The Vulnerability of The Javanese Language: An Analysis of Students' Competence

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to explore the relationship between language use and language proficiency in relation to language vulnerabilities, with a particular emphasis on the Javanese language. The research critically examines the extent to which a language becomes vulnerable as a result of its dwindling usage or the decreasing proficiency of its speakers. The study aims to address the question of whether the decline in the ability to speak Javanese is due to its decreasing use in everyday life. The research findings will contribute to identifying the causes of the vulnerability of the Javanese language in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, which is the primary hub of Javanese culture and language in Indonesia. To accomplish these goals, the study initiated a survey of primary, junior high, and high school students in the Special Region of Yogyakarta's five territorial units, which comprise one city and four regencies. The primary objective of the survey was to determine the extent to which the respondents use Javanese in their daily lives. Subsequently, the study conducted interviews with select respondents who had claimed to speak Javanese regularly. The results of the study reveal a robust correlation between insufficient usage of Javanese in everyday life and the declining proficiency of its speakers, which contributes to the vulnerability of the Javanese language.

Keywords: *Vulnerability; Competence; Javanese language usage; Yogyakarta.*

1. INTRODUCTION

This article investigates the potential risk facing one of Indonesia's most commonly spoken ethnic languages, Javanese. Javanese is the language of the Javanese people, the largest ethnic group not only in Indonesia but also in Southeast Asia (Suryadinata, Arifin, & Ananta, 2003). The Javanese are known for their hardworking and sociable nature, and they are dispersed throughout Java Island and beyond as migrants (Udasmoro & Setiadi, 2021). The nineteenth century colonialism period of the Dutch marked the start of migration of the Javanese. This resulted in the relocation of Javanese individuals to Suriname, with the first departure occurring on May 21, 1890, and New Caledonia, with the first departure occurring on February 16, 1896. During Sukarno's presidency (1945–1968), Javanese people were designated as migrants and resettled in other Indonesian islands, particularly Sumatra and Kalimantan. During the subsequent reign of Indonesia's second president, Suharto (1968–1998), a significant number of Javanese were dispatched as migrant laborers to various countries, such as Malaysia, Singapore, Arab nations, Korea, Japan, and Taiwan (Maurer, 2006; Udasmoro & Setiadi, 2021).

The Javanese people remain committed to their cultural heritage and linguistic traditions, safeguarding the Javanese language wherever they form a community. (Harwati, 2018). Even in Suriname, Javanese persists as a daily language used within the family, embodying the Javanese presence in the country. Paradoxically, the language's preservation on Java Island itself necessitates reassessment, especially in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, where the contemporary written standard of the language originated. This region is a province whose governor is the Sultan of Yogyakarta, and its sultanate represents the cornerstone of the Javanese language and culture. It is deemed the ultimate reference and benchmark for Javanese language proficiency.

Its distinct registers — or levels of formality — and varied rules for application in different social contexts have led some to claim that Javanese is a difficult language to learn and use. The language's most informal register is *ngoko*. This register is used in circumstances such as among those from the lower class; when an upper-class person is speaking

to a lower-class individual; and as a friendly gesture among those who know each other well. Furthermore, the *ngoko* register has two levels, namely *ngoko kasar* and *ngoko alus*. While *ngoko alus* carries a hint of civility, *ngoko kasar* is quite casual (Suryadi, 2018).

The other register is *krama*, a term that suggests a high degree of formality. The register is used in circumstances such as between strangers and when speaking to anyone of a greater age or higher social status. The *krama* register comprises *krama inggil* (most formal), *krama madya* (moderate), and *krama alus* (least formal). One's humility and social distance in relation to the other speaker, as well as age, determine which *krama* to use out of the three levels.

The Special Region of Yogyakarta Province in Indonesia has long been a bastion of Javanese civilization, thanks in large part to the Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate, or the Sultanate of Yogyakarta, which has played a crucial role in safeguarding Javanese culture, particularly the Javanese language (Udasmoro & Setiadi, 2021). However, despite the efforts of social actors and institutions in the province to preserve the language, the potential for the Javanese language's vulnerability persists and has indeed increased over the past thirty years (Baryadi, 2015).

Numerous studies have documented a decline in the use of Javanese in Yogyakarta since the 1990s, with many attributing the trend to the higher political position of the Indonesian language. Some scholars assert that the decline may have commenced earlier, specifically in the 1970s, when businesses, governmental institutions, and educational settings began to adopt Indonesian as the primary language. During this time, a high use of Indonesian was restricted to select groups, particularly intellectuals and those in prestigious settings, for occasions requiring a show of status (Smith-Hefner, 2009). Additionally, Indonesian was perceived to be a language that was naturally spoken by Jakartans, or those who originated from or had resided in the capital city for an extended period. Subsequently, in the 1980s, diglossia emerged in Yogyakarta, wherein two languages were used under different conditions within the community. The use of Indonesian gradually infiltrated areas that had previously been exclusively reserved for Javanese, including the domain of *adat*, or customary practices. Finally, in the 1990s, the infiltration expanded to further areas in the region. As more and more households in the province started using Indonesian to communicate among family members, Indonesian was no longer only utilized in educational, administrative, and customary contexts (Munandar, 2013).

