

UNVEILING THE HIDDEN LANGUAGE: MORSE CODES IN INDONESIA SCOUT SPEECH COMMUNITY

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Abstract

A speech community is a group of people connected by using the same language and shared norms, values, and experiences. Those factors shape how people use and interpret language. This study aims to investigate how Morse code functions as part of the speech community within the scouting community, explore its use in communication among scouts, and examine how scouts learn, apply, and interpret Morse code in various scouting activities, focusing on its role in communication and how scouts learn, apply, and interpret it in various activities. Data collection is done using a form that must be filled out by the participants who are currently in college and part of the scouts' community. The researcher used a descriptive qualitative method. Based on the research result, shows that the Morse code used among Scouts is a form of speech community identity. Scout members very often use Morse Code in scout activities to keep information private in emergencies or dangerous situations. Scout members often used a flashlight or whistle to deliver the message with Morse code. Scout members learn how to apply and interpret through formal or informal training.

Keywords: Morse code; Scout; Sociolinguistics; Speech Community.

INTRODUCTION

Humans are inherently social beings and communication is an essential part of their interactions and daily lives. According to Mailani et al. (2022), communication is a crucial aspect of bridging life together in society and organizations, including scout organizations, which emphasize cooperation and communication. The scouts use many forms of communication, one of which is non-verbal communication, which is called Morse Codes. According to Huys (2024), Morse code is a method of encoding textual information through a series of dots and dashes, which represent individual letters, numbers, and punctuation marks. The Scout Community has adapted and modified the codes, which were originally designed for long-distance communication, to basic survival skills for the members of the community.

The Indonesian scout movement, known as *Pramuka*, is a forum for character building for the younger generation, especially students and university students, to develop their great potential, courage, and discipline. As stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and

Culture of Indonesia No. 63 of 2014. *Pramuka* is not only an extracurricular activity but also a program to develop students who will embody national values as the future of the nation. Scouts have unique characteristics—not just a community that speaks the same language, but also a group that shares norms, values, and distinctive communication methods. Therefore, a visible characteristic is the existence of a strong internal speech community.

Morse codes are not only implemented as a skill but also serve as an important form of a speech community. In terms of sociolinguistics, a community that shares the same language, norms, values, and experiences is called a speech community. Speech community is an important unit in sociolinguistic and ethnographic studies, which makes a difference in analyzing social interaction, linguistic norms, and variation. Feels and shared various factors influence how members of the community use, value, and interpret the language (Saville-Troike 2003: 15). Its members may use one language, several dialects, or even different languages, but they adhere to the same communicative norms. Scouts is one of the speech communities that exist in the world. Milburn (2004) reviewed how the concept of a speech community has been applied across disciplines and noted that scholars typically enter a setting where group members interact and define its boundaries by label, place, or code. The speech community in Scouting aligns with this framework, as it includes secret codes and symbols that strengthen solidarity among its members. Codes such as ciphers and special jargon, have functioned as a unique communication tool, which is used in certain conditions during scout activities, facilitates the flow of information, signifies something, keeps information confidential, adds to the understanding of codes even in the digital era, and is an integral identity of the group.

This research aims to: (1) Learning Methods and Mastery of Morse Code in Indonesian Scout; (2) explore its uses in communication among scouts; and (3) examine how Indonesian scouts learn, apply, and interpret Morse code in scouting activities. By examining the Morse Codes, we can gain insights into how language contributes to fostering solidarity and solidifying the community's identity. While limited research has explored the connection between secret codes in *Pramuka* and linguistic aspects, this study offers a valuable contribution to the field of linguistics and can serve as a foundation for further discussions.

Previous research has primarily focused on the technical aspects of learning Morse code or speech communities formed based on geography or cultural factors. For example, La Saadi and Ernawati (2020) explored speech communities in Banda Naira. Additionally, Zubair and Solichin (2017) investigated how Morse code is introduced and applied using artificial neural networks with the backpropagation method, focusing on its technical aspects within the context of Scout activities. However, there have been a few research that highlight the Morse Code as part of social identity, despite its potential to form a speech community. The main difference of

this research lies in its emphasis on the use of the Morse Code from a sociolinguistic perspective. The research also aims to demonstrate how Morse code contributes to the formation of a speech community in the scouting community, which is utilized as a unique communication tool among its members.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method to find out more about the secret codes in the form of ciphers and symbols used in the scouting community, especially the Morse code. According to Ayton, 2023, the qualitative descriptive method describes phenomena rather than explains them, and aims to provide a comprehensive summary of events. This method was chosen because it can provide an in-depth understanding of the views or paradigms of each individual. Data was collected through questionnaire forms distributed to respondents through digital platforms such as social media to reach a wider range of participants. The expected target number of respondents is between 20 to 30 people consisting of college students who are currently active members of the scout community. Participants were selected based on the following criteria: experience with scouts, age, and education. The questionnaire was made available in both English and Bahasa Indonesia to accommodate participants and facilitate their responses. This study ensured that participation was voluntary and anonymous, with all data collected stored securely to maintain participants' privacy. Once the data was gathered, it was carefully analyzed and categorized to identify key patterns and insights.

