

# Javanese Tensions: Revitalizing Javanese amidst Old and New Symbolisms; Toward a Linguistic Anthropology

Michael Hadzantonis  
Independent Researcher.

Asian Linguistic Anthropology  
2021, Vol. 3(1): 1-32  
(c) JALA 2021  
Article reuse guidelines  
Jala.pub/permissions  
DOI: 10.47298/jala.v3-i1-a1  
Jala.pub



## Abstract

Indonesian nationalism has significantly influenced its local languages. The national slogan Unity in Diversity has been appropriated throughout Indonesia, particularly in the Javanese province. Javanese language trends have thus become a model for a larger Indonesia, where Javanese people have negotiated their ethnic symbolisms to benefit local and national intentions. However, tensions have formed in Java between heritage, nationalism and neoliberal requirements, rendering Javanese language revitalization conflictual.

This paper draws on an ethnography of Javanese urban centres, to describe patterns of language revitalization. Through a symbolic interactionist approach, the paper analyzes Javanese language ideologies and symbolisms documented in these urban centres, to describe emerging language practices. The discussion progresses to present how Bahasa Campur, a mix of several languages, has repositioned these language communities to negotiate their tensions.

The paper contributes to anthropological scholarship by presenting how global and local forces alter the practices and symbolisms of languages communities.

**Keywords:** *Mythscape, Timor-Leste, national identity, revitalization, Portuguese language*

## Introduction

While conducting ethnographic fieldwork in urban centres and rural regions throughout Java, in Indonesia, between 2012 and 2019, on Javanese language and community, performance arts, spirituality, religions and occult practices, the growing tensions between the revitalization of a Javanese identity and neoliberal intentions became apparent. During the fieldwork, these tensions emerged in my personal interactions with these communities and through various forms of media. Efforts to officially recognize and centralize the Javanese language appeared in these tensions, placing individuals and communities along a continuum between these two extremes. The growth and availability of technology over the past 30 years has unquestionably mediated society's efforts to contribute to the revitalization of Javanese language and society. However, revitalization is never less than a complex issue; renewal is always situated and never simply a replica of old discursive contexts. The concern with revitalization, and the tensions emerging from these efforts to revitalize the language have appeared in multiple sectors, including the social, religious, professional, academic, and political. The consensus on exactly where people and communities should sit within these tensions has been varied but correlates somewhat with the strength of ideologically and pragmatically '(re)branding' or re-naturalizing Javanese identity, that is, what it means to be Javanese vis-à-vis foreign encroachment (Northeast Asia, The U.S.A.). These influences include foreign language education and global media, which have all ensnared Indonesian youth communities, and also larger Indonesian society.

As has generally been the case, in the era of late (late) capitalism (Jameson 1991), the revitalization of heritage language has been central to Indonesia's national, ethnic and provincial branding. In Java, the heritage language is Javanese, and the heritage ideology is *Kejawen*, a collection of cultural practices that aim to combine cosmology and social good, central to which is an animist concern. This revitalization of Javanese heritage has brought forth traditional symbolisms, such as music, performance, syncretic religions (c.f. work by Geertz), culinary practices, architectures, lineage, etiquette, and social mores, as well as Indonesian national political ideologies which have emerged over the past few decades. These factors have become points of (ethnic) contention throughout Javanese society, and well beyond, and on which Java has needed to draw in its intentions to revitalize so as to compete with other regions and languages, not least of which is Bahasa Indonesia (Bertrand 2003).

This paper explores the revitalization of the Javanese language and ethnicity, with greater focus on urban centres such as Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Solo and Surakarta. More specifically, I investigate the revitalization of Javanese and the growth of Bahasa Campur (BC), and how shifts in social, political and cosmological ideologies, throughout the past several decades has mediated processes of revitalization of these languages. BC has expanded over the past century to become normative linguistic practice in the province of Java, where BC speakers alter language form and function for situated and larger-ethnic context. Employing a constructionist framework, and

similarly, a symbolic interactionist framework (Stryker and Vryan 2006), I draw from a decade-long ethnography of Java, to inform my analysis of ideologies of change in Javanese identity and language(s). In the process, I explore correlations between social-political developments and the revival of cultural heritage in Java, to examine emergent Javanese identity and ideology. Ultimately, I present ways in which Javanese identity and languages are framed by Javanese communities for their specific social and political purposes. Central to efforts to revitalize Javanese traditions vis-à-vis global trends are tensions between a 'cosmocentric' ideology, that is, the positioning of the human as one component in a larger natural world and matrix of jagad (cosmology), and an 'anthropocentric' ideology, that is, the human as superior to all other beings yet subservient to neoliberal requirements.

### Indonesian Political Landscapes

During the Indonesian federal pre-election campaigns in 2004, 2014 and 2019, in their efforts to win public support, Indonesia's political parties shaped their political rhetorics to position themselves favorably in the views of ethnic communities. Throughout Java, this rhetoric was marked by the use of *parikan*, a Javanese metaphorical and poetical genre (Ngadiman 1998), religious citations, historical references and claims to ethnic origin. This rhetoric, developed by Javanese political parties, was placed on banners and posters hung in strategic places in urban centres throughout Java. Throughout, political discourse sought to strategically combine Javanese, Bahasa Indonesia, and other languages and their registers and dialects, in order to garner and to secure social, political and economic support.

In these national elections, despite having an awareness of political rhetoric strategies that can sway voters, and the blindfolding effects of political rhetoric, voters largely succumbed to these political strategies, that is, rhetorical ploys that appealed to Javanese voter ethnicity. Here, politicians temporarily renounced general Indonesian 'oneness,' and identified as 'local,' rather than as national bigots, to garner voting support. Particularly unique to Indonesian federal elections and their rhetoric has been a process of disaffiliating from a larger national identity to appeal to local voters and their ethnic origin. This strategy, however, has served to further segregate Indonesia into its diverse localities, inculcating to Indonesians the significance of diversity, and not national unity. Pre-election rhetoric in Java evidenced the strength of locality and hence Java's political agency over a widespread Bahasa Indonesia. As Bahasa Indonesia increasingly became a national language, both through political mandate and through 'forced' entry, the Javanese language assumed an increasingly regional identity in competition with other emergent languages: Bahasa Indonesia, English, and Arabic. A Javanese sense of locality has become instrumental in resurrecting Javanese heritage, and more so in sustaining inter-lingual tensioned conflicts, that is, between the Javanese language and Bahasa Indonesia. As such, these election strategies indicated that Indonesian ideologies of locality can contest nationhood, a locality-generality tension that would allow local ideologies, and in this case, Javanese ideologies,

to seek revitalization through symbolisms of heritage, and through the legitimacy of (Javanese) regionalism.

The junctures between regionalism and ideologies of a homogeneous Indonesian nation evolved during the late 20th century, effected by the Orde Baru, that is, the New Order regime, throughout the 1970s to the 1990s. President Suharto's fall in 1998, together with the Undang-Undang Otonomi Daerah, the regional autonomy laws of 1999, implemented in January 2001, brought reformation of both government and law, affording Indonesians agency to re-pursue and legitimize this regionalism. New generations did not necessarily share prior values, but rather, attempted to critically question those national unity ideologies legitimized prior. Throughout, Indonesia has repeatedly accommodated a plurality of societal visions: An ethnic homogenization which Presidents Sukarno and Suharto both endorsed, yet concomitantly, an intensified localizing of ethnic identity, within which, neoliberal capitalist ideologies have assisted regions throughout Indonesia to compete with the encroaching efforts of a centralized economic power. These regional-national tensions now pervade Java, as they do other parts of Indonesia, a tensioned continuum along which Indonesian populations have attempted to position themselves. Concerns such as which factors motivate current generations to eye either end of this continuum, and how neoliberal and other forces interact to ground the revitalization of Javanese cultural heritage, then emerge.

## Repositioning Java

Prior to discussing ethnographic data on the Javanese context, I will first briefly discuss Javanese ethnic and political landscapes. In dealing with Javanese regionalism prior to 1942, and following work by Hatley (1984), Liddle (1988), Ricklefs and Calvin (1993), and Hull and Jones (1994), I note that Javanese ideologies and geographies date back to over a millennium. As a community of ideological and cultural practice, Javanese pervaded larger Indonesia (Retsikas 2012; Pemberton 1996). Despite the diversity and size of Java, urban and non-urban Javanese communities and regions are positioned to together form a larger Javanese structural identity. Unlike other more modern developments throughout the Indonesian archipelago, Java has had its identity well mapped out historically. Such has also been the case with the Javanese language, where respective regions and cities align with specific dialects and registers of the language. As a simplification, I note that, for example, many of the informants to this study confirmed that the coastal regions of the island exhibit *alam gaib*, that is, magical properties. Populations around these coastal areas make use of Javanese dialects and registers that intensify cosmological, and at times, occultist beliefs. The region near to Yogyakarta, in central Java, in contrast, emphasizes the use of an intellectual and politically functional Javanese register. As one government official informant described, mirroring the opinion of many others:

Yo mungkin sebagian orang ngertine yen daerah pesisir pancen luwih mistis, apa ya...akeh

hal-hal ghaib, tapi, mmm, ah, mmm, yo nek, mmm, yo nek dipikir-pikir... mungkin bener juga, karena kabeh elemen ngumpul ning kana...