The transition from Javanese to Indonesian in Yogyakarta can also be viewed through the lens of register usage (*krama* or *ngoko*), age groups (older or younger), and spatial settings (urban or rural). While the *ngoko* register is still commonly used, more adults than children tend to use it because the younger generation is more frequently exposed to Indonesian in educational settings (Suharyo, 2015; Yulianti, 2013). Bhakti (2020) supports the notion that the shift from Javanese to Indonesian is also prevalent in families within Sleman Regency. This shift can be attributed to several factors, including the varying levels of education among family members, practicality (i.e., straightforward Indonesian versus formal Javanese), age, socioeconomic background, lack of exposure to learning Javanese, place of residence, and attitudes towards language.

Errington, an expert on the Javanese language, conducted research in Yogyakarta and Surakarta, which indicated a decline in the number of active Javanese language users throughout the 1990s (Errington, 1998). Another study, based on Errington's findings, focused on the vulnerability of the Javanese language in the entire province of Yogyakarta. While Errington's research explained the weakening of the Javanese language in Yogyakarta and Surakarta, which are considered the twin pillars of Javanese culture, the second study delved deeper into how this vulnerability was distributed across all the territorial units in Yogyakarta Province (Udasmoro et al., 2023). Although the usage of *krama* Javanese has significantly decreased, the *ngoko* register still has a place. Only a small percentage of students in primary, middle, and senior high schools in Yogyakarta Province use *krama* Javanese, while the majority of student respondents from all territorial units and educational levels reported using *ngoko* Javanese. Only a few students claimed to speak *krama* Javanese, particularly at home.

This scholarly report examines the prevalence of Javanese language use among children and teenagers aged 10 to 17 years residing in both urban and rural areas across Yogyakarta Province's five territorial units. The primary indicators of Javanese language vulnerability analyzed in this study are language usage and linguistic proficiency. Language usage pertains to the frequency of Javanese usage in daily life, while linguistic competence refers to the participants' active and passive skills in both *ngoko* and *krama* registers.

The analysis will be presented in sub-chapters. Information on the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province that is pertinent to the study opens the discussion in one sub-chapter. It will be followed by a sub-chapter outlining the analysis of data from each territorial unit pertaining to the use of the *ngoko* and *krama* registers, and a sub-chapter describing the analysis of the informants' linguistic competence in using the *ngoko* and *krama* registers in each territorial unit.

2. OBJECTIVES

This research, conducted in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province in Indonesia, examines the correlation between the frequency of Javanese language usage and the proficiency of its users in five territorial units: Bantul Regency, Kulon Progo Regency, Gunungkidul Regency, Sleman Regency, and Yogyakarta City. The study aims to explore how the frequency of language usage and proficiency impact the vulnerability of the Javanese language. The starting point of this study is based on the hypothesis that there is a relationship between language proficiency and frequency of use (Ellis, 2002; Kartal & Sarigul, 2017), and that the declining frequency of the Javanese language usage affects the skills of its users (Diessel, 2007). The first factor that contributes to such a decline is language politics, particularly the dominant use of the national language, which marginalizes the use of minority languages (Errington, 2014; Munandar, 2013). Studies on the intensification of the Indonesian language (Collins, 2019) and the French language (Andriani et al, 2022), and how they have undermined the use of local languages in each country, stand as examples. The second factor is complexity, as the perceived difficulty of a language may discourage future generations from using it. It has been shown for a number of archaic languages, including Latin, Sanskrit, and Old Chinese, that a language's complexity causes it to deteriorate. Due to the fact that each language has a different learning curve, this claim may not be linguistically sound. However, the dominant view is that a language that is still used in everyday interactions has a greater chance of being retained (Garibova, 2016).

3. METHODS

This study included both surveys and in-depth interviews as part of a hybrid methodology. The survey method was used on 348 children and adolescents between the ages of 10 and 17 in each of the territorial units that make up the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province: Bantul Regency, Kulon Progo Regency, Gunungkidul Regency, Sleman Regency, and Yogyakarta City.

The purpose of this survey was to examine the frequency of Javanese language usage among children and adolescents in private and public settings. The study aimed to determine the extent to which these individuals utilize Javanese in their daily lives, both inside and outside the home, with a focus on usage during interactions with family members, friends, and teachers. After collecting data and identifying suitable respondents, in-depth interviews were conducted to assess their linguistic competence. Four interviewees were initially selected from each territorial unit, including two who could speak the *krama* register and two who could speak the *ngoko* register.

During the interviews, the responses of the informants to a set of tests were recorded. The first test required the respondents to accurately identify a sequence of images in Javanese to evaluate their diction skills. The second test utilized three popular Indonesian children's folktales presented in picture books: *Si Kancil* (about a mouse-deer that is a cunning trickster); *Timun Emas* (about an evil giant who tries to catch and eat the titular girl character but always fails); and *Bawang Abang lan Bawang Putih* (this story of the two titular girl characters and an evil stepmother has the similar theme and moral as the European folktale Cinderella). The level of the respondents' Javanese proficiency in the previous survey determined whether they were asked to retell one of the stories in *ngoko* or *krama*. The third test consisted of impromptu questions related to the informants' daily activities.