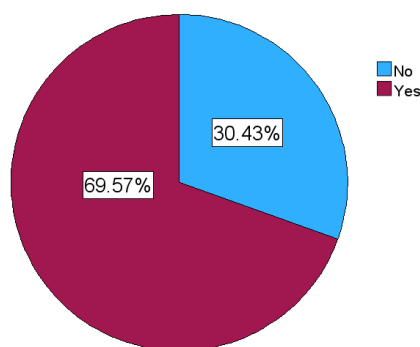
FINDINGS

The researcher presents the data findings based on a questionnaire or form filled out by the participants who are currently in college and part of the scouts' community.

Learning Methods and Mastery of Morse Code in Indonesia Scouts

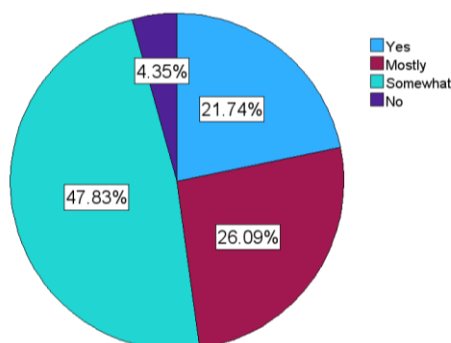
Scouts members learn Morse code and various methods. Out of the 23 respondents, 16 reported they had formally studied Morse code through scout activities. This means about 60% percent of the participants had formal training in Morse code.

Figure 1: Have scout members had any formal learning of Morse Code



The remaining seven respondents, or around 30% of the group reported that they learned Morse code by self-desire. Respondents without formal training are self-studying Morse code through watching videos on YouTube.

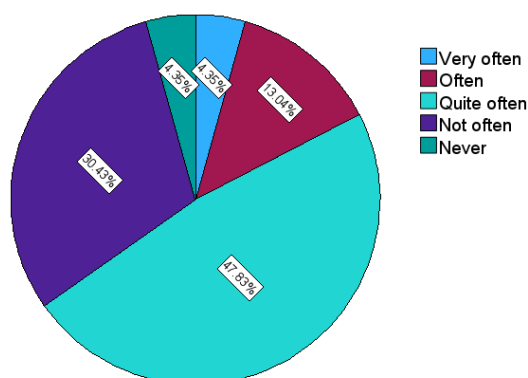
Figure 2: Scout members' levels of mastering the Morse Code



The diagram graph shows that the majority of respondents (47.83%) selected "somewhat" as their level of understanding of Morse code. Of the respondents, 26.3% selected "Mostly," indicating that they have mastered the majority of the Morse code, and the same percentage (26.3%) selected "Yes," indicating that they have mastered it. On the other hand, 5.3% of those surveyed acknowledged that they did not comprehend the Morse code (No). Only a small portion of respondents did not comprehend the Morse code at all, but the majority had a moderate to high grasp of it.

Morse Code Usage in Activities

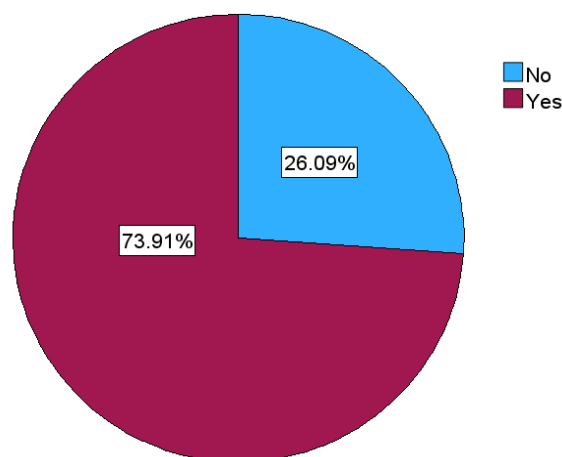
The use of Morse code often occurs in scout organizations in Indonesia which will be used during certain activities especially when conveying something confidential. However, not all scouts often communicate with Morse code when they are in an activity. This is evidenced by the data diagram that has been obtained, 4.35% of respondents use it very often, 13.04% of respondents use it often, 47.83% of respondents use it quite often, 30.43% of respondents do not use it often and 4.35% of respondents never use it. This distribution shows that although some respondents often use Morse code, most only use it occasionally, and a small proportion never use it at all.

