



## EXPLORING INDONESIAN–MALAY INTERCOMPREHENSION IN THE UPIN & IPIN EPISODE "SUSANTI JANGAN PERGI": IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING INDONESIAN TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

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### ABSTRACT

*Indonesian and Malay are closely related languages that share substantial lexical and pragmatic similarities, enabling intercomprehension between their speakers. However, previous studies have primarily focused on lexical similarities or the historical relationship between the two languages, while limited attention has been given to authentic dialogues as a corpus for investigating intercomprehension and its implications for teaching Indonesian for Speakers of Other Languages (BIPA). This study aims to analyze the lexical and pragmatic forms of intercomprehension in the Susanti Jangan Pergi episode of the Upin & Ipin animated series and to examine their implications for BIPA instruction for Malay speakers. This study employed a qualitative approach using Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). The data consisted of all dialogues in the selected episode, which were transcribed, coded, categorized, and interpreted based on lexical and pragmatic intercomprehension. The findings reveal that intercomprehension is reflected in identical and near-identical lexical items, as well as shared pragmatic strategies, including greetings, apologies, and emotional expressions, which facilitate mutual understanding through positive language transfer. These findings demonstrate that authentic dialogues in Upin & Ipin can serve as valuable resources for developing intercomprehension-based BIPA teaching materials that strengthen learners' lexical, pragmatic, and intercultural competence. This study is limited to a single episode; therefore, future research should employ a broader corpus to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Indonesian–Malay intercomprehension.*

*Keyword: intercomprehension, Indonesian language, Malay language*

### ABSTRAK

Bahasa Indonesia dan Bahasa Melayu merupakan dua bahasa serumpun yang memiliki kedekatan leksikal dan pragmatik sehingga memungkinkan terjadinya interkomprehensi antarpemutur. Namun, penelitian yang memanfaatkan dialog autentik untuk mengkaji interkomprehensi serta implikasinya terhadap pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia bagi Pemutur Asing (BIPA) masih terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis bentuk interkomprehensi leksikal dan pragmatik dalam episode Susanti Jangan Pergi animasi Upin & Ipin serta implikasinya terhadap pengembangan bahan ajar BIPA bagi pemutur Melayu. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode Qualitative Content Analysis terhadap dialog yang ditranskripsikan, dikodekan, dan dianalisis berdasarkan aspek leksikal dan pragmatik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya kosakata identik, kosakata hampir identik, serta kesamaan strategi pragmatik, seperti sapaan, permintaan maaf, dan ekspresi emosional, yang mendukung keterpahaman antarpemutur melalui positive transfer. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa dialog autentik Upin & Ipin berpotensi dimanfaatkan sebagai bahan ajar BIPA berbasis interkomprehensi untuk mengembangkan kompetensi



leksikal, pragmatik, dan budaya penutur Melayu. Penelitian ini terbatas pada satu episode sehingga penelitian selanjutnya disarankan menggunakan korpus yang lebih luas.

Kata kunci: interkomprehensi, Bahasa Indonesia, Bahasa Melayu,

## 1. PENDAHULUAN

Indonesian and Malay are two languages belonging to the Austronesian language family that share close historical, genealogical, and sociocultural relationships. Both languages evolved from Classical Malay, which functioned as a *lingua franca* throughout Southeast Asia, before developing along different trajectories due to language policies and the socio-political contexts of their respective countries (Collins, 2018). Despite these differences, Indonesian and Malay retain a high degree of similarity in their lexical, morphological, syntactic, and pragmatic features, enabling their speakers to achieve mutual understanding without extensive formal language instruction. This phenomenon is referred to as intercomprehension, defined as the ability to understand a related language by drawing on previously acquired linguistic knowledge (Ringbom, 2007).

From the perspective of second language acquisition, intercomprehension is regarded as a form of positive transfer, in which learners utilize similarities in linguistic forms, meanings, and structures between their first language and the target language to facilitate comprehension (Ringbom, 2007). Ellis (2015) argues that prior linguistic knowledge provides the foundation for interpreting new linguistic input. Consequently, the close relationship between Indonesian and Malay constitutes valuable linguistic capital that may accelerate Indonesian language acquisition among Malay speakers. In addition to linguistic similarities, successful communication also depends on the ability to interpret social and cultural contexts. Kramsch (1998) emphasizes that language meaning is inseparable from culture; therefore, intercomprehension encompasses not only lexical similarities but also shared communicative strategies and language use in authentic social interactions.

Despite this potential, intercomprehension has not been fully utilized in the teaching of Indonesian for Speakers of Other Languages (BIPA). Most BIPA instructional materials are designed primarily according to learners' proficiency levels without considering their linguistic backgrounds. As a result, Malay-speaking learners are often required to study basic language elements that they already understand through their native language. An intercomprehension-based approach, however, enables instruction to capitalize on similarities between Indonesian and Malay, allowing greater emphasis on the development of communicative, pragmatic, and intercultural competence. This perspective is consistent with Cook's (2016) concept of multicompetence, as well as the multilingualism framework proposed by Cenoz and Gorter (2015), which views learners' entire linguistic repertoire as a valuable resource for language learning.

One authentic source that reflects natural interaction between Indonesian and Malay is the *Upin & Ipin* animated series. The series was selected because it portrays spontaneous communication between Malay-speaking characters and Susanti, a character who consistently uses Indonesian. These interactions occur without translation, providing authentic examples of intercomprehension in everyday communication. Among the available episodes, *Susanti Jangan Pergi* was chosen because it contains intensive interactions between Indonesian- and Malay-speaking characters within the context of friendship, separation, and social relationships. These interactions present various linguistic phenomena, including identical and non-identical lexical items, politeness expressions, emotional expressions, and communicative strategies that are relevant to intercomprehension analysis.