The data selection process involved categorizing the findings into patterns that revealed the Javanese registers used by the children and adolescents, as well as their active and passive language proficiency levels based on their fluency in speaking, proper usage of registers, and their ability to exclude Indonesian words when speaking Javanese or refrain from using *ngoko* words when employing the *krama* register.

3.1. Language Politics in the Special Region of Yogyakarta

The Special Region of Yogyakarta Province is well-known throughout Indonesia as a seat of (higher) learning and one of the country's most popular tourist destinations. The two aspects have made Yogyakarta a cosmopolitan region with its high number of visitors and new settlers — especially students — from various corners of Indonesia and the world. Its current population is estimated to be around 3.8 million people. The province, located on the south-central part of Java Island, covers an area of 3.133,15 square kilometers (Central Bureau of Statistics Special Region of Yogyakarta, 2021).

Yogyakarta City, which serves as the provincial capital, is unique among other provincial capitals on the island due to its small size, covering only 32.5 square kilometers. It is even smaller than any of the province's four regencies. Although it is the most urban area in the province, its total population is only 435,936 people (The Central Statistics Agency Yogyakarta, 2021). The second most urban area is Sleman, located in the province's northernmost region. It

covers a much larger area of 574.82 square kilometers and has a total population of 1,223,600 people (The Central Bureau of Statistics Sleman, 2021). Bantul, the province's southernmost regency, has a land area of 506.85 square kilometers and a total population of 1,006,692 people (The Central Bureau of Statistics Bantul, 2021). Kulon Progo Regency, located on the west, has an area of 586.28 square kilometers and a population of 434,483 people (Kulon Progo Central Statistics Agency, 2021). Finally, Gunungkidul is the largest territorial unit in the province, covering an area of 1,485.36 square kilometers from the east to the south, with a total population of 747,161 people (The Central Bureau of Statistics Gunungkidul, 2021).

As a pillar that upholds Javanese culture, the Special Region of Yogyakarta has made numerous efforts to preserve Javanese as a language that the people continue to treasure and use in daily life. For instance, as a component of the education agency's *muatan lokal* or local content curriculum, the Javanese language has been designated a compulsory course in public schools throughout the province (Murwati, Yulianto, & Shodiq, 2018). Javanese is also used in announcements at Yogyakarta International Airport, along with Indonesian and English. In order to promote the preservation of Javanese culture, there is a requirement for students and government workers to wear traditional Javanese clothing every Thursday that coincides with the Pahing day in the Javanese calendar (Puspitasari & Rukiyati, 2020). Additionally, tourism ambassadors have been appointed, with one of the prerequisites being a working knowledge of Javanese.

It can be argued that the aforementioned local content curriculum as a whole has not been sufficient to improve students' competency in Javanese language or encourage its use since its launch in 2013. It has thus far tended to focus on cultural pursuits, such as learning Javanese music and making batik and other crafts. The actual Javanese language lesson typically takes place once a week and emphasizes linguistic knowledge over practice. For instance, *tembang* (Javanese songs) or Javanese vocabulary rarely used in everyday interactions is taught to elementary school students, whereas the more advanced students are exposed to Javanese literary works. While the curriculum should be commended as an effort to preserve the Javanese language, more can be done to meet the need of inspiring students to use Javanese in their daily life.

The inadequacy of the curriculum to encourage the use of Javanese in everyday situations in the province is significantly different from the situation two or three decades ago when the language was frequently utilized by both students and educators. The change is apparent as current teachers typically communicate with students in Indonesian. The Indonesian language has become dominant in language politics, and the ongoing efforts to enhance nationalism appear to have disregarded the presence and importance of regional languages (Sudaryanto, Ferawati, & Soeparno, 2022).

4. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1. Findings

4.1.1. Language Use and an Overview of the Retention of Javanese in Yogyakarta

In this section, we present a comprehensive overview of the frequency of Javanese language use among children and adolescents across the five territorial units of the Special Region of Yogyakarta, both in public and private settings. The objective is to assess the extent to which the *ngoko* and *krama* registers are still employed in the region. Our survey findings suggest a prevailing trend among respondents to utilize Javanese *ngoko* in various day-to-day activities, indicating the ongoing efforts of younger generations to preserve the language through active use. This leads us to question where and in what contexts these preservation efforts are being made more frequently. Furthermore, we investigate why the *ngoko* register is preferred and whether it is being used appropriately, such as when communicating with peers. This section features four tables that provide a detailed breakdown of when and how often Javanese is spoken by the respondents.

This study categorized the individuals with whom the respondents interacted in Javanese into private and public settings, such as the family (parents), school (teachers), and peer groups (friends). In Javanese society, it has been observed that some families encourage their children to use the *ngoko* Javanese register when addressing their parents, while others use the *krama* Javanese register. The decision to use either *ngoko* or *krama* Javanese is shaped by the specific traditions of each family. Interestingly, in certain situations, families from higher social classes may prefer their children to use *krama* Javanese when speaking to their parents. However, it is worth noting that numerous families from lower social classes make a similar choice.

In terms of the usage of Javanese in public spaces, it is customary for students to employ the *krama* register when addressing their teachers. This is due to the esteemed status that teachers hold in Javanese society, as well as the age gap between teachers and students, which necessitates the use of respectful language. Conversely, *ngoko* Javanese is typically used in public settings when interacting with peers of similar age.

