

Mitigating pedagogical challenges through culture-based approach: Javanese language learning in rural Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Lusia Neti Harwati^{1,2} and Mala Rajo Sathian^{3*}

¹Department of Southeast Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Universiti Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

²Department of Languages and Literature, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Universitas Brawijaya, Jalan Veteran, Malang, East Java, Indonesia.

³Department of Southeast Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Universiti Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

ABSTRACT

Javanese is a vernacular language used in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The dominance of the national language, *Bahasa Indonesia*, in the country's curriculum is commonly presumed as a threat to the survival of Javanese. Thus, the Yogyakarta administrators have attempted to preserve Javanese through the education sector, strengthened through provincial regulations that focus on providing quality education based on Javanese cultural values. This paper examines students' perceptions of the importance and challenges of Javanese learning based on data obtained from sixth grade students and 4 Javanese language teachers from two schools in Yogyakarta. The findings through questionnaire, classroom observation, and focus group discussion reveal that both teachers and students are mainly challenged in learning Javanese owing to the complexity of Javanese speech levels and the obligation to use students' worksheet with specific learning targets in each semester. Despite the challenges, these aspects are viewed as necessary components of learning process and fundamental in fostering competence in Javanese language that forms an integral part of the people's identity. Creative ways to learn Javanese through culture-based approach is essential. The position of the vernacular in Yogyakarta viewed from the intersectional lens of language nationalism and globalization indicate that Javanese is threatened less due to the predominance of *Bahasa Indonesia*. Rather, its complex learning process in view of the rapid technological and globalized ways of learning poses a bigger challenge.

Keywords: Culture-based approach; Javanese; language learning; pedagogical challenge; Yogyakarta

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INTRODUCTION

Southeast Asian countries are generally linguistically diverse. Embracing vernacular languages in educational policies and practices is advantageous to students as this enables them to be bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural. However, the diversity of Southeast Asian languages is endangered since governments tend to focus on promoting national languages and English. This

phenomenon has a negative impact on early learners with vernacular languages as their mother tongues, as they tend to have lower literacy rates when exposed to other languages. In Malaysia, a downward trend in the use of vernacular languages among the younger generations, prompted concern and attention from several indigenous people groups to the importance of vernacular language formal learning. The Dusun and Iban in Sarawak, and

*Corresponding author
Email: malarajo@um.edu.my

Semai in Peninsular are now included in the formal education system (Smith, 2003). The Philippines, another Southeast Asian country, is the only nation in the region that has a national policy requiring mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) from kindergarten to third grade while English and Filipino are the official languages. Belvis and Gutierrez (2019) maintained that the use of English in academia has been criticized since this is regarded as a legacy of colonialism. Teachers have a positive attitude toward the MTB-MLE program by attempting to encourage students to use their mother tongue. Nevertheless, the lack of adequate teaching and learning resources, such as dictionary and printed materials remains an unsolved problem.

In the case of Indonesia, the government promotes vernacular languages learning by including them in the curriculum as a local content subject but not all provinces are ready and eager to follow the policy. Javanese is one of the vernacular languages in Indonesia with a large speaker population yet is potentially endangered because of the predominance of the national language, *Bahasa Indonesia* in most sectors including education (Van der Kloek, 2019). In this global era, strengthening the position of *Bahasa Indonesia* and promoting its wide usage is an eminent decision. According to Article 44 (1) of the Decree No.24/2009 in reference to the National Flag, Language, Emblem, and Anthem, the Indonesian government is obliged to develop the function of *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language. Hamied and Musthafa (2019) stated that “Indonesia has been extremely successful in its national language policy-making” (p. 309). *Bahasa Indonesia* serves function and role as a medium of instruction in educational institutions.

In the Special Region of Yogyakarta, the only Indonesian province maintaining a traditional ruling elite, this phenomenon is considered a challenge in promoting and transmitting the vernacular to future generations. Despite being a part of the Republic as well as one of its 38 provinces, Yogyakarta enjoys certain autonomies. With its special region status, the provincial government makes continuous efforts to preserve and promote Javanese language and culture. The Provincial Regulation of Yogyakarta No. 2/2021 on Javanese Language, Literature, and Script Revitalization and Development, Article 15 (1) asserts that Javanese teaching curriculum and material production can be considered as an attempt to develop the language. Based on this regional regulation, Javanese is a compulsory subject for students in the primary and secondary education levels in the Yogyakarta province. However, in practice, not all schools use Javanese consistently during the vernacular language classes as teachers tend to prioritize *Bahasa Indonesia*. In other words, the existing problem is largely a lack of coherence

between policy and implementation in the education sector. In the modern era, challenges to develop Javanese teaching strategies have two main sources of reinforcement. The first challenge is the shortage of Javanese language teachers. The second is limited access to high quality internet preventing teachers’ fast access to alternative learning resources, resulting in variations in teaching the language.