Previous studies on the relationship between Indonesian and Malay have primarily focused on their historical development, lexical similarities and differences, or semantic change (Collins, 2018). Meanwhile, studies on *Upin & Ipin* have mainly examined character education, cultural representation, or its use as a language-learning medium. To date, few studies have employed authentic *Upin & Ipin* dialogues as a linguistic corpus to investigate Indonesian–Malay intercomprehension by integrating both lexical and pragmatic dimensions while linking the findings to BIPA pedagogy. Therefore, the research gap addressed in this study lies in the absence of studies that explain the mechanisms of intercomprehension in authentic communication and explore their pedagogical implications for BIPA instruction for Malay speakers.

To address this gap, this study offers two main contributions. First, it provides a comprehensive analysis of Indonesian–Malay intercomprehension by integrating lexical and pragmatic perspectives based on authentic dialogue from *Upin & Ipin*. Second, it connects the findings to the development of intercomprehension-based BIPA instruction, thereby extending the study beyond linguistic description to offer pedagogical implications for designing more contextualized instructional materials and learning strategies.

Accordingly, this study aims to (1) identify the lexical forms of Indonesian–Malay intercomprehension found in the *Susanti Jangan Pergi* episode, (2) analyze the pragmatic forms of intercomprehension that facilitate successful communication among the characters, and (3) explain the implications of these findings for the development of Indonesian for Speakers of Other Languages (BIPA), particularly for Malay-speaking learners. The findings are expected to contribute to the theoretical development of intercomprehension research on closely related languages while providing an empirical basis for developing more adaptive, contextualized, and authentic media-based BIPA teaching materials.

## 2. TINJAUAN PUSTAKA

### 2.1 Intercomprehension among Closely Related Languages

Intercomprehension refers to the ability of speakers to understand a related language without formal instruction. According to Ringbom (2007), this ability results from positive transfer, whereby learners use their first-language knowledge to comprehend a target language that shares lexical, morphological, and syntactic similarities. Consequently, the greater the linguistic similarity between two languages, the greater the potential for intercomprehension.

### 2.2 Intercomprehension from the Perspective of Second Language Acquisition

Ellis (2015) argues that second language acquisition is strongly influenced by learners' prior linguistic knowledge. Similarly, Cook (2016), through the concept of multicompetence, and Cenoz and Gorter (2015), through the concept of multilingual repertoire, emphasize that learners' linguistic resources interact and collectively facilitate the acquisition of additional languages. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that intercomprehension arises from the interaction between linguistic similarity and multilingual competence. In the present study, this theoretical framework is used to explain how Malay speakers comprehend Indonesian through authentic dialogues.

### 2.3 Language, Culture, and Intercomprehension

Language and culture are inherently interconnected. Kramsch (1998) argues that the meaning of an utterance is shaped by the social and cultural context in which it is produced. Therefore, intercomprehension extends beyond lexical similarity to include shared forms of address, politeness strategies, and communicative practices. This perspective provides the theoretical basis for analyzing pragmatic intercomprehension in the present study.

### 2.4 Previous Studies and Research Gap

Previous studies on Indonesian and Malay have primarily examined their historical



relationship, lexical similarities, or structural differences (Collins, 2018). Meanwhile, research on the *Upin & Ipin* animated series has mainly focused on character education, cultural representation, and its use as a learning medium. However, few studies have employed *Upin & Ipin* dialogues as an authentic linguistic corpus to investigate Indonesian – Malay intercomprehension by integrating both lexical and pragmatic dimensions and linking the findings to the development of Indonesian for Speakers of Other Languages (BIPA) instruction. This gap forms the basis of the present study and highlights its contribution to advancing intercomprehension research using authentic linguistic data while providing pedagogical implications for BIPA instruction.

### 3. METODE

This study employed a qualitative approach using Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). This approach was selected because the study focuses on interpreting the meaning and context of language use in the dialogues among characters rather than measuring the frequency of linguistic features. According to Schreier (2012), Qualitative Content Analysis enables researchers to systematically identify, categorize, and interpret data through a coding process, thereby providing an in-depth understanding of the relationship between linguistic forms, context, and meaning.

The data source consisted of the dialogues from the *Susanti Jangan Pergi* episode of the *Upin & Ipin* animated series produced by Les' Copaque Production. This episode was purposively selected because it features direct interactions between characters speaking Indonesian and Malay, making it representative of intercomprehension in authentic communication. The data comprised all verbal utterances collected through documentation techniques, including repeated viewing, verbatim transcription, and verification of the dialogues.

The unit of analysis was utterances containing instances of Indonesian–Malay intercomprehension. The analysis focused on two categories: lexical intercomprehension, including

lexical similarities, near-identical lexical items, and lexical differences, and pragmatic intercomprehension, including forms of address, politeness strategies, emotional expressions, and communicative strategies.