The following figure shows how often the respondents communicate with their parents using *ngoko* Javanese.
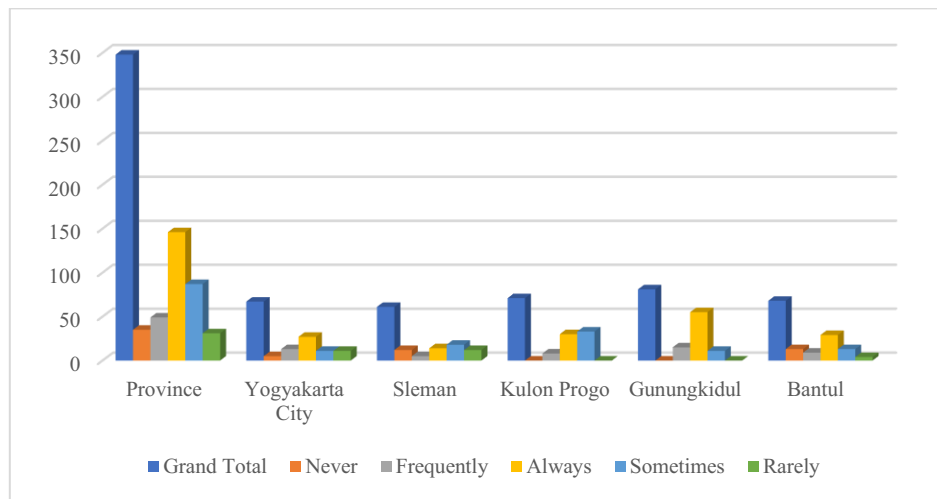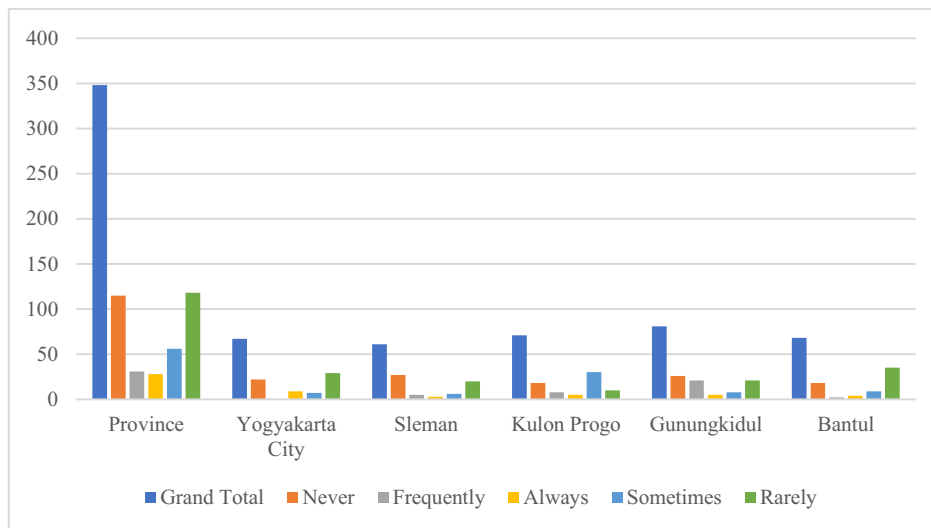

Figure 1. Usage Frequency of *Ngoko* Javanese in Private Setting (With Parents)
Source: [Research Data Analysis, 2022]

Based on the aforementioned data, a significant proportion of the respondents use Javanese to communicate with their parents. Among the five territorial units surveyed, Gunungkidul Regency has the largest number of young Javanese speakers (55 respondents) who reported always using *ngoko* Javanese when speaking to their parents. Similarly, more than 40 respondents in each of the other three units, namely Bantul, Kulon Progo, and Yogyakarta City, gave the same response. In contrast, Sleman Regency had the lowest number of respondents who reported using *ngoko* Javanese with their parents, with only 14 respondents giving this response. Furthermore, Sleman Regency had the highest number of respondents who do not use Javanese at all when speaking to their parents, as will be further expounded in Table 2. It is important to note that, compared to other regions, Sleman has the most varied usage patterns of Javanese among children and adolescents.

In terms of urbanization, Yogyakarta City and Sleman Regency share similarities but are also different. The majority of Yogyakarta City's inhabitants are native Yogyakartans, who own houses that have been passed down through generations and have greater financial resources. Nevertheless, it should be noted that some lower and middle-class residents have moved to more rural areas after selling their homes for high prices. In contrast, Sleman Regency is home to many newcomers from outside the province who are attracted to the lower cost of real estate compared to Yogyakarta City, despite the fact that many of them work in the provincial capital. Since Sleman is adjacent to Yogyakarta City, these newcomers can easily commute to and from work or school. A significant portion of these new arrivals are primarily Indonesian speakers, and some of the younger ones actually make up the full (12 respondents) of our Sleman respondents who admit to never speaking *ngoko* Javanese at home.

The respondents also supplied information regarding their use of *krama* Javanese in parent-child conversations. In Bantul and Yogyakarta City, those surveyed who said they rarely use the *krama* register in this context stand at 35 and 29 respondents respectively. Sleman Regency shows the highest number of respondents (27 students) who admitted to never using *krama* Javanese. For respondents who never use the *krama* register at all, a similar pattern occurred for the remaining areas, namely making up exactly or more than 18 students.