Most people know that the coastal areas have an increased magical practice, but, mmm, ah, mmm, that's, mmm, that's because the elements join there ...

(Dewi Sri, Surabaya, 56)

One Wayang puppeteer in Yogyakarta, also employed as a Dukun (shaman), agreed to this, noting that

Aku ngira yen sisih lor lan kidul Jawa luwih mistis uga luwih mistis ketimbang bagean liyane, sanajan aku wis ndeleng ilmu gaib sing dipraktekke ing daratan Jawa Wetan.

I think that the north and south (coasts) of Java are more mystical, more mystical than other parts, even though I have seen the occult practiced in mainland East Java.

Contextualizing their respective regional ideologies, Javanese communities draw on the symbolisms emerging from this Javanese structuralism, where each geographical location respectively functions to contribute to the construction of a larger Javanese region and identity. Following ideologies presenting Java as not one homogenous community, but rather, a landscape of diverse ethnic communities, the concept of the Javanese as a *wong jowo*, or a homogenous 'Javanese person,' would never find grounding; Java's diverse sub-groups lack a common structure, other than that may all lay claim to participation in a larger Indonesian nation and a common colonial inheritance. A large majority of the informants to this study expressed their content with this structural diversity of the Javanese region, largely concurring that there is no correct Javanese register or dialect, but rather, a systemic organization of each dialect, adhering to their construal of diverse millennia-old Javanese beliefs and values.

To prepare Java for a more salient role in a progressively democratized and decentralized Indonesia, the Javanese provincial government has been strengthening its presence throughout central Indonesia, attempting to revitalize Javanese cultural heritage, such as Javanese language, Gamelan music, Wayang Kulit puppet theatre, Batik textiles, and so forth, thus globally exposing its Javanese heritage. Several government personnel I interacted with explained that through this revitalization of local heritage, the Javanese provincial government seeks to flagship Indonesia's efforts to strengthen itself as a strong nation state. One such government employee expressed the following:

Jawa wis akeh disalin sajrone abad kepungkur. Malaysia negesake menawa budaya Jawa lair ing Malaysia, Filipina uga negesake menawa warisan budaya Jawa asale saka kana, lan kabeh wilayah Indonesia nggunakake wujud budaya lan seni Jawa. Jelase lek Jawa kuwi pusat kabeh wilayah, Indonesia kudu ngakoni opo iku Jawa, lan apa sing ana ing kabeh wilayah, lan kita kudu

ngumumake. Indonesia ngerti pentinge budaya lokal kaya budaya Jawa kanggo negara.

Java has been copied so much over the past century or so. Malaysia has claimed that Javanese culture was born in Malaysia, the Philippines has also claimed that Javanese heritage is originally from there, and all parts of Indonesia are adopting Javanese cultural and art forms. It's obvious that Java is central to the whole region, and that Indonesia needs to acknowledge what Java is, and what all regions are, and we need to make that known. Indonesia knows how important local culture such as the Javanese culture is for the country.

This intention was documented in a *peraturan gubernur* (royal decree) by the Sultan Governor of Yogyakarta in 2019, who announced that Yogyakarta will rename its government structure in the Javanese language, following the Indonesian national specialty region policy. Here, Yogyakarta has sought to localize in order to reflexively nationalize, adhering to Indonesia's Pancasila, a set of five principles regulating national development. The Sultan Governor of Yogyakarta has drawn on the national program of economic decentralization and regional autonomy as a springboard to shift toward a revitalization of provincial identity and politics, ultimately seeking to mediate a distribution of political power into the province of central Java.

Consequently, Java has seen several movements aiming at cultural revival. For example, a significant amount of resource is currently being invested into (the modernizing of) the *Wayang Kulit* shadow puppet theatre. This investment includes *Wayang* academic courses at ISI, the Institute of Seni (Arts) Indonesia in South Yogyakarta, and a modernization of Batik fashion throughout central Java by companies such as *Pria Tampan*, *Mirota*, *Margaria*, and *Winotosastro*. One has only to walk into upscale hotels in central Java to find stores showcasing 'hot and sexy' modernized Batik fashion, and thus to understand that Batik can compete with major global fashion labels and styles. Independent Batik producers and distributors in central Java now seek innovative ways through which to produce and sell Batik textiles and fashion. The Batik styles of old have opened up mercantile and artistic spaces for the negotiation of a modern Javanese style, and for the visual presentation of symbolisms of Javanese heritage, for local producers and workers.

Several concerns thus arise, such as why these cultural styles are now reemerging throughout Java, in heritage, revitalized or modernized forms, and how these styles overlap with or advance Javanese political social ideologies. A culturally revitalized Javanese identity can accelerate Javanese political interests to position Java as a significant political presence (c.f. Errington 2000), and to effectively allocate Javanese cultural (and other) economic assets. If this acceleration is possible, then an independent Javanese region, in rejuvenating its social, political, and economic engagement, will therefore be in a position to effectively align itself with the Indonesian national program of decentralization and regional autonomy, to revitalize itself as a provincial body in all its totality.



## Method and General Framework

Following Frederik Barth (1969), who contested the boundedness of cultures and ethnicities, in this paper, I focus on how the malleable interface between Javanese communities mediates the reconstruction, revitalization, and reappropriation of the Javanese language. My decade long ethnography in Java has exposed ideologies and situated identities constructed from the symbolic intentions (and histories) of communities throughout Java, through their language practices. Through local, regional and ethnic socialization processes (c.f. Smith-Hefner (1988, 2007), then, these Javanese communities form relational identities with other communities, to relegitimize and reinvigorate markers of Javanese identity (for example, the Javanese language, the Wayang Kulit puppet theatre, Batik textiles, and Gamelan music), thus revitalizing their Javanese cultural selves. Barth suggests that a point of departure for analyzing ethnicity is to observe the social or political manipulation of situated identity, thereby underscoring the constructed nature of ethnic identity. The current study thus foregrounds the political and situational practices of Javanese communities, and displaces these qualities across time and region to observe and describe revitalizations of Javanese culture and language. In line with Morgan (2014), who discusses the emergent qualities of speech communities, I argue that Javanese ethnicities have sought to adapt to current neoliberal climates, through the situated reappropriation and hence a fluid hybridity of traditional and current symbolisms. The formation of ethnicity cannot be relegated to fixed cultural symbolisms, but rather, a fluid set of these symbolisms, a process evident in the current revitalization efforts of Java. Javanese political leaders together with larger society have negotiated their cultural heritages and linguistic fluidities, thus shaping modern Javanese identities through mechanisms of revitalization, affording Java political presence as an Indonesian province.

A study of ethnicity and its language also requires an observation of the symbolic interpretation of social and cultural phenomena (Kipp 1993) by those within its specific communities. This paper hence draws on a symbolic interactionist framework (Stryker and Vryan 2006) in which Javanese communities afford meaning to their world through their shared interpretations of symbols, thus grounding the construction of Javanese identity. Throughout the paper, I draw on this symbolic interactionism to present how Javanese communities frame their Javanese identities and languages in order to pursue specific social and political goals and the revitalization of heritage. At the centre of these efforts vis-à-vis global trends in an era of late capitalism (Jameson 1991) are tensions between the 'cosmocentric' and 'anthropocentric' ideologies of Java. For this, I elicit three main aspects of contemporary Javanese language and identity formation: The histories of a current revitalized Javanese identity, the creation of Javanese as a revitalized community, and the junctures and tensions between a revitalized language and identity in Java and traditional Javanese heritage ideologies, that is, Kejawen. I thus unpack the mechanics of language revitalization in Java, mainly Yogyakarta, as both a linguistic and highly anthropological issue.

The ethnography for this study spanned a period of ten years, and comprises discussions with 453 Javanese informants living in Yogyakarta, Solo, Surabaya, Banyuwangi, and other cities, aged between 18 and 75 years of age, of Javanese cultural heritage. Many of these informants have lived in both urban and rural regions throughout Java, and were selected purposely from a variety of sectors, education levels, professions, and ages. The ethnography also includes my extensive participation in Javanese cultural and ritual activities. I have documented these participations, and other phenomena as audio, video and still image collections.

Throughout, I draw on the language ideologies of informants and communities in these urban centres in Java. These language ideologies can be defined as symbolic interpretations of language, at times correlating with political interests, and thus reflecting the social and historically situated aspects of cultural heritage (Kroskrity2010). Incorporating a cultural dimension assists in the linguistic analysis of political and social power throughout the Javanese province, and more particularly in its urban localities. These language ideologies can thus inform understandings of the symbolic interpretation of cultural models of regions such as Java, where the focus of language ideologies, as suggested by Kroskrity (2010), allows us to understand the interactions between state bodies and the communities of ancestral languages. These ideologies focus on political struggles, redistribution, and recognition of language and speech communities, concurrent with preservation and revitalization movements. As such, the activities of language revitalization, such as those developed around Javanese should be considered sites of 'ideological struggle,' a conflict that should be made explicit so that revitalization efforts are not hindered.