Data were analyzed following the Qualitative Content Analysis procedures proposed by Schreier (2012): (1) transcribing the dialogues, (2) repeatedly reading the transcripts to understand the communicative context, (3) identifying utterances containing intercomprehension, (4) coding the data based on lexical and pragmatic categories, (5) interpreting the coded data using theories of intercomprehension and second language acquisition, and (6) drawing conclusions based on the identified patterns.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, theoretical triangulation was employed by comparing the results with theories of intercomprehension (Ringbom, 2007), second language acquisition (Ellis, 2015), multicompetence (Cook, 2016), and language and culture (Kramsch, 1998). In addition, persistent observation was conducted through repeated examination of the transcripts and coding results to maintain the consistency and credibility of the analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### 4. HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

#### Overview of the *Susanti Jangan Pergi* Episode

The *Susanti Jangan Pergi* episode is one of the *Upin & Ipin* animated series that portrays everyday social interactions among child characters in the fictional village of Kampung Durian Runtuh. Unlike many other episodes, which primarily focus on children's play activities or family life, this episode highlights themes of cross-border friendship, cultural diversity, and the social bonds established between characters from Malaysia and Indonesia. The presence of Susanti, an Indonesian child character, serves as the central element that creates a naturally occurring bilingual communicative setting in which Indonesian and Malaysian Malay are used



simultaneously. This authentic interaction provides a rich linguistic context for examining intercomprehension between the two closely related languages, as the characters successfully communicate despite maintaining their respective linguistic identities.

## Identical Lexical Items

Lexical intercomprehension represents the most readily observable form of intercomprehension because it arises from similarities in both lexical form and meaning between two genetically related languages. In the case of Indonesian and Malay, these shared lexical features provide an initial linguistic foundation that enables speakers to comprehend utterances without relying on complex translation processes. Ringbom (2007) argues that language learners naturally exploit formal linguistic similarities as cues for meaning construction, allowing comprehension to occur through the mechanism of positive transfer. The greater the degree of lexical similarity between the first language and the target language, the lower the cognitive effort required to process linguistic input.

An analysis of the dialogue transcript from the *Upin & Ipin* episode *Susanti Jangan Pergi* identified numerous lexical items that exhibit identical orthographic forms, pronunciation, and meanings in both Indonesian and Malay. These words are used naturally by characters from both Indonesia and Malaysia without causing communicative barriers. Such lexical correspondence indicates that both languages continue to preserve a considerable number of inherited Malay lexical items that remain productive in everyday communication.

Table 1. Identical Lexical Items in Indonesian and Malay in the *Susanti Jangan Pergi* Episode

| No. | Lexical Item | Dialogue Context           | Meaning in Indonesian and Malay |
|-----|--------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1   | budaya       | "Bahasa dan budaya mereka" | customs and cultural practices  |

|    |              |                                     |                                |
|----|--------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|    |              | berbeda dari kita."                 |                                |
| 2  | hadiah       | "Seronok dapat macam-macam hadiah." | a gift or present              |
| 3  | terima kasih | "Terima kasih."                     | expression of gratitude        |
| 4  | Indonesia    | "Saya akan pulang ke Indonesia."    | country name                   |
| 5  | Malaysia     | "Sahabat dari Malaysia."            | country name                   |
| 6  | pandai       | "Kak pandai cakap Jepun."           | intelligent; capable; skilled  |
| 7  | rajin        | "Rajin belajar."                    | diligent; hardworking          |
| 8  | disiplin     | "Berdisiplin."                      | discipline; adherence to rules |
| 9  | surat        | "Ini ada surat dari bapak saya."    | letter; written communication  |
| 10 | kawan        | "Kawan-kawan."                      | friend; companion              |

Table 1 demonstrates that a considerable proportion of the vocabulary found in the dialogue exhibits identical orthographic forms across Indonesian and Malay, requiring virtually no phonological or semantic adjustment during comprehension. Lexical items such as *budaya*, *hadiah*, *pandai*, *rajin*, *surat*, and *terima kasih* perform equivalent semantic and communicative functions in both language systems. Consequently, speakers are able to comprehend these expressions directly through form recognition, without relying extensively on contextual inference.

From the perspective of intercomprehension, this phenomenon constitutes a clear manifestation of positive transfer, as proposed by Ringbom (2007). Malay-speaking characters who hear Susanti's Indonesian utterances, such as "*Saya mau*



*mengucapkan terima kasih sama Cikgu" or "Saya akan pulang ke Indonesia,"* are able to understand the intended meaning because the principal lexical elements already exist within their own linguistic repertoire. Conversely, Indonesian speakers can readily comprehend Malaysian characters using words such as *hadiah*, *pandai*, and *rajin* with little or no processing difficulty. These observations indicate that comprehension does not occur through word-for-word translation but rather through the activation of lexical representations that have already been established in the learner's mental lexicon.

These findings are also consistent with theories of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) proposed by Ellis (2015), who argues that language acquisition is strongly influenced by learners' prior linguistic knowledge. Learners naturally associate unfamiliar linguistic input with previously acquired forms, thereby facilitating more efficient language processing. In the present study, the extensive lexical overlap between Indonesian and Malay substantially reduces learners' cognitive processing load because they are not required to construct entirely new semantic representations. Accordingly, identical lexical items function as a linguistic bridge, accelerating comprehension of the target language while lowering the cognitive demands associated with second language learning.