Figure 2. Usage Frequency of *Krama* Javanese in Private Setting (With Parents)
Source: [Research Data Analysis, 2022]

As the figure shows, Yogyakarta City has the highest number of respondents who always speak *krama* Javanese at home (9 respondents). In Gunungkidul Regency, 21 respondents make up those who often communicate with their parents in the *krama* register. It is appropriate to mention at this point that Yogyakarta City is home to Javanese nobles who have a cultural tendency of employing the *krama* register to set themselves apart from non-aristocrats. In addition, as previously mentioned, the city is home to many native Yogyakartans. Meanwhile, being the most remote and a predominantly rural area allows Gunungkidul to more readily sustain *krama* Javanese in the private setting. However, the overall finding across all areas is that respondents either rarely use *krama* Javanese at home or never at all.

The figure below shows how frequently respondents communicate with their teachers in Javanese.
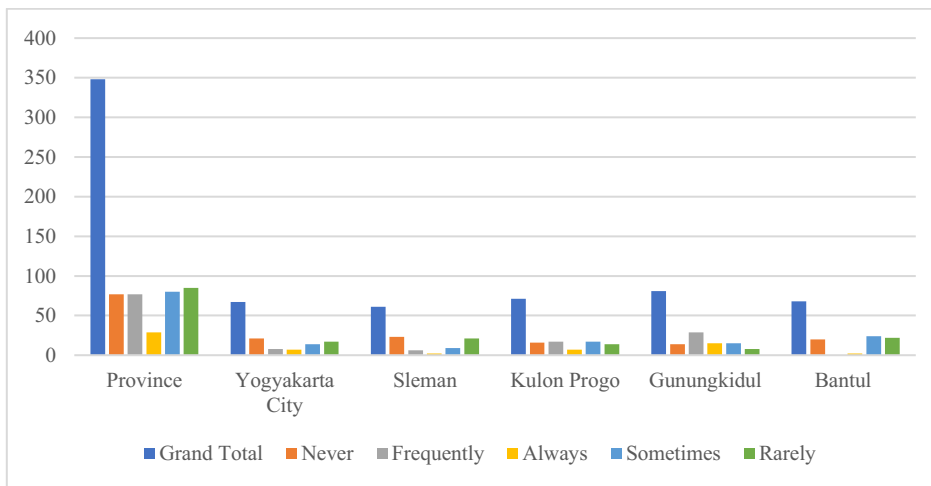
Figure 3. Usage Frequency of Javanese in Public Setting (With Teacher)
Source: [Research Data Analysis, 2022]

In Javanese culture, it is customary for students to use the *krama* register when addressing their teachers as a sign of respect for their authority and age. However, with the exception of Gunungkidul, most respondents indicated that they rarely or never use Javanese in their interactions with teachers, with numbers ranging from 77 to 101. This trend is likely due to the widespread use of Indonesian in educational institutions. Only in Gunungkidul, where traditional customs are still practiced, do a substantial number of respondents (29 students) frequently use Javanese when speaking with their teachers. In the province as a whole, 77 respondents reported using Javanese frequently when speaking with their teachers, while an equal number of 77 respondents never use it in the same context.

The study considered the respondents' use of Javanese language in public contexts beyond their teacher-student interactions by examining their communication with friends. Although it is more appropriate to use the *krama* Javanese register when communicating with teachers, the respondents are more likely to use the *ngoko* register when conversing

with their peers. The majority of respondents reported always using Javanese when speaking to their friends, with Gunungkidul having the highest number of such respondents (55), followed by Bantul with 39. Sleman, on the other hand, had the lowest usage frequency in this category with only 12 respondents. Figure 2 displays the respondents' frequency of using *ngoko* Javanese when communicating with individuals of their age group.
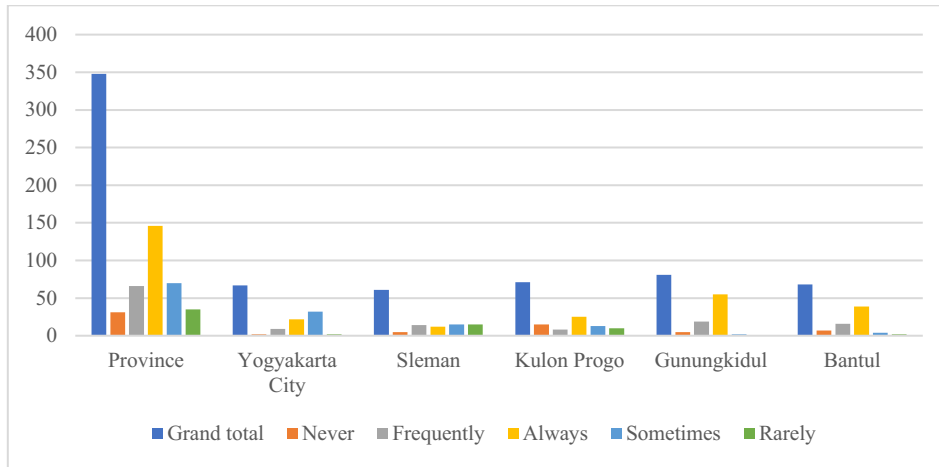
Figure 4. Usage Frequency of Javanese in Public Setting (With Peers)
Source: [Research Data Analysis, 2022]

The aforementioned results indicate that the respondents predominantly use Javanese language with their peers, with the lowest usage frequency once again found in Sleman. This is unsurprising considering that it is the area with the highest number of newcomers from outside the province. On the other hand, Gunungkidul exhibited the highest frequency of Javanese language use, with 55 respondents always using *ngoko* Javanese and 10 respondents often using it with friends. Out of the total 348 respondents, 146 reported always using *ngoko* Javanese when speaking with friends.