There are exceptions to this irregular practice. In the rural northernmost part of the Yogyakarta province, two elementary schools, namely Karanganyar Turi Elementary School and Sanjaya Tritis Pakem Elementary School are noted for their consistent focus and effort on improving Javanese teaching quality. Most of the teachers teaching in these rural schools are natives from Turi and Pakem areas, enabling close knit-communities that allow and motivate teachers, administrators, and parents to build strong relationships that support students’ academic success. Thus, they experience a strong sense of community, identity, and shared values. There are 22 elementary schools in Turi and 24 in Pakem respectively. The case study for this paper namely Karanganyar Turi and Sanjaya Tritis Pakem Elementary Schools possess similar Javanese teacher composition.

A critical overview of the current theoretical trends in the study of Javanese language preservation indicates several research gaps in the literature. Firstly, although it is widely accepted that Javanese language is possibly at risk of disappearing, little relevant research has been undertaken with a focus on the role of schools in preserving the vernacular. Rather, the literature emphasized that social environments, such as family and social media play a crucial role in increasing Javanese language use among young generations. Some scholars have examined the role of educational institutions in maintaining Javanese but to date, there has been no studies investigating students’ perspectives (Atmawati, 2021; Udasmoro et al., 2023). Secondly, previous studies have examined how the national language policy affected not only Javanese language but also self-identification and proficiency of its young speakers (Andriyanti, 2019; Sunarti & Fadeli, 2021). Additionally, the dominance of *Bahasa Indonesia*, the historical development of language policy, the challenges of bilingual education policy in Indonesia as well as the importance of policy for foreign languages have received much scholarly attention (Abduh & Rosmaladewi, 2019), followed by how formal and informal parties should be actively involved in protecting vernacular languages while maintaining the potency of *Bahasa Indonesia* (Benu et al., 2023; Mahayanti & Madya, 2020; Zein, 2019). These studies, however, focused on discussing the potential threats of *Bahasa Indonesia* and foreign languages especially English to the existence of vernacular languages without providing

detailed perspectives and insights into the specific effective or alternative approaches in language teaching.

Drawing from the discussion above, it is noted that Javanese language learning or proficiency has declined or potentially endangered owing to the predominance of *Bahasa Indonesia*. However, despite the concern and decline of Javanese, studies focusing on effective Javanese teaching and learning in Indonesia is scarce. Thus, this paper focuses on the noted gap by examining the attempt of Javanese language maintenance at an elementary school level in Indonesia, focusing on the two schools in Yogyakarta mentioned earlier. The paper suggests that it is vital to initiate an innovative teaching strategy toward effective Javanese teaching and learning, while also reflecting on the challenges of vernacular language maintenance in relation to hegemonic national language policies and community identities. In essence, we find that in the case of Javanese, its challenges are related mostly to the difficulty encountered in learning the language. The primary research questions included: (1) How is Javanese language learning linked to nationalism and what are the challenges of Javanese teaching and learning? and (2) What strategies can potentially lead to effective Javanese teaching and learning process?

METHOD

The data for this paper was collected based on a qualitative research design. Our discussion is guided by Émile Durkheim's theory of functionalism, which is a sociological perspective focusing on understanding the interdependence among members of society. According to Durkheim, society is like a living organism with different parts that are mutually dependent. Each part has its own role and function to maintain stability and harmony. Durkheim viewed social cohesion as the interdependence, or the strength of relationships and the sense of solidarity among members of a community. Society expresses solidarity through shared identity which leads to a group consciousness and this is called mechanical solidarity (Fonseca et al., 2019). In relation to this paper, we consider the group of teachers and students as the principal informants who are able to create and sustain mechanical solidarity. They share the same beliefs and values as well as collaborate and coordinate effectively to preserve the Javanese language and culture.

The main method of data collection included a survey with open-ended questionnaire. The questions ranged from opinions on ways of learning Javanese, the significance of learning the language, to motivations and challenges involved. A total of 40 students comprising 22 males (acronym MS1-MS22) and 18 females (acronym FS1- FS18) aged

between 12 and 13 participated in completing the questionnaire. We discussed with the teachers on how to improve effective questioning. Before distributing the questionnaire to the students, a pilot test to determine its potential effectiveness was conducted. The students completed the open-ended questionnaire in their own time and space to enhance the honesty and accuracy of their responses without being directly observed.

