Abstract: Local expressions in Javanese, which convey local philosophy and local wisdom, seem to keep on diminishing from the collective mind of the speech community, owing to the disappearing verbal art performance (which was a massive performance in the past) and the drastically declining use of Javanese as a language of formal education. This observation leads to a small research project conducted in Malang, East Java, taking a sample of 74 UM students, who were asked to respond to items (in a questionnaire) and show degrees of their comprehension of local literary expressions in Javanese. Results of the research indicate that most local expressions in Javanese have indeed become unfamiliar to younger speakers, hence making both classical and modern literary works sound alien to them. Efforts have been made, especially by Javanese literary scholars, to prevent Javanese from losing its rich literary tradition. However, as for the shape of Javanese literature in the future, only time will tell.

Key words: local expressions, speech levels, verbal art performance, tembang or sung-poetry, modern poetry.

1. INTRODUCTION: A SAD STORY

Javanese as a major local language in Indonesia keeps on surviving today through contradictory circumstances. It is spoken by the majority of population in Central and East Java; but it has little power in government administration, formal education, and the press. It has a long and rich literary tradition, reaching far back to the ninth century Java (Poerbatjaraka 1952); but today’s Javanese literature as well as Javanese literacy has been in sharp decline. It is a language carrying along valuable cultural heritage that still gives pride and prestige to the few elites; but its present state as an “endangered language” also causes concerns and worries among those who see the gloomy future of this language (see Prawoto 1988).

Javanese, together with other local languages in Indonesia, has been constantly pushed to the margin. They can never compete against Indonesian—the language of government administration, formal education, and the press. In this context, Indonesian, geared toward modernization and strongly influenced by globalization, is indeed—in the sense of Anderson (1990)—the “language of power.” It holds the center with increasing might, whereas local languages are incessantly weakened and pushed to the periphery.

Javanese speakers of my generation (born during the 1950s) are witnesses of how Javanese keeps on losing its grip on the collective mind of the speech community. The period of three decades following the national independence (August 17, 1945) was the heyday of Javanese. This language, imbued with rich oral and written literary tradition from the past, thrived, among other things, through abundant local expressions which reveal local philosophy, disclosing local wisdom, and portraying Javanese ideal worlds. During this period, traditional oral literature (best represented by verbal art in wayang and kethoprak performances) was at its peak; classical literature (well-known through literary works such as Walangreh, Wedhatama, or Kalatidha) continued captivating the Javanese mind; and modern literature (manifesting itself in short story, novel, and modern poetry) was widely
acclaimed by the Javanese community. Modern literature was initially introduced and then widely accepted by the community, particularly through the Javanese magazines *Panjebar Semangat* and *Jaya Baya*. Both published in East Java (and still in good survival until today), these two magazines were then best readings among educated Javanese families living both in urban and rural areas of Central and East Java.

During this period, Javanese was the language of instruction from the first to the third grades of elementary schools, the primary language of *rembug desa* (rural official meeting), and the first language within Javanese families. The well-known Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (discussed in Kadarisman 2007) applies well to the speech community at that time: the Javanese people perceived themselves and the reality around them through the Javanese language. This showed up (and still shows up) in the *ngoko-krama* distinction that sets up one’s social position and behavior not only in the act of verbal communication but also in dealing with social affairs in general. Some Javanese-specific expressions clearly reveal the Javanese world-view. *Saben wong bakal ngundhuh wohing pakarti* (Everyone will gather the seeds of his deeds). *Wani ngalah luhur wekasane* (Giving way to others eventually leads you to dignity). *Sura dira jayaningrat lebur dening pangastuti* (The spread of evil will be destroyed by the power of forgiveness). *Kalah satak bathi sanak* (There’s no problem losing some money, but gaining brotherhood). *Mangan ora mangan kumpul* (Getting together is always worthwhile, with or without food).

The first three Javanese maxims above sound strongly moralistic, giving emphasis on the inherent truth of karma and altruism; and the last two best reveal the high value of collectivism. These are part of Javanese ideals. In reality, however, while the Javanese today may remain collectivistic in much of their social behavior, they tend to neglect and abandon altruism.