Cook's (2016) concept of multicompetence further supports this interpretation. According to Cook, multilingual competence should not be viewed as a collection of independent language systems but rather as an integrated linguistic repertoire in which multiple languages interact dynamically. Malay speakers who have already internalized their native lexical system automatically activate this knowledge when encountering Indonesian. As a result, they recognize identical vocabulary without requiring explicit instruction. This mechanism explains why communication among the characters in the episode proceeds naturally despite each participant maintaining his or her own linguistic identity.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the presence of identical lexical items also reflects

the strong historical relationship between Indonesian and Malay. Collins (2018) explains that both languages originated from the same Malay linguistic tradition and therefore continue to preserve a substantial body of shared basic vocabulary employed across a wide range of communicative domains. This lexical continuity helps explain why cross-border communication between Indonesian and Malaysian speakers generally occurs with relatively few obstacles compared with communication involving speakers of genetically unrelated languages.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research on intercomprehension among closely related languages, which has consistently identified lexical similarity as one of the strongest predictors of successful cross-linguistic comprehension (Ringbom, 2007). Earlier studies examining Indonesian and Malay likewise demonstrate that identical vocabulary significantly contributes to mutual intelligibility between speakers of the two languages. Nevertheless, much of the existing literature has been limited to documenting lexical similarities or describing the historical relationship between the two languages. The present study extends previous scholarship by identifying identical lexical items through authentic conversational data extracted from the *Upin & Ipin* animated series and by relating these findings to the mechanisms of intercomprehension and their pedagogical implications for BIPA instruction.

Within the context of Indonesian for Speakers of Other Languages (BIPA), identical lexical items have important pedagogical implications. Such vocabulary can serve as an effective entry point for Indonesian language instruction aimed at Malay-speaking learners. Rather than introducing all basic vocabulary from the beginning, instructors may capitalize on existing lexical similarities as a foundation for progressing toward more complex linguistic topics, including semantic variation, pragmatic usage, and intercultural communication. This instructional strategy is consistent with the principles of multilingual pedagogy, which regard learners' first language as a valuable educational resource rather than an obstacle to



second language acquisition (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015).

The pedagogical value of this approach is further enhanced through the use of authentic audiovisual media such as *Upin & Ipin*. Learners are exposed not only to isolated lexical similarities but also to authentic examples of how these words function within naturally occurring communicative contexts. Consequently, language learning extends beyond the acquisition of linguistic forms toward the development of communicative competence and intercultural awareness, reflecting Kramsch's (1998) view that language learning necessarily involves understanding the cultural contexts in which language is embedded. Through this process, learners develop a more comprehensive communicative competence by integrating linguistic knowledge with contextual and cultural understanding.

## Near-Identical Lexical Items

In the *Susanti Jangan Pergi* episode, near-identical lexical items naturally emerge throughout the conversations between Susanti, who consistently speaks Indonesian, and the other characters, who predominantly use Malaysian Malay. Although these lexical variations differ in form, they do not disrupt communication because speakers are able to infer the intended meaning by relying on lexical similarity, contextual cues, and their existing linguistic knowledge.

Table 2. Near-Identical Lexical Items in Indonesian and Malay in the *Susanti Jangan Pergi* Episode

| No. | Bahasa Indonesia    | Bahasa Melayu | Makna                                     |
|-----|---------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1   | teman               | kawan         | orang yang menjalin hubungan persahabatan |
| 2   | berbicara / berkata | cakap         | menyampaikan ujaran                       |
| 3   | pulang              | balik         | kembali ke tempat asal                    |

|   |            |             |                                           |
|---|------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 4 | libur      | cuti        | waktu tidak bekerja atau tidak bersekolah |
| 5 | mengajari  | mengajar    | memberikan pengajaran                     |
| 6 | mengatakan | beritahu    | menyampaikan informasi                    |
| 7 | sekali     | betul-betul | penanda penegasan                         |
| 8 | menghargai | hargai      | memberikan penghormatan atau apresiasi    |

Table 2 demonstrates that the lexical relationship between Indonesian and Malay is not always manifested through identical word forms. Many lexical pairs share equivalent referential meanings while differing in their standardized lexical realizations as a consequence of the independent development of each language. Nevertheless, these differences do not prevent successful communication because speakers are able to associate the lexical forms through contextual interpretation and shared conceptual knowledge.

The lexical pair *teman* and *kawan* represents the most prominent example in this episode. Susanti consistently uses the expression *teman-teman*, whereas the Malaysian characters predominantly employ the word *kawan*. Despite their different lexical forms, both terms refer to the same social concept of friendship. From a semantic perspective, these words constitute an example of cross-linguistic synonymy, enabling reciprocal comprehension without requiring additional clarification. This phenomenon illustrates that intercomprehension is not exclusively dependent on orthographic similarity but is also supported by the conceptual equivalence encoded in each language.

A similar pattern can be observed in the lexical pair *pulang* and *balik*. In the dialogue, Susanti states, "*Saya mau pulang ke Indonesia*," while the Malaysian characters use expressions such as *balik kampung* and *balik sini lagi*. Although different lexical items are selected,



both expressions convey the same conceptual meaning of returning to one's previous or home location. These lexical differences do not interfere with communication because the conversational context provides sufficient semantic cues for interpretation. Ringbom (2007) argues that learners of closely related languages frequently rely on semantic context to establish connections between lexical forms that are not formally identical but express equivalent conceptual meanings.

Another noteworthy example is the lexical pair *libur* and *cuti*. In Indonesian, the word *libur* is commonly used to refer to periods during which school or work activities are suspended, whereas Malaysian Malay typically employs the term *cuti*. Although the lexical forms differ, both denote the same concept of a temporary break from regular activities. Indonesian speakers generally understand the expression *cuti sekolah* through repeated exposure to Malaysian media, while Malaysian speakers readily interpret *libur* through communicative context. This observation suggests that intercomprehension is facilitated not only by linguistic similarity but also by sustained cultural contact through mass media and other forms of transnational communication.

Lexical variation is also evident in the use of *berbicara* or *berkata* in Indonesian and *cakap* in Malaysian Malay. For example, one Malaysian character says *pandai cakap Jepun*, whereas Susanti uses the expression *mau ngomong sesuatu*. Although different lexical choices are employed, their communicative function remains identical, namely expressing the act of speaking. These differences represent lexical variation rather than conceptual divergence and therefore do not impede mutual comprehension.