Figure 3: Frequency of Morse Code Usage in Scout Activities

Based on the results of the graph below, most respondents (73.91%) answered that fellow scouts can communicate using the Morse code. While the rest (26.09%) answered that they could not communicate with the Morse code, this can be interpreted that there are variations in the ability to use the Morse code between fellow scouts. In conclusion, most scouts can compete using more passwords but there are one-third of respondents who are still unable to do so.

Most respondents emphasized the benefits of the Morse code when in an emergency situation. The Morse code can be an effective communication tool as it can be used to send SOS signals or secret messages that are only understood by trained members. This allows for confidentiality of messages between members. In addition, morse code is known to train various skills such as concentration, accuracy, creativity, and memory, which can make them think critically and hone their problem-solving abilities.

Figure 4: Percentage of fellow scout members who can communicate with Morse Code



How Morse Code Learn, Apply, and Interpret Morse Code in Scouting Activities

The data shows that Morse code is consolidated into the Scouts' communication culture, serving as an essential tool for emergency activities and scenarios. Morse code is commonly utilized in Scouting activities to improve communication skills and teamwork. From the survey, it appears that most respondents (63.16%) have received formal training on Morse code. This formal training most likely provides a structured and comprehensive approach, possibly through a scouting program or training session. These training sessions often incorporate hands-on activities such as relaying signals using whistles or flashlights. For example, members practice distinguishing between dots and lines in dynamic scenarios, such as "Moonlit Morse," where signals are exchanged in low light conditions.

All four respondents gave some examples of word forms commonly used in scout activities using Morse code. The morse code for each word varied greatly, some containing commonly used commands or instructions. Some examples of Morse code mentioned were, "danger" with the code (. _ . _ . _).

The majority of respondents mentioned the use of whistles as the main tool in sending Morse code. In addition, flashlights were also mentioned as an alternative to communicating Morse code with light signals, especially in night situations or in low light conditions. This shows that scouts utilize various media to transmit Morse code, depending on the situation and field conditions. These exercises not only teach technical skills, but also instill teamwork, coordination, and problem-solving abilities. Below are words that are often interpreted among scouts;

Table 1: Morse Code forms

Word / Phrase	Morse Code	Tool(s) Used
Bersiap	(—)	Whistle

Berbaris	(. _ .)	Whistle, flashlight
Berkumpul	(.....)	Whistle
Berhenti	(.)	Whistle
Tanda bahaya	(-)	Whistle
Mengerti	(. . . _)	Whistle, flashlight
Bahaya	(. _ . _ .)	Whistle, flashlight
Belok kanan	(_ .)	Whistle, flashlight
Belok kiri	(. _)	Whistle, flashlight
Hadap kanan	(_ .)	Whistle, flashlight
Hadap kiri	(. _)	Whistle, flashlight
Maju	(. .)	Whistle, flashlight
Tunggu	(. _ .)	Whistle, flashlight

DISCUSSION

In discussion, researchers would find the answer to the research question.

Morse Code and Speech Community Identity

According to Saville-Troike (2003), The essential criterion for ‘community’ is that some significant dimension of experiences has to be shared, and for the ‘speech community’ that the shared dimension be related to ways in which members of the group use, value, or interpret language. Based on this definition, Morse Code within Indonesia Scout clearly forms a speech community. Morse code creates a unique and shared form of communication that builds group identity. The shared norms, values, and experiences are the ones that influence scout members’s use and interpretation of language, making it a distinct language within the community. This is supported by the finding that 73.91% of respondents can communicate with each other in Morse Code, demonstrating their participation in shared norms (Labov 1972) and mutual understanding of how this language is used and interpreted. Such linguistic unity reflects what Bucholtz (1999) describes as the primary focus of speech communities: shared sociolinguistic norms. Furthermore, Morse Code within the Indonesian Scout embodies key characteristics of a speech community as outlined in sociolinguistic literature: language interaction and social organization,

organized internal diversity, agreement on the value and evaluation of language, and focus on communicative practice. Similar to how Labov (1966) analyzed New York City's heterogeneous yet unified speech community, Morse Code unites Indonesian Scouts despite potential variations in skill levels or regional differences. In this context, Morse Code functions not only as a tool for communication but also as a symbol of membership. Using Morse Code allows members to embody and demonstrate the principles and rules adopted by Scouts, fostering a sense of commitment and pride. This aligns with Bucholtz's (1999) view that language within a speech community serves as a crucial factor in constructing group identity and shared experiences.

The usage of Morse Code in scout activities

The use of Morse code in the Scout community has a strong connection with the concept of a speech community, which is a group of people who share certain norms, rules, and communication practices. The Scout community, with its distinctive identity, forms a unique speech community in which the Morse code is one of the forms of communication that plays an important role. The fact that 73.91% of members agree they are able to communicate using Morse code and apply it in their activities, especially in emergencies, shows that this practice has been embedded in the Scouts' communication culture.