Coming up next in the “history of Java” is the modern era, characterized by two prominent things. First, the introduction of “secondary orality”—using Ong’s (1982) term—through TV and other electronic media pushes aside Javanese verbal art performances. *Wayang kulit* (shadow play), *wayang wong* (dance drama performing shadow-play stories), and *kethoprak* (drama performing historical romance and legends) are no longer appealing to the Javanese as they used to be. Present-day generations of Javanese are probably more interested in Hollywood movies than in Javanized Ramayana or Mahabharata; they may know Sinchan and Bart Simpson better than Semar, Gareng, Petruk; to them Cinderella and Harry Potter may look more familiar than Arya Penangsaang and Damarwulan. Modern entertainments are there on TV for free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This makes verbal art performance a rare entertainment, and eventually a “stranger” in his own home.

Secondly, the increasingly dominant use of Indonesian in every walk of life kills literacy in Javanese. In government offices, at all levels of educational institutions, and even among members of urban Javanese families, the use of Indonesian dominates over the use of Javanese. Only in rural areas does Javanese survive well as the language of Javanese families. More over, all government documents are written in Indonesian; and most school and university textbooks are written in Indonesian, the rest being written in English. Thus only textbooks for Javanese lessons are written in Javanese. As a result, exposure to Javanese as a written genre in educational setting is very little, or almost none. In addition, the political-and-business move known as “*koran masuk desa*” (the newspaper introduced to the rural areas) makes the Javanese magazines *Penjebar Semangat* and *Jaya Baya* gradually lose their appeal. Observing and criticizing low literacy in Javanese,
Florida (1987) wrote an article “Reading the Unread in Javanese Literature.” When it was published 20 years ago, the article was metaphorically true; but today it is literally true.

Some anecdotes floating around recently among my own family circles, friends, and colleagues show that, for most school children in Malang, Javanese has indeed become a “foreign” language. This is obvious, for instance, in how they answered items in completion exercises below:

1. Wadhah sega arane ...
   (The container of rice is called …)
2. Sepi ing pamrih rame ing ...
   (Having no self-interest, but immersed in …)
3. Guru wilangan inggih punika ...
   (The metrical pattern [in tembang] is …)

The three statements above are to be completed respectively with the following answers: (1) wakul (rice container made of bamboo plait), (2) gawe (work), and (3) wilanganipun wanda saben larik ing salebeting sekar (the number of syllables in each line of a tembang or sung-poem). However, being unfamiliar with the object, the proverb, and the term, the children came up with the following answers:

4. Wadhah sega arane magic jer
   (The container of rice is called magic jer [i.e., one kind of rice cooker])
5. Sepi ing pamrih rame ing dalan
   (Having no self-interest, but noisy in the street)
6. Guru wilangan inggih punika guru matematika
   (The metrical pattern [in tembang] is the mathematics teacher).

Errors of this type have been floating around as “linguistic humor” among us, adult members of the Javanese families. The following anecdote sums up the situation. I asked a niece who is learning Javanese and also English at the elementary school, “Which language is more ‘foreign’ to you, English or Javanese?” “Javanese, of course,” she answered.

In June 2007, a collection of my Javanese poems (i.e., Tembang Kapang, Tembang Bebrayan or Song of Longing, Song of Family Life) was published by a friend who loves Javanese literature. Most poems in this small book are written in classical style; and so they sound like the Javanese language used in wayang or kethoprak performance. Some younger Javanese friends and colleagues at State University of Malang, raised and growing up in Javanese-speaking families, had the chance of reading the poems, but said that they scarcely understood many of them. This anecdotal account is another piece of evidence that literary Javanese may sound unfamiliar or even strange to younger speakers of the language.

To find out whether or not familiarity with Javanese (as a means of everyday communication and as a window to the cultural heritage) among its younger speakers is truly decreasing, I designed and conducted a small, preliminary research. This research was specifically intended to find out (1) the degree of their comprehension of Javanese speech levels; and (2) the degree of their familiarity with local expressions conveying (i) Javanese wisdom, (ii) Javanese cultural maxims, (iii) Javanese mysticism, (iv) Javanese childlore, (v) Javanese tembang or traditional sung-poetry, and (iv) modern Javanese poetry.
2. RESEARCH METHOD

The subjects of this research were students at the English Department and the Chemistry Department at State University of Malang or UM. Students of these two departments were selected for the reason that they are younger native speakers of Javanese who acquired the language naturally (not through formal education at UM). Along this line of reasoning, the subjects were selected through purposive sampling, comprising 47 students at the English Department and 27 students at the Chemistry Department, totaling 74 students (28 male, and 46 female). Among them, 16 students were from the western part of East Java (former Karesidenan Madiun, Bojonegoro, and Kediri), 55 students were from the eastern part of East Java (former Karesidenan Surabaya, Malang, and Besuki), and 4 students were from outside Java (their parents being Javanese migrating to outer islands but maintaining the use of Javanese, besides Indonesian, as a language within the family). They are at the average age of 21, the oldest being 23 years old and the youngest being 19 years old.

