cultural domains, the community can ensure that its symbolic, emotional, and functional value is sustained. These efforts would not only counterbalance the practical dominance of Bahasa Indonesia but also reinforce the dialect's ongoing relevance, vitality, and visibility, securing its position as a living, cherished aspect of Cina Benteng identity for current and future generations.

In conclusion, the findings reveal a complex and nuanced language attitude among the younger generation of the Cina Benteng community in Tangerang. While Bahasa Indonesia dominates practical communication in formal, educational, and professional contexts, the Cina Benteng dialect remains a cherished marker of identity, heritage, and community cohesion. Balancing functional utility with cultural preservation will be crucial for maintaining the dialect's vitality and ensuring its survival for future generations.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this research indicate that the younger generation of the Cina Benteng community in Tangerang generally exhibits a positive attitude toward their heritage language, the Cina Benteng dialect. A majority of respondents expressed pride in using the dialect, recognizing it as an integral part of their cultural identity and family heritage. However, the use of the dialect is mostly confined to informal settings, particularly within the family and community gatherings, while Bahasa Indonesia emerged as the dominant language across most domains, especially in education, work, and communication outside the community. Mandarin and English were found to be used less frequently, mostly for academic or professional purposes rather than daily interactions.

The results also reveal a gradual language shift, as the younger generation increasingly favors Bahasa Indonesia over the Cina Benteng dialect in formal and mixed social environments. Nevertheless, the high level of emotional attachment to the dialect, along with the recognition of its cultural significance, suggests that language maintenance remains possible if targeted preservation efforts are implemented. Based on the collected data, 86% of respondents demonstrated a positive language attitude, and 100% expressed pride in their heritage language, indicating a strong foundation for revitalization programs. To ensure the sustainability of the Cina Benteng dialect, strategies such as promoting intergenerational language transmission, incorporating the dialect into cultural and educational activities, and encouraging its use in both formal and informal settings are recommended. These findings not only address the research questions but also provide valuable insights for language policy, community initiatives, and cultural preservation efforts aimed at safeguarding the linguistic heritage of the Cina Benteng community for future generations.

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