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1. Language Competence

Along with usage frequency, it was important to consider the respondents' linguistic competence in Javanese since it would show us the actual variants of *ngoko* and *krama* registers that they employ in both public and private settings. Some patterns were discovered after performing qualitative research by interviewing the respondents in the province's five territorial units, as the subsequent sections shall demonstrate. We planned to interview 20 children and adolescents for the qualitative study, four from each region, namely two who could speak *ngoko* Javanese and two others who could speak *krama* Javanese. However, it later turned out to be challenging for us to interview those who had claimed that they could speak *krama* Javanese; for a variety of reasons, as many as four respondents declined to be interviewed. Meanwhile, the majority of those who had said that they could speak *ngoko* Javanese, namely nine respondents, accepted the invitations.

4.2.2. Language Hybridization

According to our study, when the respondents who reported being able to speak Javanese were asked to use the language in practical conversation, language hybridization emerged as their primary strategy. The concept of language hybridization refers to the theoretical blending of two or more languages, which can manifest at different levels of language structure, such as individual words, phrases, clauses, sentences, or even entire paragraphs (Subiyantoro, 2014, 2019; Subiyantoro et al., 2017). In this instance, *ngoko* Javanese and Indonesian were combined to create a hybrid language. The selection of vocabulary, whether in the form of nouns, verbs, or adjectives, was apparent in the hybridization. The following serves as an example.

> **Original:** *"Pas awan-awan Kancil lagi mlayu nggo **ngindari kebakaran hutan**. Kancil sing krasa kesel merga **lari** ndelok kebun sayuran nggone Pak Tani. Sawah-sawah lan **buah-buahan** ketok seger ning mripate Kancil. **Kebetulan** Kancil lagi ngelak lan lagi ngelih. **Tanpa rasa** dedusa Kancil mangan sayur lan buah-buahane nggone pak tani. Hmm, enak anggone mangan Si Kancil. "Yen mbendina ngeneki bakalan **pesta** aku," jarene. Sawise **puas** Kancil mangan, dheke leren ing ngisor wit. Ora krasa Kancil wis turu ngasi esuk."*

(Interview with A, a junior high school student from Sleman Regency, on September 29, 2022)

English translation: "One afternoon, Kancil (the mouse-deer) ran to avoid forest fires. Kancil, who was tired from running, saw Mr. Farmer's vegetable garden, whose rice fields and fruits looked fresh to Kancil's eyes. How lucky, as Kancil was thirsty and hungry. Without feeling guilty, Kancil ate Mr. Farmer's vegetables and fruits. Hmm, Kancil ate happily. "If every day were like this, I could have a daily feast," it said. After Kancil had become content, it rested under a tree. So soundly did Kancil sleep until the following morning."

The paragraph in Javanese shows that the respondent is proficient in the *ngoko* register. He was able to actively retell a popular Javanese children's tale, *Si Kancil*, in its entirety and without interruption. The complex paragraph shows a high-level storytelling capability, even by other languages' standards. According to the Common European Framework of Reference (CECR) for Languages, the capacity to construct words elaboratively in a long speech is classified as the B2 level, or the argumentative level (Andriani et al., 2022)

However, as he was retelling the story in Javanese, he loaned several regular or conversational Indonesian words (marked in bold). These words actually have their equivalents in Javanese, although some are rarely used. The Javanese equivalent for "*ngindari kebakaran hutan*" (to avoid forest fires) is "*ngendhani alas kobong*," and the equivalent for "*lari*" (run) is "*mlayu*." The Javanese term for "*buah-buahan*" (fruits) is "woh-wohan." The words "*tanpa rasa*" (without feeling) and "*pesta*" (feast) sound Indonesian when ended with the [a] sound; they become Javanese when pronounced with an [o] sound ("*tanpo roso*" and "*pesto*"). Thus, the respondent is considered to have been resorting to Indonesian as he ended those words with an [a] sound. Finally, "*puas*" (content) is also an Indonesian word which, in the context of using *ngoko* Javanese, should have been replaced by "*wareg*."

Language hybridization was also shown by other interviewees. Here is another example:

Original: *"Kancile kuwi ngakon baya **berhitung sambil** kancile nglompati bayane karo kancile mlumpat ing gegere baya. Sawise nglompat kancile **berhasil** nglewati **sungai** lan baya-bayane."*

(Interview with L, a junior high school student from Kulon Progo Regency on September 22, 2022)

English translation: "Kancil told the crocodiles to count while Kancil jumped over the crocodiles and the mouse deer jumped on the crocodiles' backs. After jumping the mouse deer managed to pass the river and the rest of the crocodiles."