## Discussion

### *Ideologies in General*

The decade long ethnography of Javanese urban centres, that is, Yogyakarta, Solo, Surabaya, Banyuwangi, and other cities, evidenced that primary cultural markers such as language, performance, cosmology, cultural heritage (e.g. Javanese kingdoms, Kraton<sup>2</sup> and Alun-Alun<sup>3</sup>), and the gendered design of the Javanese geography (the volcanos Merapi and Bromo as fathers, the sea as the mother), are crucial to Javanese identity formation. Broadly speaking, informants discussed these and other factors, through which they were able to interpret Javanese symbolisms, for example, the structured aspects of the Javanese language, their genealogies and cultural histories, Wayang designs, Kejawen, westernization, and culinary practices. A great majority of the informants generally indicated that the ideologies of revitalization complement the need for change in urban centres, and that urban Java strongly supports the current societal transformations and revitalizations of the region. However, conceptions of 'revitalization' varied significantly. Javanese urbanites generally expressed their eagerness to see Java maintain yet modernize its cultural heritage, while also wanting regional independence from the Indonesian federal government.



Symbolic interpretations of Javanese identity and its language were thus varied and fluid, yet which ultimately merged as a single whole to allow for an anthropological landscaping of Javanese language and identity. The discursive inclusion of a plurality of Javanese identity markers rendered the symbolic interpretation of Javanese identity highly fluid, and adaptable to historical as well as contemporary social and political changes. Informants indicated that identity therefore shifts across time, space and situated context in Javanese society, yet Javanese communities are generally united through an umbrella concept of 'Javanese ethnicity.' To describe the ways in which the symbolic interpretation of these identity markers has mediated a revitalization of the Javanese language and identity, I now present themes arising from the ethnography. These themes have been generalized from a plurality of motifs emerging during data collection.

### *Educational Policy*

I start with the area toward which I assign the least attention in this paper, which is that of educational policy in Java. The spread of the national language Bahasa Indonesia well supported the nation-making policies of Indonesia's New Order regime in the years 1966–1998 (Errington 1998), as part of the then president's inpres (presidential instruction) program. Ultimately, in East and Central Java, Javanese has been offered as a subject compulsory for students from grade four through to middle school, after which it is an elective (Poejosoedarmo 2006). However, the Yogyakarta municipality government has made the Javanese language compulsory throughout all of grade school (Nababan 1991). Identified as *muatan lokal* or "local/regional subject matter," the focus of Javanese language instruction is on regional culture and vernacular values (Nababan 1991). Javanese language instruction is largely centered on the inculcation of *Krama* vocabulary and phrases, that is, eloquent poetic upper-level Javanese. As such, this learning has little value for the utility of Javanese outside of the classroom. Further impeding attention to Javanese in the classroom, the federal government has determined that all education must contribute to the advancement of Indonesia's 'industry,' whereby, regional languages have lesser value in the building of Indonesia's 'national character.' Javanese language education through government policy, has thus shifted from *mata pelajaran wajib* (compulsory-content instruction), to a *muatan lokal* (local-content instruction) of lesser significance in national education. The regulation responsible for shifting the status of the regional (i.e. Javanese) language from a compulsory to a tentative subject occurred during President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's second period (2009–2014), as the president's administration simplified the *Ujian Nasional* (National Examination) for elementary to senior high school students, relegating Javanese language education to a class of subjects not compulsory for matriculating from high school. It follows that perceptions of the Javanese language as significant have dropped over the past several decades.

The national Indonesian governments prioritizes the use of a national standard language to strengthen the economic state of Indonesia, opting to delegitimize the significance of

traditional/heritage languages respective to Indonesia's many tribes and cultures. Without education of and in these languages, Indonesian people have increasingly developed conceptions of a lowered belonging to their respective regions, and lowered feelings of involvement with their region's cultural heritages and commodities, thus denigrating ideologies of belonging, and reducing (significantly) the symbolic repertoire that would otherwise firmly attach these communities to home. Many informants reflected on this, such as the two below:

Aku ora ngerti tenan apa sing diomongake wong liya nalika nanggo basa resmi, lan aku ngrasa yen aku ora dadi bagiane masyarakat kuwi.

I don't understand what others are saying much of the time when they speak formally, and this makes me feel like an outsider.

(Suri, 24, Yogyakarta)

Nalika ngrungoke lagune Didi Kempot, kadang angel tenan ngerti apa sing nyanyikke, nanging aku ngerti sekjane aku pengen weruh lan ngerti artine.

When Didi Kempot's songs come on, it's hard to know what he is saying sometimes, but I know that I should know.

(Sury's sister, Suria, 27, Yogyakarta)

In my discussions with academics at the Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, and at other institutions such as Universitas Muhammadiyah, the informants described that the Javanese language can be separated into as many as eleven levels, which would well benefit the application of the language in education, but the education department has chosen not to invest in this, and this has greatly denigrated the application of the language and Javanese culture. However, larger Javanese society, and hence, many of the informants, were generally not concerned with this complexity, which now mostly serves academic purposes if at all. Javanese populations see this complexity as superfluous and confusing, and are unclear as to where and when to apply each of these many levels in daily communication. Consequently, Javanese education now acknowledges the use of three levels: Ngoko, Krama, and Krama Inggil.

### *Societal Factors*

Younger generations in Yogyakarta and Solo have for a long time neglected the refined form of Javanese Krama, opting for Ngoko. As described by many informants, currently, only small populations of younger speakers of Javanese speak and write in Krama, yet these populations exhibit a reduced fluency. According to informants, this attenuation over the past 50 years has been influenced by the difficulty in learning and speaking Krama, owing to its intensified poetic character, and by the redundancy of Krama in current linguistic landscapes, as a register

structured by a social and familial hierarchy now seen as antiquated by most. The fact that a large majority of mothers now work outside of the household, and have limited time to spend with children in order to pass on the Javanese language, has also contributed to this attenuation. One informant in Solo admitted to that:

Ibuku sakjane kepengin ngajari aku nganggo basa Krama Jawa, nanging sering ra klakon akhire.

My mother had often wanted to help me with my Javanese Krama, but she kept putting it off.

(Fadi, 29, Solo)

Another informant expressed a similar concern:

Aku paham pas biyen isih sekolah ibuku sering ngandahani lan bakal ngajari basa Krama, nanging ora kedadeyan, malah-malah saiki.

I know that if I was with my mom more, she kept telling me, she'd teach me Krama, but it didn't happen. I rarely saw my mom when I was in school. Even now.

(Nanda, female, 34, Surabaya)

Similarly, family members have indicated a desire to develop a greater intimacy with children (and grandchildren), they claim possible only through the use of Ngoko. As one father explained:

Anakku wedok umur 3 tahun, kita ngajari basa Krama tapi yo ora akeh. Kuwi anak tunggal dan kita nggk pengen basa Krama marai hubungan anak lan wong tuwa dadi ora cedhak. Tapi yo mungkin iso kosok baline. Wong tuwaku uga ora pengen marai anakku ngrasa adoh amarga kudu ngomong Basa Krama lan marakke halangan nggo srawung kanggo anakku.

My 3-year-old daughter, we are trying to teach her Krama, but not too much. We only have one daughter, and she means everything to us. If we teach her Krama, we won't have that closeness with her. But, I don't know. It may go the other way. My parents don't speak to me because they think that I should teach her Krama, but I know I shouldn't cos it'll create a difficult situation in our house. We want her to mix in with people around her.

(Gusta, male, 38, Yogyakarta)

Societal and gender equality in urban centres in Java, influenced by the growth in the numbers

of women in the workforce, has grown significantly. With this increasing rate of equal opportunity, men now interact with women with greater caution, and this includes accepting that women now desire, to a much greater extent than in the past, to speak with partners and friends in a more ‘relaxed’ way, yet while still exercising *keakraban* (intimacy) in relationships. The Ngoko variety of Javanese offers a pathway with which to accomplish these desired ‘balanced’ relationships, a phenomenon which whole families are becoming aware of and agreeing to, as the following informants explains:

Awal-awal kene nggak yakin kudu ngaggo bahasa opo, Bahasa Indonesia utawa Ngoko opo bahasa liyane. Yen saiki kudu nganggo basa Krama kanggo anak-anakku rasane terlalu berlebihan, kecuali pancen dibutuhake di masa depan. Yo tapi kudu diakui, Basa Krama cenderung lawas lan ora iso digunakke kanggo program komouter kaya Java (ngguyu). Anak-anak butuh Bahasa Indonesia, Bahasa Inggris, tur Bahasa Perancis malah berguna kanggo mereka, uga Mandarin. Nanging, pemerintah yo ora ono usaha apa-apa kanggo nyelamatke Basa Krama, duna ora membutuhkan kuwi. Aku yo ngerti Bahasa Indonesia diajake ing sekolah Australia, nangingn dudu Basa Krama.

Initially we were not sure what to use, Bahasa Indonesia, or Ngoko or other languages. Using Krama is too much for my children to do now, and I don’t think they can handle Krama unless they will really need it later in life. I am very sorry to admit that Krama is an old language and isn’t used to program computers like Java (laughs). They need Bahasa Indonesia and English, and even some French is good for them, or some Chinese. But the Indonesian government isn’t doing anything to help the situation of Krama, so the world doesn’t need it. I know that Bahasa Indonesia is taught in schools in Australia, but not Krama.