The main research instrument was a questionnaire (see Appendix 1), in which the subjects were asked to fill out their personal data and to select and circle a number (in the range of 0 to 4) showing the degree of their understanding of or familiarity with one particular item—listed among the 27 items in the questionnaire. The contents of these items are summarized above, i.e., in the last paragraph of the first section (Introduction) of this paper. Following these 27 items was a question, asking the subjects whether or not the efforts to preserve and develop the Javanese language and culture were useful for the Javanese society in particular and for the Indonesian society in general. The last question is an open-ended question, asking the subjects to give brief comments on the Javanese language and culture as sociocultural heritage for the Javanese community.

Using this questionnaire, the researcher collected the data by coming to classes (three classes at the English Department and one class at the Chemistry Department). Upon receiving the instrument, the subjects were asked to fill out their personal data. When it came to circling the number indicating the degree of their understanding of or familiarity with a particular item, the researcher did “verbal performance,” according to the nature of the item. He read it out loud when it was a local expression; he did a chant when it was childlore; he sang it out loud when it was a tembang; and he did poetry reading when it was a modern poem. Each local expression, in the form of phrase or sentence, was written in full in the questionnaire; but as for the childlore, tembang, and modern poem, only the first line was written in the instrument. (The complete texts were given as Appendices 2.a, 2.b., and 2.c.) The data collection was conducted within two weeks, from the mid to the end of June 2007.

The collected data fell into four categories: (1) personal data of the subjects, (2) the degree of their understanding of or familiarity with a particular item, (3) their opinions whether or not preserving and developing the Javanese culture and language are useful efforts; and (4) their comments on the Javanese culture and language as sociocultural heritage for the Javanese. The first type of data was analyzed through coding and tabulation to obtain features of the research subjects, yielding results presented above, i.e., in the first paragraph of this second section. The second and third types of data were analyzed to obtain the mean score (converted to percentage) of every item. And the last type of data was categorized into four different attitudes: positive, neutral, negative, and “zero”—the last category indicating a blank answer to the open-ended question.
3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The major findings of this preliminary study fall into three categories: the research subjects’ comprehension of Javanese speech levels, their understanding of / familiarity with local expressions in Javanese, and their attitudes toward the Javanese language and culture.


The subjects’ comprehension (i.e., listening proficiency) of Javanese speech levels is shown in Table 1. The comprehension of ngoko (low level) is supposed to be 100%, but it turns out to be 98%. This is probably because 4 out of the 74 subjects are from outside Java; so their comprehension of ngoko is not perfect. The scores of comprehending krama (84%), ngoko alus (81%), and madya (76%) are relatively high, indicating their good comprehension of the mid (madya) and high (krama) speech levels. It should immediately be noted, however, that these scores indicate their mastery of the receptive skills (listening and a little reading), but not their productive skills (speaking and writing)—which are beyond the scope of the present research. It is rather unusual that the comprehension of madya is at the bottom, considering that in general madya is easier than krama (Poedjosoedarmo et al. 1979). One possible reason is that the subjects may have the least exposure to madya in their everyday experience of using Javanese.

### Table 1. Comprehension of Speech Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech Level</th>
<th>Score (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ngoko</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>krama</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngoko alus</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>madya</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2. Understanding of / Familiarity with Javanese Local Expressions

The term “Javanese local expressions” in this section is used in a loose manner, with a broad coverage including (a) local wisdom, (b) local morality, (c) local belief or mysticism, (d) childlore, (e) classical poetry or tembang, and (f) modern poetry.