Classroom observations were undertaken between September 2022 and March 2023. The observations were conducted over one academic semester, twice a week, with each observation lasting 60 minutes to understand the students' actual needs, shared values, and beliefs. This enabled us to immerse in the research sites and the informants, as well to observe in detail how the informants interacted. To anticipate loss of analytical attitude problem, we used semi participant observation, a type of observation based on the role played by the researcher/observer. We were involved with the informants by being part of their activities and being present as observers. Non-structured observation was applied as the Javanese teaching and learning process was observed in the naturalistic situations without any interference or disturbance.

We conducted focus group discussion (FGD) with 4 teachers namely, two male teachers (MT1 and MT2, aged 31 and 27) and two female teachers (FT1 and FT2, aged 26 and 55). Two sessions of FGD with 2 teachers in each session were conducted in June 12 and 14, 2023. Each session lasted 60 to 90 minutes and specific guiding questions to interpret teachers' opinions on Javanese language learning and its link to nationalism, the challenges of Javanese preservation, and potential strategies which may lead to effective teaching and learning process were provided. The FGD sessions were scheduled outside of work hours to accommodate each informant's availability, a friendly tone of voice was used to encourage positive conversations and make the informants feel welcomed and relaxed. We attempted to be neutral, open, and non-judgmental in all verbal and nonverbal responses.

The rationale for the selection of 40 students and 4 teachers was based on the main objective of interviewing the right selected people to address the research questions, and not in terms of a plain random sampling to obtain data saturation. Thus, the paper used purposive sampling, involving those who are most knowledgeable on Javanese teaching and learning process and willing to act as representatives in revealing and interpreting the teaching and learning process. The paper is based on homogenous purposive sampling as the informants came from the same group membership with specific characteristics. The group of students and teachers selected as the informants have been together as classmates and colleagues for about six years or

more. As such, they have developed shared values, beliefs, and languages, including Javanese. This group is, therefore, considered a culture-sharing group. The paper involved only a few select individuals to enable a focused, in-depth, and reliable insight and description of the Javanese teaching and learning process.

The data gathered were analyzed using thematic analysis which is commonly used in diverse fields, including education (Lester et al., 2020). The data based on the questionnaire and FGD were organized under specific themes for analysis. The FGD data were recorded and transcribed to capture every utterance from the informants. Thereafter, the ideas and perceptions depicted by the informants in the questionnaire and FGD were noted through memos, highlighting the statements and perceptions of the informants that were potentially important. Subsequently, the data were coded through labelling them with words or short phrases to explain their content and to determine the themes. Inductive approach was applied because the process of meaning-making was started without preconceived codes and theories. How codes interrelate and contrast with one another were summarized in categories to produce themes. Finally, the describing phase involved presenting comprehensive and convincing descriptive passages consisting of text analysis (examples of students and teachers' answers). A letter to the informants with information about the study including the objectives, methodology, expected outcomes, and the detailed procedure of data collection which used audio-visual materials in *Bahasa Indonesia* was distributed. Parental consent form for the informants aged below 18 years old was also provided. Finally, how teachers developed class activities and interacted with students were recorded and it was a non-interactive observation.

FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of students' answers, three themes emerged from the data: (1) Javanese language is an integral part of the local people's identity, (2) students faced some major challenges in learning Javanese, and (3) need for creative ways to learn Javanese language at school. Findings related to teachers' perceptions were integrated in the descriptive passages of students' responses. There are three themes found from FGD transcripts, namely: (1) developing spirit of ethnonationalism through Javanese teaching and learning, (2) challenges in teaching Javanese language, and (3) culture-based Javanese teaching and learning.

Javanese Language as Integral Part of Local People's Identity

The forty students who completed the questionnaire characterized Javanese language as their local

identity. Jones and Pappas (2023) argued that one's own identity can be seen from various forms of belonging, including a language. A vernacular language is a vital local identity marker, losing the language can be perceived as losing one's identity. The students interviewed for this study have common characteristics associated to their identity, namely language preference and linguistic pride reinforced through a belief that as Javanese they must be proud of themselves with humility and politeness. Underlying these beliefs are the students' values that authenticity and respectful attitude to peers and teachers are essential elements of a good Javanese.

Pride, polite mannerism, and linguistic etiquette (*unggah-ungguh basa Jawa*) are the main reasons why the informants prefer to use Javanese language in their daily communication. Below are excerpts of responses to a question we posed on the students' motivation to use Javanese as a medium of communication daily.

"Because I am Javanese and most people with whom I communicate everyday use Javanese language" (MS1, aged 12).

"I want to be more polite when communicating with others" (FS1 and FS2, aged 12 and 13).