(Issa, male, 47, Yogyakarta)

Aku mikir, hmmm, yen wong tuwaku getun amarga ora nggunakake Ngoko karo aku nalika isih bocah. Aku mesthi diwanti-wanti nggunakake Krama. Dheweke tresna karo aku, nanging mesthi bates nggo ngungkapke. Aku kelingan sawijining wektu, umure kiro-kiro 20 taun, bocah Australia iki urip bareng keluarga, suwine sesasi, utawa nem minggu, kanca sing tak temoni nalika sinau. Dheweke tetep bareng karo kita amarga pengin ndeleng keluarga Indonesia ing Solo. Ing dina dheweke lunga, dheweke ujar manawa keluargane ora tumindak alami ing sakiwa tengene, kaya-kaya, sawise sewulan isih ana rasa isin. Aku seneng dheweke mbukak babagan iki amarga aku ngerti yen ora isin, lan aku ngerti yen kita nindakake kabeh wektu. Ana alangan ing antarane kita lan wong tuwa. Lan dakkira iku Krama. Sing aku ora duwe karo anak-anakku. Wong tuwaku ngomong karo anak-anake nganggo basa Ngoko lan basa liyane kayata basa Indonesia, Basa Campur, lan dheweke luwih cedhak tinimbang aku.

I think, hmm, my parents regret not using Ngoko with me when I was a kid. I was pushed to use Krama with them. They loved me but there was always a barrier, I think. Once, I was about 20, this Australian guy came to live with our family, for a month, or six weeks or something, a friend I met when I was studying. He stayed with us because he wanted to see an Indonesian family in Solo. The day he left, he said that the family was not acting naturally around him, as though, after a month, there was still some shyness. I'm glad he opened up to me about that because I realized that it wasn't shyness, and I realized that we do that all the time. There's a barrier between us and our parents. I think that was Krama. I don't have that with my children. My parents speak to my children in Ngoko and other languages such as Bahasa Indonesia, Bahasa Campur, and they're closer than I was with them.

(Anita, female, 34, Solo)

Beberapa orang mungkin berpikir yen (basa) Jawa wis mati, tapi yo kuwi kan sebuah pergerakan budaya? Maksudku, kabeh iso berubah, kita ora iso ngarep-arep Jawa sak lawase. Aku lan bojoku ora perlu kuwatir tentang kuwi. Kita ngerti yen bocah-bocah bakal apik lan iso nemokake Kejawen maneh. Nanging yo kuwi hukum tarik-menarik. Dalam pengertian, kita isa kelangan Jawa kuno (lawas), nanging yo kita iso mikir maneh dan menemukna kembali apa sing diarani Jawa kuwi.

Some people think it's the death of Java, but isn't that how every culture moves? I mean, everything changes, and we can't expect to be the old Java forever. I and my husband just don't worry about it. We know our kids will be good and they'll find Kejawen again. But it's a push and pull. In one way, we lose the old, but in another way, we rethink what Java was.

(Rachel, female, Banyuwangi, 34)

In witnessing this social and linguistic change, damage to the Javanese social fabric has been a concern for Javanese communities. However, through cultural 'patch ups,' Javanese communities and families frequently attempt to negotiate their social and cultural networks so as to attempt to revitalize heritage, and to appropriate heritage in order to function adequately in society. Concurrently, as Rachel (above) explains, many Javanese people do realize that cultural change is inevitable and that adjustments need to be made, a realization not specific to Java.

Throughout a substantial part of Javanese history, the regional localized Javanese language has been linked to ideologies of a hierarchically structured society, at the centre of which is the palace Kraton. The indexicality of the language has been such that Kraton was able to maintain its importance while simultaneously sustaining a need for its use through governing and legitimizing ethnic communities throughout Java, positioning itself as the centre of these

communities and the province as a whole, and hence authorizing itself as purveyor of Javanese cosmological thought. The sustaining of a hierarchical Javanese language perpetuated the centrality of Kraton, which reflexively strengthened the need for Javanese. This hierarchy has now largely disappeared, a process which many factors have influenced; pressure from the government to make changes throughout both language and society; altered spatialities and the accelerated use of time, consequent to neoliberal aims of society, as we discuss below. This shift has sufficiently altered the indexical strength of the Javanese language, instilling in Javanese societies notions of a reduced functionality of the language for the current era. Javanese communities have long perceived the language as feudal (feudal) in its hierarchical form, and even patriarchal (patriarchal), whereas perceptions of Bahasa Indonesia include that, despite its qualities as *kurang ekspresif* (inadequately expressive) and *garing* (dry), it is a comfortable language efficient for application in neoliberal society, and for effecting equality during interaction. To add to this, immediately following Suharto's New Order campaign, Bahasa Indonesia began its wide scale encroachment on regional languages throughout Indonesia, instilling upon the nation perceptions of its importance as a standard and national unifier against the foreign other. These indexical shifts over the past three to four decades have significantly disenfranchised the Javanese language. As one informant commented:

Bahasa Indonesia iku ibarate musik pop, dene basa Jawa iku kaya musik Jazz.

Bahasa Indonesia is (like) pop music, whereas Javanese, in any form is (like) jazz or classical music.

(Agnes, female, Yogyakarta, 39)

The current revival of the Javanese language has largely occurred outside of formal education, a process grounded in societal processes, such as a need for the revitalization of heritage identities, and for Javanese musical innovation. Prior to the digital revolution, media and media discourse were largely controlled by single stakeholders, and by Jakarta-based media corporations. The homogenous media industry was incapable of accommodating the interests of diverse communities throughout Indonesia. However, through technological and online advances, new generations have found pathways through which to regain this critical agency, affording themselves the freedom to again revitalize and communicate in heritage languages, and to contest the normative language practices, thus affording these communities new agencies with which to govern language trends. Current social media content in Javanese communities emphasizes the use of Javanese *Ngoko*, i.e., YouTube, memes, Twitter, and Instagram, as does Javanese mainstream music draw largely on the Javanese language. New trends in Javanese pop music have won strong popularity with young audiences, becoming a significant social movement throughout Java, and beyond. Until approximately 2010, the majority of Javanese mainstream music lyrical content was written in Bahasa Indonesia or English, after which, Java



experienced a musical revival, largely influenced by the musician Didi Kempot, through his adherence to Javanese as lyrical content. The music of Didi Kempot awakened society to the fact that the Javanese language does have expressive potency. A group of street-musician informants in Yogyakarta, remarking on widescale consensus, at one point expressed to me that:

Didi Kempot dadi siji-sijine faktor gelombang popularitas wong Jawa jaman saiki. Dheweke iso nggawe kene sadar yen Basa Jawa kuwi sampurna nggo musik sing Bahasa Indonesia lan basa liyane ora mathuk.

Didi Kempot was the sole factor for the wave of popularity of Javanese now. He made us realize that Javanese is perfect for music where Bahasa Indonesia and other languages just don't have the touch.

This discovery of the need for increased expression, evidenced by Kempot and his music, has motivated a digging up of Javanese language forms. According to this group of musicians in Yogyakarta, Javanese has again become nggawe pangertèn (sense-making), that is, it makes

Luwih pas migunaake Basa Jawa ing masyarakat kayata musik, interaksi sosial, lan ngembangke masyarakat, ngerteni sejatine wong Jawa, jagad, dung/sembayang lan urusan liya-liyane, ngomong nanggo Basa Jawa luwih mantep, kaya misuh contone.

More sense to use Javanese for much of society's requirements such as music, social interaction, social development, understanding Javanese identity, cosmology, prayer, and dealing with the world, expressing emotion such as profane language and misuh swear words, and more.

The musicians noted that this expression is not replicable in Bahasa Indonesia and English, owing to the mantep (intensely expressive) character of Javanese. The symbolic character of puns, humor, prayer, and other genres differs greatly between Javanese and other Indonesian languages, where expression in Bahasa Indonesia is considered kurang ekspresif (inadequately expressive) and garing (dry), and hence boring and tedious. For example, terms such as ndilalah, mak bedunduk, jebul, sak dek-sak nyet, all signify impulsive suggestions of shock, and are translatable into other languages only with difficulty. Table 1 below presents a list of such terms or phrases that require extended descriptions when translated into English and Bahasa Indonesia.

English	Bahasa Indonesia	Javanese
Walk slowly at the road edge	Berjalan pelan-pelan di tepi	Mlipir
Fall backward and hit your head	Terpelanting ke belakang	Nggeblag
Trip forward and hit your face	Terjatuh kedepan (Nyungsep)	Njlungup
Massage body with hot fluid	Mengoles seluruh badan dengan minyak pijat	Mblonyohi
Riding an old bicycle	Mengayuh sepeda tua/kuno	Ngonthel
Hit by a truck moving backward	Tertabrak truk yang sedang mundur	Kunduran Trek
A hot pyroclastic cloud	Lelehan lava gunung meletus	Wedhus Gembel
A small, sharp object under skin	Ada benda kecil masuk ke kulit (dengan tidak sengaja)	Tlusupen
Accidentally spill from a container	Sesuatu keluar tempat asalnya (bisa tempat, bagian tubuh)	Mbrojol
Hit by something from above	Kejatuhan benda dari atas secara tidak sengaja	Kebrukan
Tipping a bottle to drink	Minum air/minuman lainnya langsung dari botol, tanpa sedotan/gelas	Ngokop
Glare restricting eye opening	Pandangan terganggu karena silau, cahaya terlalu kuat	Mblereng
Embrace tightly for stability	Pegang erat (tali/tangan)	Gondhelan
Falling/tripping on hole	Jatuh ke lubang tanpa sengaja	Kejegleng
Carelessly overactive	Gerak aktif berlebihan (gerak, dsb)	Pecicilan
Unwell from the cold	Suhu badan dingin karena demam/cuaca	Kadhemen
Release body 'wind' with coin on skin	Menggosok badan (punggung, permukaan kulit) dengan uang logam karena masuk angin	Kerokan
Accidentally find useful objects	Menemui kejadian secara tiba-tiba, tidak sengaja (kebetulan)	Ndilalah
Expression appearing objects	Keadaan yang terjadi secara tiba-tiba	Mak bedunduk
Water spitting from a mouth	Mulut mengeluarkan air liur (ketika tidur, anak-anak biasanya)	Ngiler
Copious amount of sweat	Berkeringat banyak	Gobyos
Using one's fingers	Mengambil sesuatu dengan jari-jari	Ngutheki/nguthiki
An object stuck between teeth	Sisa makanan diantara gigi	Sliliten
Unintentionally poking eyes	Mata tercolok benda (tangan/jari/sesuatu)	Keculek