The Morse code in the Scout speech community functions not only as a communication tool but also as a means to strengthen group bonds through shared knowledge and skills. These skills develop a sense of community and solidarity among members, as understanding and using the Morse code requires shared practice and coordination. Furthermore, when Scout members use the Morse code, they engage in communication practices that define roles and expectations within their community. This reinforces the group's identity as a community that is prepared for a variety of challenges, including emergencies where speed and accuracy of communication are essential.

The correlation with the speech community can also be seen in how the Morse code helps maintain fundamental Scout values, such as self-reliance and preparedness. Scouts, as part of a communication community that shares these skills, become more resilient and able to act effectively in conditions where modern solutions may not be reliable. Mastery of Morse builds trust between members, as each individual knows that communication can still take place without advanced technology. Morse is thus not just a tool, but an integral element in communication practice that enriches the character and cohesiveness of the Scout community as a resilient and adaptive speech community.

The fact that Morse code supports the basic principles of scouting, such as self-reliance and preparedness, suggests a correlation with "talking communities". As part of a group of people who share these skills, scouts become stronger and more capable of acting in situations where

current technology may not be reliable. Everyone trusts each other with their mastery of Morse because they know communication is possible without sophisticated tools. Morse is therefore not just a tool, but also an essential part of communication practice that enriches the nature and strength of the Scout community as a flexible and resilient "speech community".

Scout members learn, apply, and Interpret Morse code in Scout Activities

The data shows that Morse code is inserted in the Scouts' communication culture, serving as an essential tool for emergency activities and scenarios. Morse code is commonly utilized in Scouting activities to improve communication skills and teamwork. From the survey, it appears that most respondents (63.16%) have received formal training in Morse code. This formal training most likely provides a structured and comprehensive approach, possibly through scouting programs or training sessions. Official scouting organizations agree to engage Scouts through hands-on activities, such as sending messages using whistles or flashlights, that encourage an understanding of the structure of Morse code-the dots and lines that represent letters and numbers. Scouts practice Morse code in structured group exercises where they relay messages using different communication methods, including light and sound signals. Activities such as "Moonlit Morse" involve sending messages by flashlight at night by learning to represent dots and dashes with light signals, where dots are short flashes and dashes are longer flashes.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research results, the Morse code used among Scouts is a form of speech community identity. It shows how Morse code creates a sense of shared norms, values, and experiences among Scout members. In addition, Morse code creates a unique form of communication that is understood exclusively by Scout members. Morse code is mainly used to keep information private in emergencies or dangerous situations. Scout members usually learn Morse code in two ways: formal training provided by schools or official institutions and informal training, where members are often self-taught using social media and other resources.

The Morse code in the Scout speech community functions not only as a means of communication but also as a means to strengthen group bonds through shared knowledge and skills. These skills develop a sense of community and solidarity among members, as understanding and using the Morse code requires shared practice and coordination. Furthermore, when Scouts use the Morse code, they engage in communication practices that define roles and expectations within their community. In the Scout speech community, Morse code not only helps people communicate but also helps form group relationships through the exchange of knowledge and skills. Since understanding and using Morse code requires practice and cooperation, these

skills foster a sense of solidarity and togetherness among members. In addition, when Scout members use Morse code, they engage in communication practices that define roles and expectations within their community. This supports the group's identity as a community that is prepared to face various problems, such as emergency situations that require fast and tight communication. All members become more trusting of each other because they know that communication is possible even without modern technology. Morse is not just a tool, but also an important part of communication practices that enrich the character and cohesiveness of Scouts as a strong and flexible speech community.

Scout learning methods are organized and emphasize commonsense applications, such as the utilization of whistles or flashlights to communicate messages. These tools ended up particularly critical in nighttime activities or circumstances where visual or capable-of-being-heard signals are required, particularly when present-day communication strategies are untrustworthy. Scout activities including the practice of Morse code move forward cooperation and problem-solving aptitudes. For cases, brief and long impacts on whistles are utilized to speak to focuses and lines, whereas flashlights are utilized for visual Morse communication at night. These activities not as it were sharpen specialized capability, but moreover fortify collaboration, belief, and coordination between individuals. Compelling communication depends on collective practice, so through organized preparation and commonsense utilization in different activities, Scouts' communication abilities are ceaselessly bolstered and fortified. In this way, Scouts stay arranged, versatile, and joined together.

This research does need to be perfect, it needs to be improved as a reference for the community to find out about the existence of speech communities in the Morse code in Indonesian scouting organizations. It is hoped that the research after this is able to explore more deeply what we have not described in this article. Researchers should compare the use of morse code in Indonesian organizations with other countries' Scouts so that they can understand the insights of how culture and society affect the use and understanding of morse code. Research the use of the morse code in emergency situations to understand the effectiveness of the morse code as a communication tool in critical conditions.

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