"I am used to speaking Javanese but not with *krama* speech level" (MS3 and MS4, aged 12).

"It is easier to communicate with my friends and parents using Javanese" (MS5, aged 12).

"My mother tongue is Javanese, not *Bahasa Indonesia*" (MS6, aged 13).

The students also believe that as Javanese they must learn and master Javanese language. To be able to master Javanese, the students explained that there are certain challenges.

If we relate the students' answers to the teachers' perceptions on the importance of teaching and preserving Javanese language, the latter believe that their role is important. Considered as role models and knowledgeable persons, they believe that the students need their guidance. Two teachers maintained that they want to dedicate themselves as teachers to the country. Being able to demonstrate good manners to their students is a concrete example of dedication. In other words, both teachers and students feel that they have common and oneness in culture, including the language. Additionally, two other teachers argued that:

"Being nationalist means that we are proud of ourselves as Javanese and love its culture. We can see the correlation between Javanese teaching and learning and nationalism when we have a great willingness to teach the language and even use it in daily communication" (MT2 and FT1, aged 27 and 26, FGD, June 12, 2023).

Nationalism refers to a sense of loyalty and pride in a social identity among people within a country. Nationalism cannot be separated from education because people who devote themselves to

teach tend to have a moral purpose, which is, preparing children to have a national pride while they are exposed to different cultures (Kidwell & Triyoko, 2021; Tröhler, 2020). The teachers interviewed for this paper focused on introducing and developing good manners through Javanese teaching and learning as an informant claimed that teaching Javanese style politeness is one of her responsibilities. Nationalism can be seen from various aspects, including culture and ethnicity. In Indonesia, nationalism education in elementary schools is considered an effort to develop students' understanding and attitudes to love the country. Learning Javanese language and culture as described in this paper is an example of nationalism education. Although in this case it is specific to Java- creating a Javanese-centric sense of pride and identity.

Javanese is associated as a language of culture, embedded through politeness and good manners. From the articulation of the language, the values within and the respect for the elders and community, a language is perceived to showcase refined culture or gentility. The comment that "I want to be more polite" (FS1 and FS2) and the teachers' comments related to dedication to teaching Javanese as a service to the nation as it imparts good manners is extremely significant. To better connect with students and develop their engagement and motivation, teachers can adopt culturally responsive teaching (CRT) approach, referring to teaching and learning encounters that embrace students' customs, language, experiences, and perspectives as tools to make learning processes more effective for them.

The Provincial Government of Yogyakarta attempted to implement CRT with two regulations. First, the Provincial Regulation of Yogyakarta No. 5 / 2011 on the Management and Implementation of Culture-Based Education, which focuses on the commitment to provide quality education based on Javanese cultural values for all children, youth, and adults. The second is the Governor of Yogyakarta Regulation No.66 / 2013 on the Culture-Based Curriculum, which emphasizes the importance of instruction and student learning based on Javanese values, norms, beliefs, practices, and language. The teachers are aware of their roles in the implementation of such regulations which may lead to effective teaching and learning processes. Below are excerpts of responses to a question posed on the teachers' strategies which may lead to effective Javanese teaching and learning.

"Character building through reading fable, the students then learn, for example, that they need to be kind to others" (MT2 and FT2, aged 27 and 55, FGD, June 12, 2023).

"Every Thursday, the students have to address all teachers using Javanese language, especially *krama* speech level" (MT1 and FT1, aged 31 and 26, FGD, June 12, 2023).

Based on the teachers' responses, it can be said that instead of learning a set of grammatical rules, learning Javanese language can immerse the students in their own culture. This is in line with Kim (2020) who argued that "culture can be central to language learning" (p. 520). As such, understanding Javanese culture helps the students to fully learn and appreciate the vernacular. In relation to character building as mentioned by two informants, it is generally accepted that character education which means helping students to understand common ethical values, such as respect and responsibility for self and others, is a significant concern in the Indonesian education system.

In collaboration with other pedagogical specialists from *Sanggar Mari Kangen*, a non-profit organization in Ngandong Village in Turi that works to preserve Javanese culture, elementary schools studied for this paper seek alternative ways to introduce Javanese culture by conducting extracurricular activities, namely *macapat* (a kind of poetic meter in traditional Javanese poetry) and *karawitan* (*gamelan*/a traditional music instrument and performance practice) for grades 3 to 6, once every week. Both *macapat* and *karawitan* are essential to not only appreciate Javanese culture but also improve the students' memory, coordination skills, creativity, and confidence. Puguh et al. (2023) maintained that *macapat* and *karawitan* have spread to other countries such as the Netherlands, the United States, England, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. The dissemination of Javanese culture was impacted by western scholars who studied the Javanese musical structure. Indeed, "globalization opens up space for traditional arts and culture to develop outside their original territory" (p. 2). In short, Javanese culture is accepted by people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Using culture to teach Javanese, therefore, may have wider reach and implications beyond Java.