### *The Javanese Traditional State Structure*

Between the years 1800 and 1945 (Indonesia's national independence), during the Islamic Mataram Kingdom period, Java divided itself into five concentric general regions (Figure 1. Below). The configuration of these circles intended to emulate Javanese cosmological ideologies originating in Hindu-Buddhist traditions. The traditional city in Java during the Islamic Mataram kingdom included the Kraton palace, its Alun-alun square, mosques, markets and Abdi-dalem (Kraton employee) settlements. The Islamic Mataram Kingdom stretched from Pajang (now Surakarta city) in West Java, to Yogyakarta in central Java, and implemented the *mancapat-mancalima* concept (Junianto 2019), that is, a five-dimensional coordinate system – the four winds (north, south, east, west, and their centre Kraton).

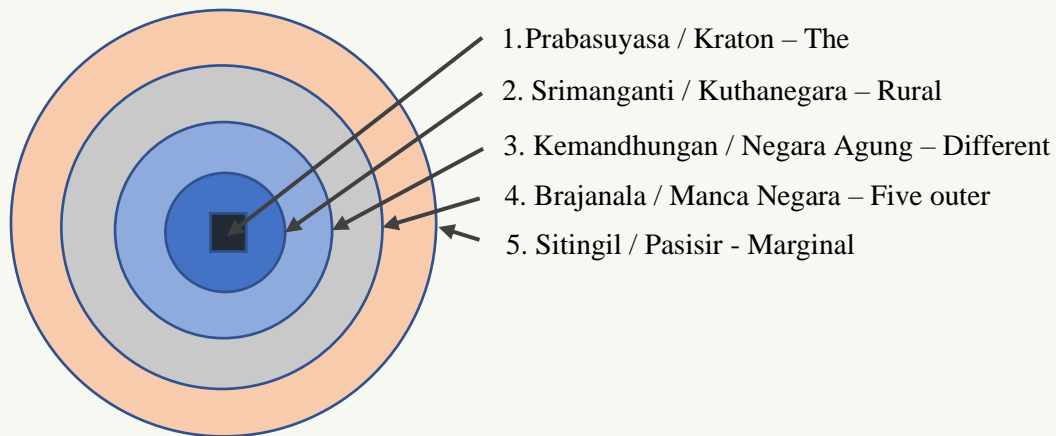


Figure 1: Structure of Javanese Society (Santoso 2008)

Kraton urban centres were traditionally known to expound refined speech and polished social comportment (Mulder 1996; Koentjaraningrat 1985), endorsing a social hierarchy system through Javanese reified language that indexed the required relationships between speakers and addressees. Errington (1985: 36) notes that this adherence to Javanese registers governed “virtually every aspect of personal appearance and movement.” A normatively correct Javanese was centralized, and a shift from this normative correctness correlated with distance from the centre of the kingdom to the margins. Figure 1 presents that region 2, Kuthanegara, constituted the larger capital of each city, such as Yogyakarta and Surakarta. Region 3, Negara Agung, contained rural areas around each capital. Region 4, Manca Nagara signified a culture different to the centre, and this included the eastern regions of Java, comprising five distinctly separate states (Panca (five) and Nagara (states)). The Mancanagara concept referred to the states in four directions outside the negaragung realm, placing the core region of Kuthanegara at the center. The concept of Mancanegara ended after the Java War (1825-1830) at which time the Dutch

government replace the design with Karesidenans (residency) directly governed by the Colonial Dutch. Region 5, Pesisir (coast), encompassed both coastal regions and distant lands, a region over which Kraton lost control during the Succession War (1742-1757 AD).

Correct and sophisticated Javanese language and manners pervaded regions 1 and 2. Regions 3 and 4 differed in that they were loosely bound to Kraton regulations, and could thus evade mandate requiring the use of 'correct' Javanese language (Krama). Following Indonesia's independence, society had become much more mobile, and thus sought migration in order to alter its social and economic wellbeing. As such, social and economic differentials were constructed to empower Kraton as a feudal system. With a desire to effect upward socioeconomic mobility, populations in Regions 3 and 4 continuously sought to migrate to regions 1 and 2, bringing Ngoko, where ultimately, populations in Regions 1 and 2 would envision and seek a new life in Jakarta, taking Kraton Krama culture with them. Over the past century, and predominantly from the time of Indonesia's independence, interests in social and economic mobility have aided this immigration from Javanese rural regions into urban centres, subsequently intensifying Ngoko Javanese in Yogyakarta, Surakarta, and other urban centres. In remote and coastal regions distant to urban centres and the Kraton, Krama was not widely used, and was not considered as important as in the Kraton centres. This influx thus carried with it social and cultural habits that were 'less Krama' and 'more Ngoko,' thus shifting the lifeworld paradigms of Javanese populations in urban centres from Krama to Ngoko. As such, Ngoko flushed out Krama in these Javanese urban centers in.

### *Language Change throughout Javanese History*

Early during the Hindu influence, Sanskrit began to make inroads into Java, shaping a Kawi (poetic or archaic) language, as the language symbolic of Jawa Kuna (Ancient Java). Around the time of the 15th century, new influences appeared, such as Malay and Arabic, marking a salient Islamization of Java. Chinese immigration to Java in the 1800s and 1900s mainly comprised Chinese merchants and rural communities, and not nobles, although nobles such as Raden Patah, the King of Demak, who settled in Java in the year 1500 A.D., did make their way to Java. These communities were generally of Southern Chinese descent employing Hokkien dialects, and mainly working as importers and traders, which contrasted with work with Kraton and feudalism. A small number of Chinese communities were able to enter Kraton, and even attain the rank of Kraton officials. During colonialism, in the 17th to 20th centuries, the arrival of Chinese and European traders also brought new language influences, reconfiguring language typologies and ideologies in Java. The English revolution beginning in the second half of the 20th century has had a marked effect on current language patterns.

At the start of the 20th century, Indonesian was the primary language of approximately five percent of Indonesia's population (Sneddon 2003). By the late 20th century, influenced by the

growth of a new middle class (Oetomo 1990; Errington 1998) language use in Java had shifted from Javanese to include significant amounts of Bahasa Indonesia. Steinhauer (1994) presents that, in youth communities, daily use of Javanese dropped 16 percent, whereas the Indonesian language increased by approximately 40 percent. In Yogyakarta and elsewhere, these urban, educated youth were the most active proponents of the increase in use of Bahasa Indonesia (Samuel 2000). This language shift among young and educated Javanese indexed shifting language ideologies and new social and economic possibilities, consequent to which, populations were now able to substantially avoid the burden of physical migration to effect social and economic upward mobility. The most common daily use of basa varieties outside the family were by the end of the 20th century symmetric (Goebel 2000), a significant change from the days of asymmetric common discourse. The use of new varieties, such as BC, would now well constitute an integral part of Indonesia's symbolic pursuit of middle-class identity.

Consequent to the above policies, ideologies, and need for new expressions, normative language mixing has emerged at multiple and complex levels throughout Java. This language mixing, or Bahasa Campur (BC), originated at a time when social and familial hierarchy dominated Javanese society, that is, the 'pre-equality' days. Elders and important individuals summoned deference from subordinates, a requirement which sustained a skewed asymmetric social interaction and gendered differentials throughout Javanese society. Until the Suharto era, elders, the 'noble,' and royalty in Kraton had the authority to penalize subordinates for any use of inappropriate non-deferent forms of language. These language police do exist until the present day, but the limited number of 'language police' inhibited the administration of these policies and any subsequent penalty.

Many informants during the ethnography suggested that, following stories from parents and grandparents, BC initially evolved in tertiary environments throughout the mid to late 20th century, in sectors largely populated by upper socioeconomic classes. Tertiary students of the political sciences were active proponents of the societal growth of BC (Samuel 2000), further mobilizing this growth through political paradigms external to their academic institutions. BC has since provided opportunities to encode language for communication in a hybrid society, as a fluid sociolect that shifts in form to connect multiple communities, but with subversive intentions, where hierarchies and rigid asymmetric societal structures are contested through a symmetric 'leveling' of language. The political constituencies that developed BC early on had intentions to subvert the hierarchical structure of Javanese and hence the feudalism of Kraton. Current forms of BC, then, as subversive, have become normative practice throughout Javanese urban centres, and throughout other parts of Indonesia, thus further mediating the gradual erasure of other languages. As such, BC functions as the common language outside of rituals and specific celebrations, at which Krama is preferred.