From the perspective of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), these findings indicate that learners rely not only on formal lexical similarity but also on linguistic inferencing to establish semantic relationships between words with equivalent meanings. Ellis (2015) argues that language acquisition involves activating learners' prior linguistic knowledge to

formulate hypotheses about unfamiliar linguistic forms. Accordingly, when Malay speakers encounter the word *pulang*, they naturally associate it with the concept represented by *balik*, which already exists within their linguistic repertoire. Conversely, Indonesian speakers can infer the meaning of *cuti* by relating it to the familiar concept of *libur*. This process demonstrates that language learning develops dynamically through the activation of interconnected semantic networks rather than through isolated vocabulary memorization.

These findings further support Cook's (2016) concept of multicompetence, which conceptualizes multilingual competence as an integrated and interactive linguistic system. Knowledge of Malay facilitates the comprehension of Indonesian, just as knowledge of Indonesian may support the understanding of Malay. The interaction among these linguistic systems enables learners to construct meaning by recognizing conceptual relationships across lexical items rather than by memorizing direct lexical equivalents. Consequently, language acquisition becomes a process of integrating existing linguistic experience with newly encountered linguistic forms.

Compared with previous studies examining the relationship between Indonesian and Malay, most research has primarily focused on documenting lexical differences or tracing historical semantic developments. The present study offers a different perspective by demonstrating that lexical variation itself may function as a mechanism that strengthens intercomprehension when interpreted within authentic communicative contexts. The dialogues in *Upin & Ipin* reveal that speakers experience little difficulty understanding lexical items such as *kawan*, *balik*, *cuti*, and *cakap* because contextual information and the close relationship between the two language systems facilitate interpretation. Consequently, this study extends previous research beyond describing lexical similarities and differences by explaining how such variation is cognitively processed during cross-linguistic communication.



These findings have important pedagogical implications for Indonesian for Speakers of Other Languages (BIPA), particularly for Malay-speaking learners. Near-identical lexical pairs can be effectively incorporated into contrastive vocabulary instruction, enabling learners to recognize that equivalent concepts may be expressed through different lexical forms in Indonesian and Malay. Such an instructional approach encourages learners to develop language awareness, fostering a deeper understanding of the systematic relationship between the two languages rather than relying solely on vocabulary memorization. Furthermore, authentic audiovisual materials such as *Upin & Ipin* provide learners with opportunities to observe these lexical variations in naturally occurring communicative situations, thereby promoting the development of communicative competence in a more meaningful and contextualized manner.

### Different Lexical Items and False Friends

Based on the analysis of the dialogue transcript from the *Susanti Jangan Pergi* episode, several lexical items exhibit differences in lexical form as well as variations in semantic preference between Indonesian and Malay. Although these items occur less frequently than identical and near-identical lexical items, they illustrate that intercomprehension is facilitated not only by linguistic similarity but also by speakers' ability to exploit communicative context to overcome lexical differences.

Table 3. Different Lexical Items and False Friends in the *Susanti Jangan Pergi* Episode

| No. | Bahasa Indonesia | Bahasa Melayu | Keterangan                                            |
|-----|------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | ngomong          | cakap         | Perbedaan pilihan leksikal untuk aktivitas berbicara. |
| 2   | teman            | kawan         | Sinonim lintasbahasa yang berbeda bentuk.             |

|   |         |         |                                                                                 |
|---|---------|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3 | pulang  | balik   | Perbedaan pilihan leksikal dengan makna yang setara dalam konteks.              |
| 4 | libur   | cuti    | Variasi leksikal untuk menyatakan masa tidak bersekolah atau tidak bekerja.     |
| 5 | kangen  | rindu   | Perbedaan pilihan leksikal untuk mengungkapkan kerinduan.                       |
| 6 | kampung | kampung | Bentuk identik, tetapi asosiasi pragmatik dapat berbeda menurut konteks budaya. |

Table 3 indicates that most lexical differences identified in this episode do not represent conceptual divergence but rather differences in lexical preference that have developed within the standardized varieties of Indonesian and Malay. For example, Susanti expresses "*Aku pasti akan kangen kalian*," whereas the Malaysian characters more frequently employ the word *rindu*. Although the lexical forms differ, both expressions refer to the same emotional state of longing or missing someone. Indonesian speakers generally understand *rindu*, while Malaysian speakers are equally capable of interpreting *kangen* through the conversational context. This observation demonstrates that communicative context functions as a compensatory mechanism that enables speakers to overcome lexical variation without disrupting mutual understanding.

A similar phenomenon can be observed in the lexical pair *ngomong* and *cakap*. Susanti uses the expression "*Saya mau ngomong sesuatu*," whereas the Malaysian characters consistently employ *cakap* to express the same



communicative function. From a linguistic perspective, these lexical items represent different standardized lexical choices that have evolved independently within Indonesian and Malaysian Malay. Despite their phonological and orthographic differences, both forms fulfill the identical communicative function of referring to the act of speaking. Speakers' ability to understand these expressions illustrates that intercomprehension depends not solely on formal lexical similarity but also on the capacity to infer meaning from communicative context and previous linguistic experience.