Main Challenges Faced in Learning Javanese Language

From the students' perspectives, the main challenge of learning Javanese is mastering its complex speech levels as it is vital to understand the local values and how to express various degrees of politeness.

There are three main speech levels in Javanese, namely *ngoko* (informal), *madya* (semi-polite and semi-formal), and *krama* (polite and formal). Indeed, each level contains several sub levels, such as *ngoko lugu*, *madyantara*, *wredha krama*, and so on. However, this paper only refers to general knowledge of Javanese speech levels and the use of two classes, *ngoko* and *krama* because the informants are more familiar with those categories in their daily lives. Examples of Javanese words based on their speech levels are: I, subject pronoun (*ngoko*: *aku* and *krama*: *dalem*, *kawula*, *kula*); you, subject and object pronouns (*ngoko*: *kowe* and

krama: panjenengan); sick (*ngoko: lara* and *krama: gerah*).

Ngoko is commonly used between friends and relatives. Individuals with high social status due to their wealth, career, profession, or social influence, for example, also use this speech level to communicate with people from a lower social class background. *Krama* is unlike *ngoko*, used in reference or conversations with respected interlocutors, such as the elderly or people with higher social status. This speech level is also commonly used in ceremonial speeches which need formality or etiquette. The *krama* level is almost like a palace language (*basa kedhaton*) that indicates the higher status of the interlocutors. *Basa kedhaton* is a speech style used exclusively among the upper members of the *priyayi* in the presence of the Sultan in formal audience. In traditional Javanese society, *priyayi* refers to a class that comprised the elite in contrast to commoner (*wong cilik*).

This difference between *krama* (higher status) and *ngoko* (equal or lower status) adds complexity to the language, making learning difficult for the children. Some teachers interviewed agreed with the students' opinions, claiming that most of the time they needed to translate both oral and written texts from Javanese to *Bahasa Indonesia* because the students struggle with mastering Javanese vocabulary especially when they have to deal with *krama* words. However, others perceive that the fundamental challenge of teaching Javanese is the obligation to use LKS (*Lembar Kerja Siswa*) or students' worksheet with specific learning targets and achievement in each semester. As Tóth and Csapó (2022) argued, it is possible that instructional methods are influenced by national assessment programs that require specific targets and scores. The teaching materials in the LKS remain oriented towards grammatical rules and textbook memorizing without ensuring long-term retention of knowledge and fluency in Javanese language skill. In fact, it is important to teach the students how to use the vernacular in certain life situations. The teachers further argued that their experiences make them ideally suited to design the LKS by themselves since they know the students' needs, interests, and stages of development better.

Being able to speak Javanese fluently served as an act of self-presentation. Distinguishing between Javanese and other ethnic groups, the students reported with pride that their ability to use the language correctly, especially to communicate with their peers and teachers at school can be seen as a medium to demonstrate their identity. Six of the forty students observed, claimed the following:

"We want to be more polite so when we communicate with our friends and especially teachers, we use Javanese. The problem is that it is hard to understand and use *krama*" (FS6, MS15, MS16, MS17, FS7, and MS18, aged 12 and 13).

As citizens of multi-ethnic Indonesia, the students have both national and ethnic identities. The teachers believe that learning Javanese does not hinder nationalist sentiments because the students' shared beliefs and ways of life created a common bond as Javanese and can be viewed as an element of Indonesian nationalism. In this case, people tend to have a positive identification with their nation when they maintain their identification with the culture of their respective ethnic groups.

Creative Ways to Learn Javanese Language at School

From the students' perspectives, learning Javanese from a young age is essential. Including the language as a compulsory subject in the curriculum from grades 1 to 6 is, therefore, imperative because Javanese enables them to practice their culture. Some informants maintained that introducing Javanese from an early age and including it in the curriculum can be seen as an effort to preserve and promote this vernacular language and its culture.

The data from the study suggests that the students prefer to study Javanese in a more communicative way, for example by practicing directly with their peers and teachers rather than learning the language through textbooks that do not encourage social interaction. Besides, practicing the language via daily communication also leads to the improvement of their vocabulary. The use of games, Javanese folklore, and digital platforms, would also be a more interesting way for them to learn the language. The excerpt below illustrates the students' perceptions about the best ways to learn Javanese language.

"Using Javanese to communicate with friends and teachers" (FS15, aged 12)

"Singing Javanese traditional songs" (FS16, aged 13).