A cluster of factors has influenced the widescale development of BC.

Firstly, much of the Javanese population residing in urban centres throughout Java currently has a lowered competence in Krama. In the past, with lowered competence in Krama, Ngoko speakers were caught between needing to express deference to elders and their inability to use Krama effectively. The language differentials created by a system of specific registers signifying deference reinforced status differentials between interlocutors (Koentjaraningrat 1985). Until the late 1970s, asymmetric Javanese speech interactions were relatively common. However, Errington (1985); emphasizes that the privilege of using the most refined speech was always limited to the court elite, the priyayi (Errington 1985). However, following the widespread denigration in competence in Kromo, Ngoko began to present an option with which to compensate for voids in Krama competence. Speaking in Ngoko, however, would constitute the gravest of disrespectful acts, and thus diverting to other languages such as English, Bahasa Indonesia, Chinese and Arabic became a viable option. Much discussion with older informants during the ethnography exposed that the emergence of BC closely followed ideologies of egalitarianism across Javanese (and larger Indonesian) society. The need for social interaction took precedence over familial goings on, and hence life 'outside' of the family became gained prominence over familial interactions. Consequent to this, Javanese society gradually grew to accept the emergence of increasingly loosened familial ties, where a large majority of parents have accepted the increasing use of Ngoko in domestic environments.

Secondly, BC speaking communities have growingly opposed traditional Javanese ideologies to cultivate new hybrid cultures. These communities have sought to subvert feudal and imperial traditional Javanese culture through linguistic reformation and hence hybridity. As one Gadjah Mada University Professor noted:

The initial intention of BC was the subversion of feudalism and the opposition of greed and overaccumulation. Traditionally Java was heterogeneous, and had many places, and BC represents the plurality of Java and its plural ideologies. BC networking the Chinese with the Javanese with their scope of interests, that is their traditional interests, but sometimes has a strong connection with the Kraton builders are creating their network by creating the proper Javanese manner like Krama.

(Rudy, male, Yogyakarta, 41)

Prior to the reformasi period, people saw themselves as forced to follow government policies which they perceived as oppressive. History books in elementary and junior high school throughout Java mainly discussed Javanese kingdoms despite the fact that these books were labeled as having a history of a larger Indonesia. Following reformasi, many people began to refute ideologies of Kraton or Javanese kingdoms as superior, and in challenging Kraton policies



and ideologies, began to negotiate new hybridized social identities on a wide scale, not least through new hybrid language communities. These communities were developed for activities aimed at the bridging of ethnic groups. Religious communities also integrated their own discourses, so as to naturalize themselves as pious and spiritual. Islamic communities began to integrate Arabic, and other social sectors also encouraged code mixing, such as in markets where Bahasa Pasar (market language) emerged. Chinese communities developed a local BC to form networks between Chinese communities and the outside, through codeswitching practices, such as in markets. For example,

#### Example 1

BC: Harganya/Regane gopek ceng

BI: Harganya lima ribu

Java: Regane seket ewu

English: The price is 5,000

#### Example 2

BC: Menawi regine semanten kula boten gadhah ingkam (from the English 'income')

English: If the price is [only] this low, I will have no income.

BC: Tiyang mriki sampun maindit dhateng wayang

English: The people here have already maindit (from the English 'minded' suggesting 'in love') with Wayang.

These speech communities purported to convey their unique ideologies, enculturations, cosmologies and mercantile intentions within specific yet malleable cultural contexts. Through the fluid use of BC, each respective speech community would appropriate its cultural intentions for situated purpose, thus negotiating cultural boundaries in discursive instances and individual speech acts. As Rudy (Gadjah Mada University) explained:

In the Islamic viewpoint, the sayings of the Koran are that man is the ruler (kaliph)... who has the power to control the world. According to the will of god, so in the Arabic BC ideology people tend to see that people are superior to the world. On the other hand, the Kejawen people, despite the language they use, are attached to traditional viewpoints connecting humans and nature. That is, humankind is only a part of the universe, and because of this rule, humans are not permitted to do what they want in the daily life. As they are part of the universe, they are responsible for its harmony. People who use BC with Chinese are more pragmatic, because the ideology brought with Chinese BC is a capitalist ideology. Sometimes people suggest that the general Chinese ideologies is not

ethical or pragmatic, but that is not the way they are. Chinese Indonesians can be highly ethical but their patterns in establishing their communities are unique and we need to understand how they live.

A vendor, naming himself 'Milwaukee' (60, male), selling occultist ornaments and medicines at one market in Yogyakarta, suggested that:

Awal bentukane BC kuwi nggo ngubungke lan mbalekke ing alam semesta, nanging saiki BC Arab lan Cina maknane wis fleksibel.

The initial engineering of Bahasa Campur was to connect to and revert to the natural world, but now with BC Arabic and Chinese the intentions have been diluted.

### *The Current Influence of Kejawen on Language in Java*

During the ethnography, informants in urban centres throughout Java generally confirmed the movement away from Javanese throughout the 20th century. However, since the turn of the millennium, the Javanese language has experienced a significant revival, which has, in turn, contributed to the growth of BC. One factor in this development is Kejawen ideology, which comprises precepts which pervade the lives of Javanese communities. Kejawen describes a cosmocentric matrix, whereas many normative religious practices are structured on anthropocentrism. These Kejawen ideals purport to guide living and to offer harmony, ideals which I have collected throughout the ethnography and which I present below.

The pillars (below) generally point to an acceptance of the affordances provided by the natural world, and with the correct placement of the person within the natural world (cosmological) matrix, where the person is but one element of the cosmos, and not superior to it. The continuous reference to the cosmos, and to connections with the cosmos, creates a frame of reference for normative orthodox behavior. Any disturbance of the cosmic order of things would compromise the position of the human as an element embedded deeply within the natural world matrix. All Kejawen actions, thus, require this cosmological stance. As an example, several informants discussed notions akin to the following by Rudy (Gadjah Mada University):

The rice field can only produce the amount required for each person, which we should not abuse. In the post-industrialization era, the Javanese were forced by the government to develop a more productive soil, and to douse this soil with chemical fertilizers, and to use other artificial methods to accelerate harvesting of plants. The Javanese became greedy while destroying nature and a fertile earth. This was told by a Javanese prophecy, called *ilang berkating bumi*, that is, the loss of earth's blessing.

<b>Bahasa Indonesia</b>	
1	Prihatin (Ascetism): The renouncing of pleasures that restrict spirituality, and a sacrifice of items to the natural world. Practitioners do not necessarily segregate themselves from society, but must fast on birthdays, to develop self-awareness and a 'humble position in the cosmos.'
2	Slametan (Gratitude): The eating of seven vegetables. The eating must be in moderation, so that practitioners accept that there are limits to how much they should consume natural resources.
3	Nrimo ing pandum (Humble acceptance): Greed damages the balance of the earth. Excessive desire forces the earth to overproduce and reflexively damages the natural world balance.
4	Memangun karyenak tyasing sesama (Work diligently but expect less from others): One's contribution to society reinforces its structure, stability, cohesion, thus reinforcing equality and the notion that all things together form the natural world matrix. In its original concept, memangun karyenak tyasing sesama is the ability to fulfil ones own desire without sacrificing other's feelings. 'Work dilligently but expect less' is translated as 'rame ing gawe sepi ing pamrih.'
5	Tepa sliro (Tolerance): Societal interaction is vital, and tolerance of others is central to social cohesion. We assist others through tolerance, and through inclusion of all in a larger network.
6	Guyub rukun (Harmonious spirit): All people must increasingly maintain harmony with others to maintain social balance and cohesion.
7	Ajing diri soko ono ing lathi (The worth of a person becomes apparent during talk): As interaction is communal, a person must speak with integrity and straightforward intentions.
8	Aja murka ngangsa-angsa (Do not overexert yourself): Disrespecting your body damages the bodily gift given by the natural world, restricting harmony / participation with the natural world.
9	Urip sak madyone (Live in moderation): Do not abuse the offerings of the natural world, which would then damage the natural world balance and leave humanity with no benefit.
10	Sepi ing pamrih, rame in gawe (Work first, accept rewards later): Do not seek to draw on resources prior to investing in their sustainability.
11	Memayu hayuning bawono (Create a beautiful world): Beauty suggests harmony and growth. Always aim to foster this growth.
12	Becik Ketitik ala ketara (All actions are recorded): Good and bad actions will be recorded by the universe. The person must not engage in tahayul or gugon tuhon, i.e., superstition or mythology.
13	Nglurug tanpa bala, menang tanpa ngasorake (Attack without an army, win with humility): Do not draw on abundant resources for results, and do not draw on abundant resources for rewards. The reward that you have contributed to the betterment of the world.
14	Sawangsinawang (Wrongfulness of comparing yourself with others): The natural world will provide the commodities required by all, as things are commodified naturally. The focus on the individual negates communal distribution, thus propagating greed.

A renewed ideological and symbolic affiliation to the natural world, then, as a substrate of Kejawen communities, has motivated a revival of the Javanese language. However, several informants, as devout practitioners of Kejawen, commented a majority of young Javanese communities do not currently realize nor practice this consciousness, a neglect which is producing tensions between natural and capitalist intentions. As one informant inculcated:

Wong sing nyalah-migunaake Kejawen kanggo tujuwan mistik "sihir ireng" ora tekan level ideologis Kejawen. Panyalahgunaan iki normal, amarga percepatan sawise kapitalisme sing terlambat ndorong wong kanggo golek 'jalan pintas', kayata ilmu sihir ireng sing njanjeni dhuwit, katresnan lanang-wadon, kerjoan sing hebat, ketenaran, lan kesehatan sing apik sanajan nyalahgunaanake sejatine zat.