Part of Javanese wisdom is expressed through language-specific sayings and proverbs. The subjects’ understanding of these sayings and proverbs ranges from “excellent” (99%) to “very poor” (32%). As shown in Table 2, (1) Mangan ora

### Table 2. Understanding Javanese Wisdom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Well-known Sayings and Proverbs</th>
<th>Score (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mangan ora mangan kumpul (Getting together is always worthwhile, with or without food)</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aja dumeh (Morally, don’t be …)</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ula marani gepuk (A snake approaching the hitting stick)</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kebo nyusu gudel (A buffalo sucking milk from its young)</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tumbu oleh oleh tutup (A large bamboo-plait basket obtaining its best cover)</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kacang mangsa ninggala lanjaran (The string-bean plant won't leave its shaft.) | 65%
---|---
Kutuk marani sunduk (A kutuk fish approaching the skewer) | 63%
Mburu uceng kelangan dheleg (Chasing an uceng fish, losing the dheleg fish at hand) | 43%
Rindhik asu digitik (Slow is the running beaten dog = Even the running beaten dog is considered slow) | 36%
Dhandhang diunekake kuntul, kuntul diunekake dhandhang (The crow is called white-bird, and the white-bird is called crow) | 32%

mangan kumpul remains very popular among younger speakers. It is surprising that (2) Aja dumeh (which never shows up in an utterance in and around Malang today) is highly comprehensible to the subjects. Maybe it is such a well-known cultural maxim that its rare use in verbal communication does not prevent its familiarity.

Expressions (3) through (10) are proverbs. Proverbs (3) and (7) have the same metaphorical meaning, “someone approaching the danger.” And yet, proverb (3) sounds more familiar than (7), probably because the words ula “snake” and gepuk “hitting stick” are more familiar to the subjects than kutuk “a kind of fish” and sunduk “skewer.” Proverb (4), which suggests “the old learning from the young,” also sounds familiar, since the words kebo “buffalo” and gudel “its young” are relatively familiar animals in the present surrounding. Similarly, proverb (6), which suggests “the child will follow the footstep of his parent,” also contains the familiar words kacang “string-bean plant” and lanjaran “the shaft.”

The last three proverbs are understood poorly by the subjects. They respectively mean (8) “chasing a small thing, losing the big thing at hand.” (9) “running very fast,” and (10) “the character of a two-faced, hypocritical person.” The “uceng fish” in (8) is nearly gone from the environment, and the word dheleg, a synonym of kutuk (fish), is now never used by the speech community. Similarly, the word dhandhang “crow” in (10) is never used in everyday Javanese, while the water bird kuntul has disappeared from the environment. Thus proverbs (8) and (10) sound unfamiliar because the (content) words in them no longer have referents in the physical environment or disappear from usage. The difficulty in understanding proverb (9), repeated here as example (7), is due to its syntactic peculiarity.

(7) Rindhik asu digitik
Slow dog be beaten
‘Even the running beaten dog is considered slow.’

In traditional literature, this unusual syntactic construction is called sanepa or “emphasizing the meaning of an adjective through implicit comparison with its opposite” (Padmosoekotjo 1960). As illustrated by example (7), to express the idea of (running) “very fast,” the opposite adjective “slow” is used in the context “Even the running beaten dog is considered slow.” Therefore, example (7) means “very, very fast.” While it was part of common usage in the past, this kind of language-specific expression seems to have disappeared from everyday Javanese. Proverb (9) is hard to understand, not because of lexical peculiarity but because of syntactic archaism.

As for the local expressions conveying Javanese morality (Table 3), the subjects’ understanding of them is relatively high. In spite of some archaic words in the three expressions in Table 3, they all sound familiar enough to the subjects, probably because of the well-known message. In the Javanese community, there are lots of religious circles in which similar moral doctrines are often heard.
Table 3. Understanding Javanese Morality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Local Expressions</th>
<th>Score (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>Saben wong bakal ngundhuh wohing pakarti</em> (Everyone will gather the seeds of his deeds)</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>Rawe-rawe rantas, malang-malang putung</em> (Cutting off the entangling ropes, and breaking up the cross-blocking shafts)</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>Sapa salah bakal seleh, sapa temen bakal tinemu</em> (Wrong-doers will get defeated; truth-lovers will be rewarded.)</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast, local expressions conveying Javanese mysticism (Table 4) are hardly comprehensible to the subjects. The phrases *sangkan paraning dumadi* “the whence and whither of beings” in (1) and *tapake kuntul nglayang* “the trace of a flying kuntul bird,” *galihe kangkung* “the core of an omchoy stem,” and *isine bumbung wangwung* “the content of a cut-off hollow bamboo” in (2) may sound unfamiliar to the subjects for their lexical archaism and esoteric content. Similarly, the whole expression in (2) may sound unfamiliar for the same reason. All these expressions convey part of the local philosophy, which was deemed central and valuable in the past but has been driven into periphery at present.