"Use Javanese puppet characters during the class" (FS17, aged 12).

"Through folklore, traditional games, and *YouTube*" (FS18, aged 13) and

"Learning or practicing with friends" (MS7, aged 12).

Based on the students' responses, direct practice, games, folklore, and digital platforms, such as *YouTube*, are clearly aligned with their learning needs, conversely learning a language from textbooks is regarded as 'an old-fashioned' way. The students' responses also revealed that present language learning tools and strategies are a bit dated in lieu of new and creative ways. They also believe that introducing Javanese puppet characters and traditional songs would be useful as learning the language means that they also learn its culture. Their responses are supported by the teachers' opinions about the effective ways of Javanese teaching and learning. Two teachers, for example, maintain that using storytelling for daily activities, introducing

Javanese puppet characters, and traditional children's songs starting from grade 1 and 2 in classrooms are very useful and entertaining. However, other informants believe that being able to learn Javanese through digital platforms remain an unsolved problem. The Regional Development Planning Agency (2024) maintained that since 2019, the provincial government has been attempting to enhance the quality of education, teacher, infrastructure, and educational services through Jogja Smart Province program with five prioritized areas, namely smart society (economic and education), smart living (mobility and tourism), smart environment, smart culture, and smart governance. At present, in collaboration with Google for Education, there are 11.618 Chromebook for 707 schools to create smart society. Unfortunately, these learning facilities are not evenly distributed. Despite the progress made in Yogyakarta, the digital divide between urban and rural schools in this province remains stark.

It is hoped that language teaching and learning can encourage students to participate in social and emotional activities. Here, interaction-based language learning is required (Kim, 2020). In other words, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), an approach that focuses on learning a language as a means of communication, needs to be implemented. In the past few decades, CLT has become commonly used in foreign language classrooms, such as English at all levels of ability and with students of all ages (Dos Santos, 2020; Han, 2022). It may be useful to apply such an approach to vernacular language classrooms, such as Javanese. With CLT, Javanese learning can be interesting as all the media mentioned by the students can be introduced in the classroom because the main objective of language teaching and learning is communicative competence. Tas and Khan (2020) stated that "communicative competence is the ability to communicate well" in both spoken and written texts (p. 87). They further explained that two applied linguists, Canale & Swain, developed and introduced the first comprehensive idea of communicative competence with four components, namely grammatical competence (the ability to recognize and produce understandable and meaningful well-formed phrases or even sentences), discourse competence (the ability to combine language structures into different types of cohesive and coherent texts), strategic competence (the ability to use one's language to communicate intended meaning), and sociolinguistic competence (the ability to communicate appropriately using the correct words, expressions, and attitudes in a particular situation).

If we refer to the students' perspectives on Javanese teaching and learning, it can be concluded

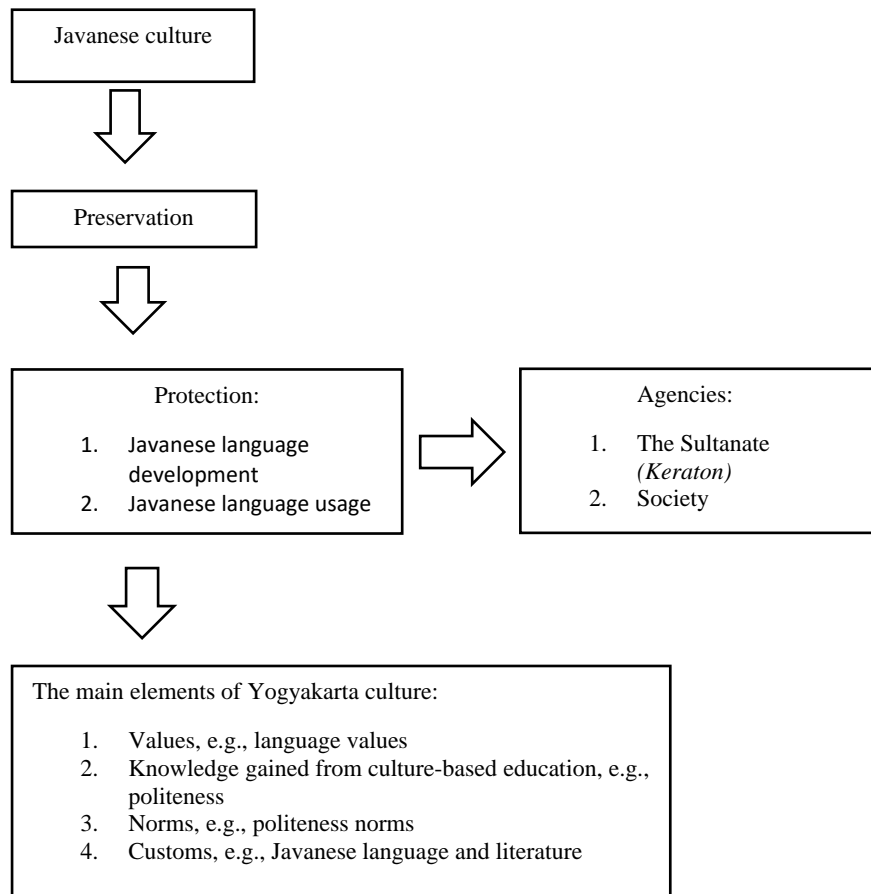
that communicative competence could be achieved mainly through interactive cultural activities. This is because the students want to learn the language and connect to their culture. Furthermore, among the four components above, both grammatical and discourse competences are seen as the two main key components in acquiring communicative competence. It seems difficult for the students, for example, to differentiate Javanese orthography (writing system) of certain vocabularies, such as *wedi* (adjective: afraid) and *wedhi* (noun: sand). The role of Javanese orthography is rather symbolic, not communicative. However, the ability to write Javanese words correctly also helps the students develop fluency, as the way they communicate is not limited to spoken words. As such, understanding the standardized system of writing, including spelling, punctuation, emphasis, and word breaks, for example, is essential. The mastery of strategic and sociolinguistic competences is perceived as the second challenging part of attaining communicative competence. The students are willing to learn how to communicate using the language with correct words and speech levels, depending on who their interlocutor is and how they use terms of politeness and formality when required.