Interestingly, no genuine false friends were identified in the dialogue of this episode that resulted in communicative breakdown. This finding is understandable because the *Upin & Ipin* script is intended for audiences in both Indonesia and Malaysia, leading scriptwriters to avoid lexical items that might generate significant semantic ambiguity or misunderstanding. Nevertheless, the concept of false friends remains an essential component of the theoretical framework for intercomprehension. Numerous examples have been documented in the literature on Indonesian and Malay. For instance, the word *bisa* means "to be able to" in Indonesian but may also denote "venom" in Malay; *percuma* means "useless" or "in vain" in Indonesian but can additionally mean "free of charge" in Malay; and *budak* commonly refers to "child" in Malay, whereas in Indonesian it tends to denote a "servant" or may carry negative connotations in certain contexts. Although these examples do not occur in the present dataset, they provide important theoretical illustrations of lexical divergence that may potentially hinder intercomprehension and therefore deserve attention in BIPA instruction.

The findings support Ringbom's (2007) argument that learners of closely related languages predominantly rely on positive transfer as long as unfamiliar lexical forms can be associated with previously acquired linguistic knowledge. However, when learners encounter lexical items that have undergone semantic shift or differences in conventional usage, successful comprehension requires greater reliance on

contextual information and pragmatic knowledge to avoid misinterpretation. Accordingly, intercomprehension should be understood not merely as the recognition of similar linguistic forms but as a dynamic process of meaning construction that integrates lexical knowledge with contextual interpretation.

This interpretation is also consistent with Ellis's (2015) theory of Second Language Acquisition, which proposes that language comprehension results from the interaction among linguistic input, prior linguistic knowledge, and contextual information. Throughout the *Susanti Jangan Pergi* episode, none of the characters requests clarification when encountering unfamiliar lexical variants because the conversational context provides sufficient information for interpreting the intended meaning. This observation highlights the crucial role of contextual information in minimizing ambiguity arising from lexical variation and supporting successful communication between speakers of closely related languages.

From the perspective of multicompetence, Cook (2016) argues that multilingual speakers are capable of managing multiple linguistic systems simultaneously rather than processing each language independently. Instead, lexical knowledge from different languages interacts dynamically within an integrated cognitive system. Consequently, lexical variations such as *kangen-rindu* and *ngomong-cakap* are not perceived as communicative obstacles but as complementary elements that enrich multilingual speakers' linguistic repertoire and enhance their cross-linguistic communicative competence.

The findings also extend previous studies on the relationship between Indonesian and Malay. Much of the existing research has concentrated on documenting lexical differences through dictionary-based comparisons or historical linguistic analyses. In contrast, the present study demonstrates that authentic communication relies more heavily on contextual interpretation than on absolute lexical equivalence. In other words, successful intercomprehension is determined not only by



lexical correspondence but also by speakers' pragmatic ability to interpret communicative intentions within specific interactional contexts. This perspective contributes to the field of intercomprehension studies by emphasizing the importance of analyzing naturally occurring discourse rather than relying exclusively on structural comparisons between language systems.

These findings have important pedagogical implications for Indonesian for Speakers of Other Languages (BIPA), particularly for Malay-speaking learners. Instructors should introduce different lexical items and potential false friends through a contrastive instructional approach, enabling learners to recognize that the close relationship between Indonesian and Malay does not necessarily guarantee semantic equivalence. Classroom activities may incorporate authentic dialogues, role-playing exercises, and contextual discourse analysis so that learners develop not only lexical knowledge but also an understanding of how particular expressions function in real communicative situations. Such instructional strategies are likely to reduce the risk of negative transfer while simultaneously strengthening learners' linguistic awareness of the similarities and differences between Indonesian and Malay.

## Pragmatic Intercomprehension

The episode *Susanti Jangan Pergi* portrays various communicative interactions that demonstrate successful pragmatic intercomprehension between speakers of Indonesian and Malaysian Malay. Throughout the episode, Susanti consistently speaks Indonesian, while the other characters maintain Malaysian Malay as their primary language. Nevertheless, the dialogue reveals almost no instances of communicative breakdown or requests for clarification. This finding indicates that the two speech communities share not only substantial linguistic proximity but also highly compatible pragmatic conventions that facilitate mutual understanding during interaction.

Table 4. Pragmatic Intercomprehension in the Episode *Susanti Jangan Pergi*

| No | Dialogue Excerpt                               | Pragmatic Function              | Evidence of Intercomprehension                                                                                                                                     |
|----|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | "Saya mau ngomong sesuatu."                    | Initiating an important message | The interlocutors immediately understand that the speaker is about to convey important information despite the use of the Indonesian lexical item <i>ngomong</i> . |
| 2  | "Tak payah beritahu."                          | Polite refusal                  | The Indonesian-speaking character correctly interprets the utterance as a polite rejection without requesting clarification.                                       |
| 3  | "Kami minta maaf kerana telah menyakitimu."    | Apology                         | The utterance is understood as an attempt to repair interpersonal relationships.                                                                                   |
| 4  | "Aku pasti akan kangen kalian."                | Emotional expression            | Malaysian characters correctly interpret <i>kangen</i> as expressing the same emotional meaning as <i>rindu</i> .                                                  |
| 5  | "Kalian semua adalah sahabat luar negara aku." | Reinforcing solidarity          | The utterance is interpreted as emphasizing cross-national friendship and social identity.                                                                         |



|   |                 |                                |                                                                                            |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6 | "Terima kasih." | Expressio<br>n of<br>gratitude | The expression is<br>appropriately<br>understood and<br>reciprocated by<br>all characters. |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Table 4 demonstrates that communicative success throughout the episode is determined primarily by the shared understanding of pragmatic functions rather than by complete lexical equivalence. For example, whenever Susanti begins an utterance with "*Saya mau ngomong sesuatu*," the other characters immediately recognize that she intends to communicate something important. Their responses indicate that their attention is directed not toward the lexical choice *ngomong* itself but toward the communicative intention signaled by the utterance. This phenomenon illustrates that pragmatic intercomprehension operates through the recognition of familiar interactional patterns shared by both speech communities rather than through identical linguistic forms.