The Javanese childlore (Table 5), like the proverbs presented in Table 2, is recognized with different degrees of familiarity. Childlore, not only in Javanese but also in any other culture, is purely part of oral tradition which contributes to the shaping of childhood. Like folktales, childlore has no written record. Therefore, its recognition depends entirely on whether or not it still prevails orally within a speech community. The three pieces of childlore above are recognized differently by the subjects, (1) and (2) sounding somewhat familiar to them, but (3) getting close to extinction. It should be noted that the childlore above is not translated into English, since it is a kind of meaningless “poetic language”—in the sense of Jakobson (1960)—performed for the sheer joy of its form, with very little or no consideration of its meaning.

Table 4. Understanding Javanese Mysticism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Local Expressions</th>
<th>Score (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>Wong Jawa kudu mangerteni sangkan paraning dumadi</em> (A Javanese must understand the whence and whither of beings)</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>Sura dira jayaningrat lebur dening pangastuti</em> (The spread of evil will be destroyed by the power of forgiveness)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>Kaya nggoleki tapake kuntul nglayang, galihe kangkung, isine bumbung wang-wang</em> (Like seeking the trace of a flying kuntul bird, the core of an omchoy stem, and the content of a cut-off hollow bamboo)</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Familiarity with Javanese Childlore

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Childlore</th>
<th>Score (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>Dhok tri legendri nagasari ...</em></td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>Enyet-enyet tebu, cah cilik pinter mlaku ...</em></td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>Kang-ungkang belungkang ...</em></td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tembang or traditional sung-poetry (Table 6) is much worse in recognition than the chidlore. Tembang was very popular in the past, at least until the mid 1970s; but since then it has been drifting to disappearance, especially among school children.

Table 6. Familiarity with Tembang

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Tembang</th>
<th>Score (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jago kluruk rame kapiyarsi …</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jinejer ing Wedhatama</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in East Java. The first song is Dhandhanggula and the second is Pangkur. Both belong to the so-called macapat, a genre of traditional song which enjoyed great popularity in the past. In my own schooling, I learned both songs when I was in the third grade of elementary school. As noted earlier under data collection, I sang out these two songs for the subjects; and yet, even at the “listening” level, both songs were recognized very little.

A little better than tembang is modern poetry (Table 7). Following the development of modern Indonesian literature, modern Javanese literature bloomed during the 1960s and 1970s with short story, novel, and modern poetry (see Hutomo 1975). As shown in Table 7, two modern poems are included in the questionnaire:

Table 7. Familiarity with Modern Javanese Poetry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Modern Poetry</th>
<th>Score (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Guritan Gedheg Nolong”</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Banowati”</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guritan Gedheg Bolong (Poem of the Holed Bamboo-plait Wall) and Banowati. The first poem, being everyday in content and lexical use, sounds relatively familiar to the subjects, despite the fact that it is a satirical poem. In contrast, the second poem sounds unfamiliar to most subjects, probably because of its content. Banowati is a well-known female character in the Javanized version of Mahabharata. She is the wife of King Duryudana—married to this King of Hastina but her heart still passionately attached to Arjuna (the third of the Pandawa Brothers), who is said to be the most handsome character in Mahabharata. The persona “I” in the poem stands on the side of Banowati, who is considered to be an unfaithful wife, and implicitly conveys her heart-rending pain and longing to Arjuna, who cannot resist coming and going like a stealthy hawk. Probably unfamiliar with this part of wayang stories, the subjects have little recognition of the poem, despite its relatively familiar lexicon.