Canale and Swain's idea of communicative competence can be related to a cultural schema of Yogyakarta which is depicted in Figure 1. The model has been simplified here as the focus is to point out the importance of Javanese language and culture from the provincial government's perspective. Culture determines how a society or a social unit understands rules and then makes a meaningful behavior guided by the shared values, beliefs, attitudes, and norms. Central cognitive processes which influence such a kind of action are called cultural schemas. Children learn these schemas in their interactions with adults (Boutyline & Soter, 2021).

The four components of communicative competence are related to Javanese language preservation mentioned in the cultural schema of Yogyakarta. With the guidance of teachers, the students learn to develop their communicative competence in Javanese language. The students are active agents in learning Javanese through their interactions with the teachers. These interactions are motivated by their collective idea of Javanese standards of behavior which probably is enhanced within the family or upbringing and the school environment. In addition, with culture-based education (CBE) it is hoped that children will be able to learn politeness strategies at an early age. With CBE in this global era, the main challenge for educators and policymakers is how to shape both national and global identities without neglecting the importance of local culture heritage preservation.

Figure 1

A Simplified Cultural Schema of Yogyakarta (Yudahadinigrat et al., 2018)



Together with the Provincial Regulation of Yogyakarta No. 5/2011 and the Governor of Yogyakarta Regulation No. 66/2013, the cultural schema can be viewed as a legal protection of Javanese language amidst *Bahasa Indonesia* education and globalization. This is a part of Language Policy and Planning (LPP). Language policy is guidelines to the language planning, whereas language planning refers to endeavors undertaken by government to intervene the function, acquisition, and structure of a language. There are three types of language planning, namely status planning (about uses of language), acquisition planning (about the users of language), and corpus planning (about the forms of language) (Abdelhay et al., 2020). Teaching Javanese language is a part of acquisition planning.

Thus, to move forward and energize Javanese learning, the Provincial Government of Yogyakarta can be more attentive to the role and position of Javanese language in the education sector by initiating good cooperation and communication, especially with internal stakeholders of education. A micro-level based Javanese language maintenance which refers to a bottom-up approach to Javanese language policy and planning through analyzing and interpreting ‘voices from the field’, such as the

students and teachers observed in this study may be useful because the vernacular preservation starts with understanding how Javanese is used and negotiated at the micro level. Language behavior and social behavior of the students and the teachers’ guide to understand formality levels and social class variants in the Javanese language can be considered a significant milestone in the LPP process in Yogyakarta. Additionally, a new style and strategy of teaching, which is, communicative and cultural-based (CCB) Javanese teaching and learning as an integration of CLT and CBE will be useful.

DISCUSSION

The findings provide insights into how the teachers construct and integrate the meaning of nationalism. This is reflected in their ability to interpret the students’ need and develop their communicative competence and sense of belonging to a shared cultural norms and values. If teaching the vernacular entails clear expectations, culture-oriented approach, and deep student engagement, focusing on developing a sense of belonging to the Javanese norms and values may shed light on how to be a respectful person. A distinct method of Javanese language maintenance with micro-level community

participation plays a significant role in encouraging LPP.