A similar phenomenon is observed in the utterance "*Tak payah beritahu*." Lexically, this expression differs from its common Indonesian equivalent, *tidak usah memberi tahu*. Nevertheless, Susanti exhibits no indication of misunderstanding. The surrounding conversational context provides sufficient pragmatic cues for interpreting the expression as a polite refusal or dismissal. From a pragmatic perspective, meaning is therefore constructed through contextual inference rather than through the literal interpretation of individual lexical items.

Pragmatic intercomprehension is also evident in the speech act of apologizing. After learning that Susanti will permanently return to Indonesia, the Malaysian characters express their regret by saying, "*Kami minta maaf kerana telah menyakiti hati kau*." Although the utterance contains linguistic variations such as *kau* instead of *kamu* and *kerana* instead of *karena*, the illocutionary force of the apology remains fully comprehensible. Susanti accepts the apology without seeking clarification, indicating that both

interlocutors share comparable sociocultural conventions governing interpersonal reconciliation. This finding supports the notion that pragmatic competence extends beyond lexical recognition to include culturally shared expectations regarding appropriate communicative behavior.

One of the most salient manifestations of pragmatic intercomprehension concerns emotional expression. Susanti consistently employs the Indonesian lexical item *kangen*, whereas the Malaysian characters predominantly use *rindu*. Although these lexical forms differ, they evoke the same emotional concept of longing or missing someone. According to Ellis (2015), second language comprehension involves not only lexical processing but also the integration of contextual and affective information during meaning construction. Consequently, when Susanti states, "*Aku pasti akan kangen kalian*," the Malaysian characters immediately respond with appropriate emotional reactions despite the lexical difference. Their interpretation is guided by contextual understanding and shared emotional experiences rather than by formal lexical equivalence.

Perhaps the strongest illustration of pragmatic intercomprehension appears when Susanti declares, "*Kalian semua adalah sahabat luar negara aku*." This utterance represents the narrative turning point of the episode because it fundamentally redefines the characters' understanding of the concept *sahabat luar negara* ("friends from another country"). Initially, the Malaysian children associate the expression with pen pals living abroad whom they know only through written correspondence. Susanti, however, reconstructs the concept by emphasizing that her Malaysian friends themselves are her *foreign friends* simply because they come from another country, despite their daily face-to-face interactions. Remarkably, this conceptual shift is immediately understood and accepted without linguistic confusion. The characters promptly revise their previous assumptions and emotionally embrace Susanti's perspective. This episode demonstrates that pragmatic intercomprehension encompasses not



only the interpretation of utterances but also the negotiation and reconstruction of shared social meanings.

From Ringbom's (2007) perspective, the communicative success observed throughout the episode illustrates that positive transfer extends beyond the lexical level to the pragmatic domain. Speakers rely on their previous communicative experiences to interpret the intentions underlying their interlocutors' utterances. Pragmatic intercomprehension thus emerges as an integrative process involving linguistic knowledge, sociocultural experience, and contextual interpretation rather than as a simple comparison of lexical forms.

Cook's (2016) concept of multicompetence further supports this interpretation. Cook argues that multilingual speakers do not store their linguistic knowledge in isolated systems but instead develop an interconnected communicative repertoire. This phenomenon is clearly reflected in *Susanti Jangan Pergi*, where none of the characters interrupts the conversation because of lexical variation between Indonesian and Malaysian Malay. Instead, they prioritize achieving communicative goals over linguistic uniformity. Successful interaction therefore depends on the speakers' ability to integrate multiple linguistic resources into a unified communicative system.

These findings also resonate with Cenoz and Gorter's (2015) theory of multilingualism. Malaysian society is inherently multilingual, exposing its speakers to multiple languages and language varieties in everyday life. Such multilingual experiences strengthen speakers' ability to perform pragmatic inference when interacting with Indonesian speakers. Likewise, Susanti demonstrates considerable communicative flexibility by consistently maintaining her Indonesian linguistic identity without disrupting the flow of interaction.

Consequently, pragmatic intercomprehension in this episode is influenced not only by the genealogical proximity of Indonesian and Malaysian Malay but also by the participants' shared experiences within multicultural and multilingual environments.

From the perspective of Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) instruction, these findings extend beyond vocabulary acquisition. BIPA programs designed for Malay-speaking learners should emphasize the development of pragmatic competence alongside grammatical proficiency. Learners should be guided in understanding culturally appropriate strategies for apologizing, expressing sympathy, showing gratitude, delivering sensitive information, and reinforcing interpersonal solidarity. Authentic audiovisual materials such as *Upin & Ipin* enable learners to observe firsthand how linguistic forms interact with social contexts and cultural values in naturally occurring communication. Such an approach aligns closely with Kramsch's (1998) argument that language learning fundamentally constitutes a process of learning culture through communicative practice.

Compared with previous studies, which have generally positioned *Upin & Ipin* as a medium for character education or vocabulary acquisition, the present study demonstrates that the series also serves as a valuable resource for developing learners' pragmatic competence. The analysis of speech acts, politeness strategies, and meaning negotiation reveals that audiovisual media provide authentic communicative contexts that are often difficult to replicate through conventional textbooks. Accordingly, this study not only enriches scholarly discussions of Indonesian–Malay intercomprehension but also offers an important pedagogical contribution by highlighting cultural and pragmatic proximity as valuable resources for designing BIPA instruction tailored to Malay-speaking learners.