What has been discussed in section 3.2 (Understanding of / Familiarity with Javanese Local Expressions) of this paper boils down to three important points. First, a few local expressions sound highly familiar to the subjects for their popular message conveyed in everyday lexicon. Second, some local expressions sound relatively familiar to the subjects for their well-known message in spite of their low frequency lexicon. Third, many local expressions, including both classical and modern Javanese poetry, are unfamiliar to the subjects, probably because of their little known or unknown content, lexical archaism, and—in a very rare case—syntactic archaism. In summary, much of the Javanese value contained in local expressions is no longer familiar to the subjects and is probably in the process of disappearing.
3.3. Attitudes toward the Javanese Language and Culture

While the subjects’ understanding of as well as their familiarity with local expressions is in general low, their attitude toward the Javanese language and culture is mostly positive. To the question “Are the efforts to preserve and develop the Javanese language and culture useful for the Javanese society in particular and the Indonesian society in general?” their response shows unanimous agreement (95%). In addition, to the open-ended question “In one sentence, write down your personal opinion about the Javanese language and culture as ‘cultural heritage’ for the Javanese society,” most of them gave a positive response (65.5%). Detailed of their attitudes are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Attitudes toward the Javanese Language and Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>No. of Subjects</th>
<th>Score (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstain</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The subjects’ responses showing their attitudes can be summarized as follows: (a) positive: the Javanese language and culture are (highly) valuable for the Javanese society as well as for the Indonesian nation; (b) neutral: the Javanese language and culture are important part of Indonesian culture; (c) negative: the Javanese language is of little value for its complicated system of speech levels; and (d) abstain: there is no response to the question. As shown in Table 8, most subjects (65%) gave a positive response; about one-third of them (30%) gave a neutral response; only 1 person (from outside Java) gave a negative response; and 2 persons left the answer blank. In brief, although most local expressions in Javanese are alien to the subjects, they still have a very good sense of belonging toward their language and culture.

4. TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL NOTES

Considering that the present research is quite elementary and sketchy in nature, only tentative conclusions can be drawn. First, with respect to Javanese speech levels, mastery of the ngoko (low) level among younger speakers of Javanese is very good. It is probably the only speech level that they can handle with ease in oral communication. However, when given written texts in ngoko to read, comprehension problem will probably arise. Anecdotal records, told by colleagues and friends in Malang, prove this. The reason is linguistically self-evident:

\[ \text{I consider the present research quite elementary and sketchy for the following reasons. First, since there are millions of younger speakers of Javanese, a sample of only 74 younger speakers has a low degree of representation of the whole population. Second, the subjects’ degree of understanding of as well as their familiarity with Javanese expressions was measured only at the perceptive (listening) level, but not at the productive (speaking) level. If the productive level had been measured, the scores would probably have been much lower, considering that the mastery of the speaking skill is always more difficult than that of the listening skill. Third, the number of expressions included in the questionnaire was very limited (only 27 items in total). If more expressions had been included, the scores would probably have been much lower too, since there are many other expressions which may sound alien to younger speakers of Javanese today. Despite the inherent flaws of the present research, however, it is still much better to find out an answer to the question through a sketchy research than merely through assumptions and conjectures.} \]
lexicon used in oral communication is much more limited than that used in written texts. In other words, high-frequency ngoko words cause no communication problem; but low-frequency ngoko words do. Javanese literary scholars today (see Prawoto 1988) are worried that Javanese will eventually be reduced to a very poor spoken language—its rich literature, with its fast decreasing number of readers, could be drifting to obscurity.

During the 1960s and 1970s, younger speakers of Javanese did correspondence among themselves in Javanese, i.e., in refined ngoko. This is also the language of short story, novel, and modern poetry. Most of them were avid readers of Penjebar Semangat and Jaya Baya—two popular Javanese magazines among the speech community then. Today, a younger speaker of Javanese (in East Java) writing personal letters or e-mail in Javanese would be considered a “messenger” from the past. Even comprehending a written Javanese text is a remarkable linguistic accomplishment, let alone producing one.

Going up to the madya (mid) and krama (high) levels is a daunting ascent. At the listening level, usually there is no comprehension problem. When it comes to speaking, however, many younger speakers become nervous and lose self-confidence. A colleague at UM, waiting for his child going home from a kindergarten, was asked a question in krama. He felt so nervous that he could only answer with a mumble and then went away from the scene. A niece of mine doing KKN (Kulian Kerja Nyata or Academic Practicum) at a rural area in Malang preferred to keep silent when her group had a conversation with Javanese elders, for she was worried of making embarrassing mistakes if ever she had courage of speaking krama.