The above sentences show that the interviewee borrowed several Indonesian words. The words "*berhitung sambil*" (to count while) should have been replaced by "*ngitung karo*" in *ngoko* Javanese. The Indonesian word "*berhasil*" should have been replaced by "*kasil*," while "*sungai*" (the river) finds equivalence in "*kali*."

An adolescent from Bantul also resorted to a number of Indonesian words while retelling the folktale *Bawang Abang lan Bawang Putih*, as shown in the following passage.

Original: *"Bawang Putih yaiku bocah wadon kang ora duwe bapak lan ibu. Dheweke urip karo **ibu tirine** lan duwe anak wadon kang umure padha karo Bawang Putih. Saben dina bawang putih dikongkon nyambut gawe sing abot **kalih** ibune lan anak tiri — lan **kakak** tirine, **Bawang Merah**. Bawang Abang saben dina gaweane mung dandan lan Bawang Abang ora trima yen kalah ayu lan kalah **menarik** timbang Bawang Putih. Bawang Putih dikongkon ngumbahi ana ing kali. Sasuwene umbah-umbah Bawang Putih **dibantu** karo iwak Emas ajaib. Reti yen olehe ngumbahi cepet rampung, ibu tirine dadi **curiga**, terus ngekon si Bawang Abang ngetutke Bawang Putih umbah-umbah."*

(Interview with S, a junior high school student from Bantul, on September 29, 2022)

English translation: "Bawang Putih was a girl who did not have a father and a mother. She lived with her stepmother who had a daughter of the same age as Bawang Putih. Every day Bawang Putih was told to work hard by the mother and the stepdaughter — and her stepsister, Bawang Merah. All Bawang Merah did was dress up every day and she could not accept that she was less beautiful and less attractive than Bawang Putih. Bawang Putih was told to wash (clothes) in the river. While doing the washing she was helped by a magical gold fish. Upon learning that she (always) finished washing quickly, her stepmother became suspicious and asked Bawang Merah to follow Bawang Putih.

From the above passage, it can be seen that the interviewee could retell the story in sequence in *ngoko* Javanese. However, some Indonesian words made their way into the retelling. For the Indonesian terms "*ibu tiri*," "*kakak tiri*," and "*dibantu*," the *ngoko* equivalents are "*ibu kuwalon*," "*mbakyu kuwalon*," and "*direwangi*," respectively. It is interesting to note that register hybridization took place in the interviewee's usage of the *krama* word "*kalih*" in place of the *ngoko* "*karo*" (meaning "with" or "by").

The above examples of the application of *ngoko* Javanese show that the interviewees had both active and passive linguistic skills in using the register. The remaining respondents in this group displayed almost the same high level of linguistic proficiency, indicated by their ability to retell a fairly long story, although not fully sophisticated due to the vocabulary they borrowed from Indonesian. Thus, it is possible to classify *ngoko* as a Javanese register that is still in use by young people in Yogyakarta Province. The usage frequency and their competence in using the register with relevance provide hope that the potential vulnerability of *ngoko* Javanese is still at a manageable level.

4.2.3. The Endangered Krama Register

In contrast, in the absence of substantial conservation efforts, the formal Javanese register, *krama* Javanese, is at a high risk of extinction in Javanese society. Pranowo et al. (2021) highlight various errors in using Javanese and their underlying causes. The most prevalent causes of mistakes in *krama* Javanese usage are the inappropriate selection of words and affixes. Among the contributing factors for these errors are the user's inability to distinguish *krama* Javanese vocabulary from Indonesian words; the inability to distinguish between *krama* Javanese humilifics (intended for oneself) and honorifics (intended for respected people); the limited knowledge of *krama* Javanese outside of *krama ndesa* (rural-style *krama*); the complexity of adjectives that do not describe actual objects; as well as the arbitrary way numerous *krama* affixes are used. Pranowo et al. suggest that efforts to preserve the *krama* register must be strong to keep it alive and well in Javanese society. However, some challenges remain: many parents no longer use *krama* Javanese; the younger generations are more accustomed to speaking either *ngoko* Javanese or Indonesian; some Javanese language instructors lack the necessary knowledge or creativity; and the younger generations do not receive much encouragement from their environment to improve their Javanese.

The interviews with respondents claiming to be able to speak *krama* Javanese revealed a number of patterns. The first pattern is that some of them were better at responding to queries in the open dialogue setting. The interviewees' limited ability to retell the chosen folktale is the second pattern, which led to their using brief passages and mixing the *krama* register with *ngoko* Javanese and/or Indonesian. Third, some interviewees completely failed to demonstrate their claim that they could speak *krama* Javanese during the interview. Fourth is the failure of certain interviewees to show up after being informed that they would be required to demonstrate their *krama* Javanese proficiency. Overall, despite the fact that *krama alus*, the lowest level of *krama* Javanese and therefore the most casual, was chosen for the interview, none of the respondents showed outstanding *krama* Javanese skills.

The attempt to use of *krama* Javanese can be seen in this instance from the interview below.