People abusing Kejawen for 'dark magic' mystical purposes are not reaching the ideological level of Kejawen. This abuse is normal, as the acceleration subsequent to late capitalism pushes people to find 'short cuts,' like black magic promising money, sex, a great job, fame, and good health despite substance abuse.

(Mas Pur, Male practitioner of Kejawen, Yogyakarta, 35)

These suggested abusive practices expose a skewed accumulation of resources, which denounce the ideological restrictions of Kejawen. Within practices of capitalism and their ideologies, ownership and accumulation embeds the individual within a structurally mercantile society. Kejawen ideology presents that commodification is greed, and hence, ownership leads to the exploitation of natural resources. Despite the Kejawenese precept of Urip sak madyone (live in moderation), capitalism pervades Java, inspiring excessive accumulation and desire, which one informant labelled as a bom wektu (time bomb). During a discussion with a group of academics in Surabaya in 2014, an interesting point arose. The discussion was particularly focused on the correlation between this accumulation and Bahasa Campur. The attempts of youth to move away from traditional Javanese linguistic structures, that is, Krama, Madya, and Ngoko, and their feudal associations, indicates that youth ideologies are currently such that these new generations, increasingly seeking to renounce traditional Javanese hierarchies, seek egalitarianism with elders. In the process, youth communities prematurely accumulate the affordances of authority in order to quickly obtain social authority, which may be inappropriately premature by Javanese traditional (and modern) standards. This attempt to accelerate ownership of authority and social status is quite common to late capitalism.

The revival of Kejawen may currently be occurring at both societal and linguistic levels, as a great majority of informants have expressed their disdain with government mandate and the appropriation of conventional religions (Islam, Christianity, Buddhism). For example, the Indonesian government had long attempted to categorize citizens into accepting only

conventional religions, and illegalized all other spiritual practices. Reversion to a traditional religious framework presents these communities with a renewed sense of purpose, that is, a spiritual identity which they believe they have lost through the encroaching effects of transnationalism. This pursuit, at the very least, mediates their symbolic reversion to Kejawen. Forty years ago, Suharto's strict governmentality regulated Javanese populations and their Islamic and Christian practices, 'forcing' practitioners of Kejawen to select from five official mandated religions. Following the demise of President Yudhoyono, President Jokowi allowed for new regulations such as *penghayat kepercayaan*, opening up spaces for society to practice multiple religions and faiths, and to acknowledge this practice in their identity cards. Now, many see Kejawen as an antithesis to an age of anthropocentric consumption.

So how does the revitalization of the Javanese language, and its embeddedness in BC, reconnect the Javanese to the natural world of Kejawen, I ask. Long standing feudalism prevalent in Kratonese Java presented motives for change. Javanese society has long sought to subvert this feudalism, yet to concurrently revitalize its Javanese heritage, exposing a significant tension in current Java. As one academic at Airlangga University stressed,

Membangkitkan Kejawen ki yo ora podo karo nglairke feudalisme Jawa kuno. Kejawen dan Jawa kuno tak pikir ki babagane luwih komplek, malah kuwi iso nggo nata susunan dan stuktur sosial, kekayaan Jawa dan kuwi bukan untuk menghadirkan feodalisme baru.

To embrace Kejawen is not the same as re-embracing feudalism. Kejawen and Javanese ancient thought are highly complex, and the hierarchies in this heritage were intended to structure society so as to foster its growth, and not to present nor encourage feudal ideologies.

(Dr. Supi, Male, Surabaya, 53)

Dr. Supi brings forth a valid point, which is that the equating of Kejawen with feudalism may reflect simplistic thinking, and on which I call for work. Javanese heritage in many ways did contest feudalism, and thus projected ideologies of equality, such as in the *Wayang Kulit*. *Wayang* performance narratives endorse *adiluhung* (nobility), but concurrently contest feudalism, not least through playful constructions, such as with the jesters *Punokawan*, or *Semar-Gareng-Petruk-Bagong*, where the *Dalang* and the narrative as a whole challenge feudalism and the agency of nobility. Much social media also currently conveys disagreement with the feudalism of *Kraton*, as a large majority of younger generations draw on social media as a critical tool of social engagement. Several group discussions during the ethnography evidenced that general consensus suggests that Kejawen and *Krama* as deeply interrelated, have embedded speakers within a matrix of hierarchical subordination and oppression forced by *Mataram* rulers. Some

Kejawen practitioners devoutly maintain their Krama structure. Others are obsessed with Kawi, an earlier form of Javanese, to contest the structure of the Javanese language developed during the Mataramese 'Kraton' period, which they see as impure and contaminated by the Islamic language. Furthermore, a Samin spiritual movement in the regencies of Pati, Blora and Rembang, in Java, in the late 19th century, rejected Krama, seeing the register as a product of Indonesian-Colonial Dutch cooperation. Furthermore, current trends in Javanese social media present Eastern Javanese communities as rejecting Krama, following a reluctance to accept narratives of East Java's subordination to Mataram sovereignty in the 17th and 18th centuries.

### Theoretical Factors

A functional imbalance between traditional Javanese language and modern society has emerged, where a desired reversion to ideologies and practices of cosmology that accompany the use of a multi-leveled Javanese language appear to misalign with the desire for societal freedom. A Ngoko dominant register has replaced Krama, which society sees as generally redundant. The consequent language shift has mediated complex political, economic, societal, technological, demographic, and cultural processes. Ideologies of Indonesia's long-standing efforts to standardize a language nationally have migrated locally through the development of Bahasa Campur, which itself impresses one as a metaphor of unity in diversity. Yet, the subversive intentions of this BC standard do not allow for a standard but a non-standard within a standard. This development thus forces Javanese to make critical decisions on identity, in their efforts to revitalize the language, the heritage, and hence to reinvigorate Javanese identity.

The Javanese in general appear to be attempting to negotiate ideological barriers between pre-colonial cultures and traditions and their current neoliberal disposition. This has influenced young generations, whose sense of cultural belonging has been infiltrated. The fall of Suharto in May 1998 did establish some type of threshold, a burning building out of which the Javanese people (and Indonesians as a whole) was forced to jump, safely. Those of approximately forty years of age and upwards carry a Javanese identity which is somewhat elusive to description, while younger generations are becoming increasingly interested in pre-colonial Java as a point of departure when investigating and making sense of identity in a rapidly developing neoliberal Indonesia. Following my countless visits to Indonesia over the past decade, I myself sense that, after Singapore, Indonesia is the most quickly advancing country in ASEAN, economically, and strategically as a country seeking to reaffirm its national identity. A critical observation of contemporary Javanese identity quickly exposes the tensions that modern Java is facing in post-Suharto Indonesia. As with the politicians who were compelled to use local languages and to renounce their belonging to a larger national identity in order to win the popular vote, the Javanese now face the dilemma of whether Javanese identity, as a well-structured hierarchy of languages, constitutes a cosmocentric traditional set of ideals, and how these will intertwine with modern society. To discard or not to discard? This becomes a complex task in a society which is



still apprehensive towards the indoctrination of the New Order's nationalist ideology, which itself conflicts with the national motto of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity). Despite the *sumpah pemuda*, the Indonesian youth pledge of 1928 (Tribune News 2020), which specified three ideologies of anti-colonialism – a common Indonesian bloodline, a common Indonesian nation, and a common Indonesian national language *menjunjung tinggi Bahasa persatuan Bahasa Indonesia* (Foulcher 2000) – Indonesia has continuously inculcated its desire for diversity, through its mandated ideology and national emblem.

Several factors have intricately influenced the growth of *Bahasa Campur*: A subversion of the hierarchical intentions of Javanese and hence the feudalism of *Kraton*; a movement away from normative religious practice; the acceleration of time and the reduction of space emanating from the effects of late capitalism; a need for linguistic and cultural expression; a bridging together of ethnic communities through specific discursive tools so as to supersede political and neoliberal oppression; a new local identity as a reflexive stance to perceived encroachment of global neoliberalism. The Javanese now appropriate BC as a main symbolic element in negotiating their identity construction and resistance to a past of feudalism, and to a world of foreign encroachment. It is from these social symbolic ideologies that the interest for systematically regulating a relationship between the languages in contact emerged. In relation to BC, and considering the progressive displacement that these communities have traversed since *reformasi* and through revitalization, the Javanese language situation does at times display recessive trends, symbolically at least, such as a desire for reversion to hierarchical rigid social relations in various sectors, e.g. in religious and artistic discourse. Yet, Indonesia's economic development and efforts to effect upward socioeconomic mobility have hastened a liberation from rigid social structures, culminating in a social and linguistic tension. A solution to this tension may arise from a separation of the ideological and performative aspects of Javanese, that is, a parallel authority, such as in the Japanese context. The functionality of Javanese registers, particularly *Krama*, *Madya*, *Ngoko*, and their predecessor, *Kawi*, useful for the development of a new *Bahasa Campur*, may not at all be lost.