The eloquent use of krama in expository writing such as in Pathokaning Nyekaraken (A Guide to Tembang Writing) by Hardjowirogo (1926 [19..]) or Kapustakan Djawi (Javanese Bibliography) by Poerbatjaraka (1952) seems to have vanished into the memorable grandeur of Javanese past. Similarly, the use of archaic vocabulary both in tembang and in wayang, either in oral performance or written stories, has become the privilege of the talented few. Present-day wedding ceremonies are made like wayang performance through wedding narratives performed by a wedding MC. During my research on wedding narratives in Malang and Solo (Kadarisman 1999), there appeared a huge linguistic gap between these two towns in East and Central Java. In Solo, the MC was an eloquent performer with his audience as competent listeners. But in Malang, even an MC could be a rather poor performer with his audience as (very) poor listeners. Thus the distinction shows up between the center and the periphery of Javanese culture (see Kuntjaraningrat 1985). At this point, it is important to note that the results of the present study are probably true in the periphery (in Malang) but not in the center (in Solo or Yogya).

With regard to local expressions, much has been lost in Javanese culture. Local values, local philosophy, classical literature, and modern literature are indeed in the danger of extinction. This cultural heritage, while still cherished as adiluhung (exquisite and noble), is now comprehensible only to a selected few. In the past, this cultural heritage was widely spread among the Javanese community through formal education as well as extensive practice of verbal artistry. Today, only the talented few, through rigorous personal efforts, can still understand and hence treasure this cultural heritage. Is there a way back to regain the “lost paradise”? Attempts have been made by Javanese literary scholars to preserve this treasure, particularly as contained within Javanese literary tradition. But as for the prospect of Javanese literature, only time will tell.
Finally, despite all the unhappy accounts, enthusiasm and love to preserve the cultural heritage, as revealed by the present research, is still very much there within the collective mind of younger generations of Javanese. This is a truly valuable socio-psychological asset for the Javanese community. The ensuing question is: how can we the Javanese make the best use of this asset to shape the future of the Javanese language and culture?

REFERENCES


Appendix 1. Questionnaire

KUESIONER

Kuesioner ini digunakan untuk mengetahui seberapa akrab penutur bahasa Jawa usia-muda terhadap tingkat-tutur dan ungkapan bahasa Jawa yang (dulu) lazim digunakan oleh masyarakat Jawa. Sebagai responden, Anda diminta untuk melengkapi pernyataan atau menjawab pertanyaan, dengan (a) melingkari huruf atau angka, dan (b) mengisi bagian yang kosong, sesuai dengan konteks yang ada.

Anda tidak diminta mencantumkan nama, sehingga pengisian kuesioner ini tidak berpengaruh apapun terhadap kehidupan Anda. Kejujuran Anda mengisi kuesioner ini sangat diperlukan dan sangat dihargai, demi keberhasilan penelitian kecil ini. Terima kasih.

Biodata singkat Responden:
Jenis kelamin :  L  /  P
Umur : _____ tahun
Tempat lahir (Kodya / Kabupaten) : _______________________________________
Menempuh SD, SLTP, dan SLTA di :
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

_Dalam kolom kedua pada tabel berikut, tertulis kalimat atau ungkapan bahasa Jawa, juga tembang dolanan, guritan (puisi), dan tembang Jawa. Peneliti akan membacakan atau melantunkan apa yang tertulis pada kolom kedua tersebut satu demi satu. Anda diminta mendengarkan, dan kemudian melingkari satu angka pada lajur yang sama untuk menyatakan tingkat pemahaman atau pengenalan Anda terhadap apa yang dibaca atau dilantunkan oleh peneliti. Lingkari angka 4 jika pemahaman/pengenalan Anda tinggi sekali, angka 3 jika cukup tinggi, angka 2 jika agak rendah, angka 1 jika rendah sekali, dan 0 jika tidak ada pemahaman/pengenalan sama sekali._