> **Original:** *"Nggih. Kancil lan Baya niku dadose nyeritakaken Kancil **sing… sing** kepingin… **nyeritakake** sing Kancil kepingin nyebrang kali. Enten kaline, enten baya sing kathah. **Baya kepingin… Baya kepingin… pingin maem sing Kancil**. Nggih. Dadose Kancil… damel syarat. Si Baya… Si Baya diangsalke maem sing Kancil, **nanging sing Kancil… sing Kancil kudu** nyebrang kali riyin. Nggih dadose baya-bayane niku **setuju… setuju** lajeng baris kangge Si Kancil nyebrang. Sesampune Kancil nyebrang, **Baya nyuwun… nyuwun bukti** saking syarate wau **ben isa** maem si Kancil, nanging si Baya kapusan kalih si Kancil, nggih. **Si Kancil langsung… langsung lunga**. Nggih, pun ngeten niku."*

(Interview with R, a junior high school student from Bantul, on September 22, 2022).

> **English translation:** "Right. Kancil and Buaya (the crocodile) tells of Kancil who… wished to… tells of Kancil who wished to cross a river. There was a river, there were lots of crocodiles. Buaya wanted… wanted… wanted to eat Kancil. Yes. So Kancil… gave its condition. Buaya... Buaya would be allowed to eat Kancil, if Kancil... Kancil could cross the river first. Yes so Buaya agreed… agreed and then lined up for Kancil to cross. After Kancil got across, Buaya asked for proof of the condition so he could eat Kancil, but Buaya had been lied to by Kancil, right. Kancil immediately… immediately left. Yes, that's how it goes."

In his retelling of the story in *krama* Javanese, the particular interviewee showed difficulties putting his words together. He struggled to finish his remarks as he stumbled, pausing at different words. The respondent proved to have a rudimentary proficiency in the *krama* register. In the previous examples, many interviewees who were instructed to talk in *ngoko* Javanese borrowed from Indonesian vocabulary. However, the interviewee in this instance mixed his *krama* Javanese not only with Indonesian words, but also words from the *ngoko* register. The bold-italics words indicate the borrowed *ngoko* and Indonesian vocabulary, as well as glaring grammatical faults. The word "*sing*" (the/that) is *ngoko* Javanese, which should have been replaced with the *krama* word "*ingkang*." Similarly, "*nyeritakke*", "*kudu*," and "*lunga*," should be "*nyariyosaken*", "*kedah*," and "*kesah*," respectively.

Here is another example of one respondent's attempt at using of *krama* Javanese:

Original: *"Ning suatu dinten ana kewan jenenge Kancil, ajeng njukuk mentimun weke Pak Petani. Ning suatu dinten niku enten… Aduh, lali Mbak ceritanya… Kancil ajeng njukuk timun niku Pak Petani naruhake jebakan lan ing suatu dinten niku Kancil boten reti nek ning wite timun niku enten jebakan, terus kancile nyeblung jebakan niku, terus Kancil dicekel Pak Petani diwehke kandhang, terus dikurung."*

(Interview with R, a high-school student from Kulon Progo, on September 22, 2022)

English translation: One day there was an animal named Kancil, who wanted to take cucumbers belonging to Mr. Farmer. On that one day there was... Oh no, I forgot the story, *Mbak* (honorific for older girl). Kancil wanted to fetch the cucumber (but) Mr. Farmer put a trap and on that one day Kancil didn't know that there was a trap (by) the cucumber vine, so Kancil got stuck in the trap, and Kancil was caught by Mr. Farmer (who then) put it in a cage, then locked it up.

The interviewees were able to speak actively but only at a very basic level of competency, as evidenced by the examples for the *krama* Javanese usage. They retold the stories briefly, stumbling and taking time to find the right words.

5. CONCLUSION

Drawing from our analysis of Javanese language usage and the language proficiency of young people, it can be concluded that the Javanese language is susceptible to endangerment in both the *ngoko* and *krama* registers. In particular, the vulnerability of Javanese *ngoko* is evident in the mixing of Indonesian words into the language. Although many students claim to speak *ngoko* Javanese, their language proficiency is compromised by the prevalence of Indonesian terms. The proliferation of Indonesian words in everyday language use is a worrisome trend that threatens the survival of Javanese language and culture. If left unchecked, it could result in the continued prevalence of Indonesian in social contexts, thereby further marginalizing the Javanese language. Our analysis has demonstrated that the mixing of Indonesian words in Javanese is common, and if this trend continues, it is likely that the younger generations will lose their ability to communicate effectively in Javanese.

The usage of Javanese *krama* register may decrease in its level of formality as a result of its hybridization with *ngoko* Javanese and Indonesian, which is evident in the language use of the respondents. The *krama* register is characterized by a high level of politeness that relies on an ideal word choice. Due to a lack of serious preservation efforts, the *krama* register is at risk of losing its formality as it continues to mix with the less formal *ngoko* register and the Indonesian language.

Rather than merely introducing the Javanese language as part of the local content curriculum in schools, the first step towards preservation is to implement daily practices in the family and social settings. Additionally, the use and language skills of both the *ngoko* and *krama* registers require quality- and quantity-based reinforcement. To ensure that no language, particularly Indonesian as the national language, comes to dominate and cause the Javanese language to decline further, a larger policy space for its preservation is essential.

6. COMPETING INTEREST STATEMENT

This article is free from any conflict of interest regarding the data collection, analysis, and the publication process itself. Either replicate or modify the previous sentence for this part.

7. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contribute in designing the research, building up the conceptual framework, analyzing the data, and interpreting the research findings.

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