### Pragmatic Intercomprehension

The episode *Susanti Jangan Pergi* portrays a variety of communicative interactions that demonstrate successful pragmatic intercomprehension between speakers of Indonesian and Malaysian Malay. Throughout the episode, Susanti consistently communicates in Indonesian, whereas the other characters primarily use Malaysian Malay. Despite these linguistic differences, the conversations exhibit virtually no instances of communication



breakdown or requests for clarification. This finding suggests that the two speech communities share not only substantial linguistic proximity but also highly compatible pragmatic conventions that facilitate mutual understanding during interaction.

Table 4. Pragmatic Intercomprehension in the Episode *Susanti Jangan Pergi*

| No | Dialogue Excerpt                                     | Pragmatic Function              | Evidence of Intercomprehension                                                                                                                                    |
|----|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | "Saya mau ngomong sesuatu."                          | Initiating an important message | The interlocutors immediately understand that the speaker intends to convey important information despite the use of the Indonesian lexical item <i>ngomong</i> . |
| 2  | "Tak payah beritahu."                                | Polite refusal                  | The Indonesian-speaking character correctly interprets the utterance as a polite refusal without requesting clarification.                                        |
| 3  | "Kami minta maaf kerana telah menyakitimu hati kau." | Apology                         | The utterance is understood as an attempt to restore interpersonal relationships.                                                                                 |
| 4  | "Aku pasti akan kangen kalian."                      | Emotional expression            | The Malaysian characters correctly interpret <i>kangen</i> as conveying the                                                                                       |

same emotional meaning as *rindu*.

|   |                                                |                         |                                                                                                   |
|---|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5 | "Kalian semua adalah sahabat luar negara aku." | Reinforcing solidarity  | The utterance is interpreted as emphasizing cross-national friendship and shared social identity. |
| 6 | "Terima kasih."                                | Expression of gratitude | The expression is appropriately understood and reciprocated by all characters.                    |

Table 4 demonstrates that communicative success throughout the episode is determined primarily by shared pragmatic functions rather than by complete lexical equivalence. For instance, whenever Susanti begins an utterance with "*Saya mau ngomong sesuatu*," the other characters immediately recognize that she intends to deliver important information. Their responses indicate that they focus not on the lexical form *ngomong* itself but rather on the communicative intention conveyed by the utterance. This finding illustrates that pragmatic intercomprehension operates through the recognition of familiar interactional patterns shared by both speech communities rather than through identical linguistic forms.

A similar phenomenon can be observed in the utterance "*Tak payah beritahu*." Lexically, this expression differs from its common Indonesian equivalent, *tidak usah memberi tahu*. Nevertheless, Susanti exhibits no indication of misunderstanding. The surrounding conversational context provides sufficient pragmatic cues for interpreting the utterance as a polite refusal or dismissal. From a pragmatic perspective, meaning is therefore constructed through contextual inference rather than through the literal interpretation of individual lexical items.

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Perhaps the most compelling illustration of pragmatic intercomprehension occurs when Susanti states, "*Kalian semua adalah sahabat luar negara aku.*" This utterance represents the narrative turning point of the episode because it fundamentally redefines the characters' understanding of the concept *sahabat luar negara* ("friends from another country"). Initially, the Malaysian children associate the expression with pen pals living abroad whom they know only through written correspondence. Susanti, however, reconstructs the concept by emphasizing that her Malaysian friends themselves are her *foreign friends* simply because

they come from another country, despite their daily face-to-face interactions. Remarkably, this conceptual shift is immediately understood and accepted without linguistic confusion. The characters promptly revise their previous assumptions and embrace Susanti's perspective. This episode demonstrates that pragmatic intercomprehension encompasses not only the interpretation of utterances but also the negotiation and reconstruction of shared social meanings.

From Ringbom's (2007) perspective, the communicative success observed throughout the episode illustrates that positive transfer extends beyond the lexical level to the pragmatic domain. Speakers draw upon their previous communicative experiences to interpret the intentions underlying their interlocutors' utterances. Pragmatic intercomprehension therefore emerges as an integrative process involving linguistic knowledge, sociocultural experience, and contextual interpretation rather than as a simple comparison of lexical forms.

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## 5. KESIMPULAN

This study demonstrates that Indonesian–Malay intercomprehension in the *Susanti Jangan*

*Pergi* episode operates at both the lexical and pragmatic levels. Lexical intercomprehension is reflected in identical and near-identical lexical items, as well as lexical differences that remain comprehensible through context. Pragmatic intercomprehension is supported by shared politeness strategies, emotional expressions, and cultural values, enabling effective communication between speakers without extensive formal language instruction. These findings highlight that linguistic and cultural proximity facilitates successful mutual understanding between Indonesian and Malay speakers.

This study contributes to the advancement of intercomprehension research by integrating lexical and pragmatic analyses based on authentic dialogues from the *Upin & Ipin* animated series as a linguistic corpus. The findings also provide pedagogical implications for the development of Indonesian for Speakers of Other Languages (BIPA), particularly for Malay-speaking learners, through the application of an intercomprehension-based approach and the use of authentic learning materials.

This study is limited to a single episode of the animated series and therefore does not represent the full range of Indonesian–Malay language use. Future research is recommended to employ a broader linguistic corpus, incorporate various communication media or contexts, and empirically examine the effectiveness of intercomprehension-based approaches in BIPA instruction.

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