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Kalimat / Ungkapan</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aku njaluk tulung, tukokna amlop nyang toko ngarep kuwi.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kabare dhek wingi Sumardi empun angsal yatra. Napa larene siyos kesah teng kitha?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yen Pak Santa ora tindakan, kowe bisa ngampil titihane, nggo nyang kepanjen, sowan Budhe.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bu Nur, manawi badhe kundur samenika, panjenengan dipun aturi manggihi Pak Hardjana rumiyin.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mangan ora mangan kumpul.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tumbo oleh tutup.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kebo nyusu gudel.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ula marani gepuk.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rindhik asu digitik.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Rawe-rawe rantas, malang-malang putung.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sapa salah bakal seleh, sapa temen bakal tinemu.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Kacang mangsa ninggala lanjanar.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Mburu uceng kelangan dheleg.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Kutuk marani sunduk.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Aja dumeh.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Saben wong bakal ngundhuh wohing pakarti.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Wong Jawa kudu mangerteni sangkan paraning dumadi.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Apakah upaya pelestarian dan pengembangan budaya dan bahasa Jawa berguna bagi masyarakat Jawa khususnya dan bagi bangsa Indonesia pada umumnya?

Tuliskan kesan Anda dalam satu kalimat tentang budaya dan bahasa Jawa sebagai "kekayaan sosio-kultural" masyarakat Jawa.

Appendix 2.a. Javanese Childlore (without Translation)

Enyet-enyet tebu, cah cilik pinter mlaku.
Enyet-enyet bawang, cah cilik pinter mbrangkang.


Dhok tri legendri nagasari ri, ri wul iwul-iwul jenang katul tul, tullen olen-olen jajan manten ten, tenana lehku lunga mbesuk apa pa, pa dheng mbako enak mbako sedheng dheng, dheng kok engkak-engkok manak kodhok dhok, dhok tri ...

Appendix 2.b. Tembang Texts (with English Translation)

Jago kluruk rame kapiyarsi
Lawa kalong luru pandhelikan
Jrih kawan an ing semune
Wetan bang sulakipun
Mertandhani yen bangun enjing
Rembulan wis gumlewang
Neng kulone gunung
Ing padesan wiwit obah
Lanang wadon samya anambut kardi
Netepi kewajiban
The crowing roosters are heard all around.  
Small and large bats are seeking a hiding place,  
fearful of the rising sun.  
The red dawn in the east  
signifies the awakening morning  
The moon sets in the west,  
behind the mountain.  
The village is now awakened,  
men and women ready for work,  
doing daily routines.

Jinejer ing Wedhatama  
Mrih tan kembemangning pambudi  
Mangka nadyan tuwa pikun  
Yen tan mikani rasa  
Yekti sepi asepa lir sepah samun  
Samangsanje pakumpulan  
Gonyak-ganyuk nglelingsemi

It is set out in the Wedhatama,  
So that they should not weary of turning over  
in their minds,  
Whereas though a man be old and bent,  
If he has not grasped the essence,  
Truly he is as empty and insipid as  
the abandoned quid,  
And when people are together in company  
He is embarrassingly free-and-easy.  
(English translation of the second tembang  
by Stuart Robson 1990)

Appendix 2.c. Modern Javanese Poems (with English Translation)

GURUTAN GEDHEG BOLONG

wayah asar aku nyawang gedheg kamar: bolong  
bangsat! iki mesthi orong-orong  
esuke dak pasang pengumuman:  
"DILARANG MEROONGRONG!"

coba, upama sampeyan apa ora ndomblong?  
maca ing ngisore  
ana tulisan ceremendhe;  
"ora. aku mung gawe rong."

POEM OF THE HOLED BAMBOO-PLAIT WALL

one late afternoon i saw the bamboo-plait,  
wall of my room: holed
shuck! this must be the subversive digging-roach.
the next day i put up a sign:
“NO SUBVERSION!”

just imagine, and you’d be amazed!
a notice underneath,
written by a small roach:
“no. i’ve just dug in a hole.”

BANOWATI

_Dak sawang Banowati kaya praupaning wengi_
_Aku bocah lanang ngliga dhadha_
_Nanging nyimpen rasa goreh lan panglangut_
_Apa bakal dak tampa saka pepeteng iki?_

_Dak sawang Banowati kaya sore kekemul mega_
_Nalika Janaka katon wira-wiri kaya wulung nyingkiri sepi,_
_Tansah teka lan mangkat, teka lan mangkat_
_tampa kendhat_

BANOWATI

I see Banowati like the night’s face
I’m a young man, standing shirtless,
But hiding in my soul are the feelings of angst and loneliness.
What will I receive from this darkness?

I see Banowati like a late-afternoon shrouded with clouds,
While Janaka is flirting around like a hawk keeping off sight,
Coming close by and going away, always ceaselessly.