The teachers are able to see their profession as an opportunity to strengthen Javanese values in the midst of greater global connections that redefine the ability of individuals and groups to maintain their own ethnic and national identities. The data shows that the teachers believe that their roles and responsibilities are critical for the development of the students' language skills. Learning Javanese is conceived as a process of transferring cultural knowledge from the older generation to the younger generations. Commitment to instruction offers the teachers responsibility to examine and improve their teaching strategies as well as help the students achieve learning objectives. The findings show that both teachers and students have situational awareness which means that they are able to perceive, understand, and respond to the challenges of Javanese teaching and learning effectively.

If we put the Javanese learning process in a broader context and view it from a macro perspective, then learning the vernacular can be considered small steps of two larger goals. Firstly, preventing linguistic chauvinism that Javanese as the biggest ethnic group and vernacular language with approximately 80 million of speakers in the country has a greater prestige than others. The second is preparing future generations with Indonesia-centric mindset. Assisting children to have open mindset that Indonesia is rich in culture with hundreds of distinct languages and traditions is one of the roles of teachers as a foundation to prevent cultural prejudice. The Indonesian national vision of multi-ethnic coexistence by implementing the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) should be considered an endeavor to strengthen the position of Indonesia as a multicultural country.

For this paper, we used a multi-method approach (FGD, open-ended questionnaire, and classroom observation) to obtain a deep understanding of the topic examined. However, the paper lacks input from two stakeholders, people in authority and public members of the Javanese community where this study was conducted. From our own perspective, learning culture through the process of enculturation or direct exposure to the people who share Javanese beliefs and practices would have helped us capture the native's point of view, customs, and ways of living. We are of the opinion that local community's cultural norms, beliefs, and values can impact on how the students interact with the teachers and vice versa.

Even though the findings proposed an alternative solution for complementing the existing regulations and encouraging LPP, it seems not an easy task to implement the bottom-up approach to Javanese language policy and planning which is argued to be crucial in this study. The cultural traits of Javanese people with the emphasis on social

stratification based on status and power and avoidance of direct conflicts or disagreement tend to create distance between rural school teachers and students and decision-makers. Although such a potential barrier does not reduce the significance of the findings, further examination of this matter could develop insights into the best ways to bridge the gap between them.

CONCLUSION

Determining the challenges and teaching strategies are relevant to students and teachers' participation in the Javanese language preservation which is not only challenged domestically (versus *Bahasa Indonesia*) and globally, but also internally. The students' learning experiences revealed the complexities within the process of Javanese language learning and the conservative, top-down methodologies used to teach it. Mastering the *krama* speech level with its different vocabulary in reference to status and class of the person spoken to, as well as maintaining the language tied with cultural heritage and noble values such as politeness makes it a big challenge. Another issue in terms of teaching strategy development for rural elementary schools in this study is limited access to high quality internet. Due to limitations in the scope of the data collected, this study is unable to conclude that all rural schools face the same problem. To overcome the challenges, it is important to implement supportive learning environment that reflect the local culture and create classroom activities that connect the content to students' daily lives through CCB Javanese teaching and learning without neglecting the obligation to attain specific targets of the LKS. This can help the teachers reflect on how their own cultural identity and experiences impact the students' attitudes. In addition, a distinct method of Javanese language maintenance with micro-level community participation plays a significant role in encouraging LPP.

Although the teachers of Karanganyar Turi and Sanjaya Tritis Pakem Elementary Schools strive to do their best and constantly improve the teaching of Javanese, their efforts might be regarded as a mirror reflecting the ideal vernacular language teaching and learning process in Indonesian education context. The findings represent a vital contribution to the ongoing discussion about how vernacular language teachers take their responsibility and how they contribute to the development of teaching and learning strategies and LPP encouragement. Future research focusing on LPP should be undertaken separately within a longer period in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the LPP making process. To do this, data could be gathered at the macro-level by interviewing policymakers. This is essential to gain more insights into the factors

contributing to deciding what kind of policy and planning should be implemented.

Although the findings suggested evidence of the importance of determining specific teaching approach, we are aware that examining a related topic, such as the role of teachers as leaders by outlining insights into the process of constructing teacher leader identity that could be gained through various angles would be beneficial. For example, how each teacher defines teacher leadership in a multitude-ways, how personal and ethnic identities shape their leadership styles, and how teacher leadership might develop over time. Thus, this topic needs to be situated within a longitudinal study. It will contribute to existing knowledge and research in the field of vernacular language preservation and teacher leaders.

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