The findings throughout the larger ethnography present that Javanese communities at large have long reflected on (re)positioning both language and society within a broader framework of *jagad* (cosmology), and have negotiated the spatial and temporal groundings of Javanese ethnic identity, once well rooted in *jagad*. Many informants did emphasize that turning points throughout Javanese history, that is, points that have been pivotal to Javanese cultural development and the emergence of BC, have acted as *manthuk-manthuk spasial lan temporal*, or nodes for the development of new spatialities and temporalities, at which Javanese heritage was to be (re)defined. Ultimately, an elusive Javanese identity now confronts Javanese society. Here tradition sits in tension with modernity. The traditional spatial construction of the Javanese kingdom, with *Kraton* at the centre, required that feudalism and social hierarchy segregate Javanese society thus creating socioeconomic differentials throughout. The sustained use of a

hierarchical language, that is, a deferent Krama at the top and a subservient Ngoko below, mediated ideologies of a socially and economically differentiated society. This spatial design assured that society was positioned vertically, that is the above and below, and horizontally, that is, geographical groupings of social classes and stratification. The temporal aspect of traditional Javanese society was such that, by maintaining a Javanese hierarchical structure, and hence, by retarding the attainment of authority by younger generations, these younger generations were required to semiotically invest in 'earning' authority (*Sepi ing pamrih, rame in gawe* – Refrain from being money oriented). This time-retardation aligned with the intentions of precapitalist society, where society placed importance on investing resource into earning the privilege of accumulating a commodity such as authority, through acquiring the appropriate symbolic and social capital. However, modern Java seeks both reversion to heritage structures, and an effective position in a globalized neoliberal world. A solution to this tension may well lie in parallel authority scapes, where authority becomes a constant object of transition across malleable cultural and social boundaries.

## Conclusion

The gradual disappearance of Krama language did not correlate with the emergence of a Marxian classless society. In various sectors in Java, this class remains, and is at times more potent through the use of BC. This phenomenon occurs with practitioners such as the Ustadz, Kyai or Habib, as Muslim clerics who gain power through the hybridized Arab-Javanese BC in *pengajian* (religious meetings) or *dauroh* (short religious learning sessions).

In this paper, I have argued that Javanese communities see themselves as situated within anthropologically complex flows, culminating in tensions that need to be resolved if Javanese society is to be revitalized vis-à-vis current political forces. Many informants and communities did express that the Javanese language in all of its totality has mediated social and political domination. However, many also consider the reframing of Javanese into Bahasa Campur to be a definite subversion of unwanted elements of this social and political domination. This now presents a tension: How to revitalize the Javanese language while eliminating associated feudalism, and without symbolically or performatively resurrecting any Javanese feudal and redundantly hierarchical structures of old. These hierarchies appear to be inapplicable in the present era, and a stratified Javanese language would may well become dysfunctional in current general society, as denigrative to Java's efforts to globalize. The possibility of a revitalized traditional Javanese requires that we probe deeply into heritage practices such as *Kejawen*, so as to highlight the contemporary application of pre-colonial Javanese culture and its cosmological and cosmocentric traditions. Ultimately, a revitalization would require an embedding of modernity in heritage, and to reinterpret the ideological and performative symbolisms of Javanese heritage for a progressive Javanese context. Bahasa Campur solves the problem of reviving one type of Javanese, Ngoko. It re-embeds Javanese communities in a

cosmocentric matrix, as Kejawen requires, but, by doing away with Krama, removes another cosmocentric embedding, that is, it does away with the delaying of the attainment of authority. Traditional Javanese – Krama-Madya-Ngoko – was structured on cosmocentric ideology. This traditional is not absent, but replaced by a new cosmocentricism, as BC attempts to render malleable cultural boundaries and to combine all communities into an egalitarianism that is *budi perketi* or *unggah-unggaah* (national character building).

## Bibliography

- Bertrand, J. (2003). Language Policy and the Promotion of National Identity in Indonesia. In *Fighting Words: Language Policy and Ethnic Relations in Asia*. Michael E. Brown and Sumit Ganguly, Eds. Pp. 265– 290. Cambridge and London: MIT Press.
- Errington, J. J. (1985). *Language and Social Change in Java: Linguistic Reflexes of Modernization in a Traditional Royal Polity*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies.
- Errington, J. J. (1998). *Shifting Languages: Interaction and Identity in Javanese Indonesia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Errington, J. J. (2000). Indonesian('s) Authority. In *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Politics and Identities*. Paul V. Kroskrity, ed. Pp. 205– 228. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.
- Foulcher, K. (2000) *Sumpah Pemuda: The Making and Meaning of a Symbol of Indonesian Nationhood*, *Asian Studies Review* 24(3): 377-410.
- Frederik, B. (1969) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget
- Goebel, Z. (2010). Identity and Social Conduct in a Transient Multilingual Setting. *Language in Society*, 39(2): 203-240
- Hatley, R. (1984). Mapping Cultural Regions of Java. In *Other Javas away from the Kraton*, Edited by: Hatley, Ron. 1–32. Clayton: Monash University.
- Hull, T. H, and Jones, G. W. (1994). Demographic Perspectives. In *Indonesia's New Order: The dynamics of Socio-economic Transformation*. Hal Hill, ed. Pp. 123– 178. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Jameson, F. (1991). *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*,
- Junianto, H. W. (2019). Konsep Mancapat-Mancalima Dalam Struktur Kota Kerajaan Mataram Islam. Periode Kerajaan Pajang Sampai Dengan Surakarta  
<http://jurnal.unmer.ac.id/index.php/jam/article/view/3987>
- Kipp, R. (1993). *Disassociated Identities: Ethnicity, Religion and Class in an Indonesian Society*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Koentjaraningrat (1985). *Javanese Culture*. Singapore: Oxford University Press.

- Kroskirty P. Language Ideologies-Evolving Perspectives. In: Jaspers J, editor. Language Use and Society. John Benjamins, Philadelphia, USA; 2010. p. 192–211.
- Liddle, W. (1988). Politics and Culture in Indonesia. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Morgan, M. H. (2014). Speech Communities. Global.Harvard University Press.
- Mulder, N. (1996). Inside Indonesian Society: Cultural Change in Java. Amsterdam and Kuala Lumpur: The Pepin Press.
- Nababan, P. W. J. (1991). Language in Education: The Case of Indonesian. *International Review of Education* 37(1): 115– 131.
- Ngadiman, A. (1998). Javanese Cultural Thought Patterns as Manifested in Javanese Expository Discourse. Unpublished Dissertation. Malang: IKIP Negeri Malang.
- Oetomo, D. (1990). The Bahasa Indonesia of the Middle Class. *Prisma* 50: 68–79.
- Pemberton, J. (1996). On The Subject of Java. *American Ethnologist*, 23(1): 197-198.
- Poejosoedarmo, G. (2006). The Effect of Bahasa Indonesia as a Lingua Franca on the Javanese Speech Levels and Their Functions. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 177(1): 111– 121.
- Retsikas, K. (2012). *Becoming - An Anthropological Approach to Understandings of the Person in Java*. London: Anthem Press.
- Ricklefs, M. C. (1993). *A History of Modern Indonesia since c.1300*, London: Macmillan.
- Samuel, J. (2000). Les Langues Regionales en Indonesie: Usages, Discours, Avenir (Regional Language in Indonesia: Usage, Discourse, Future). In *L'Indonesie, Un Demi-Siecle de Construction Nationale (Indonesia, a Half-Century of National Construction)*. Françoise Cayrac-Blanchard, Stéphane Dovert and Frederic Durand, eds. Pp.303–339. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Santoso, J., (2008). *Arsitektur-kota Jawa: Kosmos, Kultur and Kuasa*. Jakarta: Centropolis - Magister Teknik Perencanaan.
- Schieffelin, B, B, Woolard, K. A., and Kroskirty P. V. (Eds.) (1998). *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Smith-Hefner, N. J. (1988). The Linguistic Socialization of Javanese Children in Two Communities. *Anthropological Linguistics*. 30(2): 166– 198.
- Smith-Hefner, N. J. (2007). Youth Language, Gaul Sociability, and the New Indonesian Middle Class. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*. 17(2): 184– 203.
- Sneddon, J. (2003). *The Indonesian Language: Its History and Role in Modern Society*. Sydney NSW: University of New South Wales Ltd.
- Steinhauer, H. (1994). The Indonesian Language Situation and Linguistics: Prospects and Possibilities. *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land-, en Volkenkunde*, 150(4):755–783.
- Stryker, S. and Vryan, K. D. (2006). The Symbolic Interactionist Frame. In *Handbook of Social Psychology*. Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research (J. Delamater Ed.). pp. 3–

28. Global: Springer.

The Tribune (2020) <https://www.tribunnews.com/nasional/2020/10/28/isi-teks-sumpah-pemuda-dan-makna-di-dalamnya-lengkap-dengan-sejarah-sumpah-pemuda>

---

## Endnotes

- 1 The New Order Regime was coined by Indonesian President Suharto to label his regime from 1966. The label sought to challenge the political ideologies of the previous president, Sukarno.
- 2 The central Javanese Palace
- 3 Central Square, where, as Kraton was recognized as the centre or axis of the entire Javanese realm, Kraton's square Alun-Alun was considered as the central open sphere for all Javanese people.
- 4 A prominent Javanese song writer and performer

