

The Existence of Javanese Language in Wonomulyo: A Philosophical and Multicultural Study

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Abstract:

This study examines the existence of the Javanese language in Wonomulyo within a multicultural context, identifies factors supporting and inhibiting its maintenance, and interprets its significance through the philosophy of language. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through interviews, participant observation, and documentation involving community leaders, teachers, parents, and youths. The findings indicate that Javanese continues to maintain moderate vitality, particularly within family, community, and cultural-ritual domains such as *selamatan* and *kenduren*. In these contexts, Javanese functions not only as a means of communication but also as a medium for transmitting moral values, social etiquette, and collective identity, especially through the practice of *unggah-ungguh*. However, language maintenance faces significant challenges. The dominance of Indonesian in formal education, public spaces, and digital communication has led to a gradual narrowing of Javanese use, particularly among younger generations. While youths remain bilingual, Indonesian is increasingly associated with modernity and mobility, whereas Javanese is largely confined to symbolic and intimate domains. From a philosophical perspective drawing on Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Foucault, the study argues that the weakening of Javanese reflects not only linguistic change but also shifts in meaning, identity, and power relations. The study highlights the need for integrated efforts involving families, communities, education, and digital spaces to sustain regional languages in multicultural societies.

Keywords: Existence; Javanese Language; Language Maintenance; Multiculturalism; Philosophy of Language.

Introduction

Language functions not only as a medium of communication but also as a marker of cultural identity and a repository of collective values transmitted across generations (Mahmud & Indah, 2023). Through linguistic practices, individuals shape social relations and sustain shared meanings, making language continuity closely linked to cultural endurance.

Javanese is one of the largest regional languages in Indonesia, spoken by more than 80 million people (Pradopo, 2021). Its complex speech levels reflect ethical norms and philosophical orientations within Javanese society (Fathurrahman & Lestari, 2022). Nevertheless, empirical studies report an increasing shift among younger speakers toward Indonesian and foreign languages, particularly in formal, educational, and

digital domains (Puspitasari & Rahardjo, 2021). This shift indicates not merely reduced language use but a transformation of the social functions traditionally carried by regional languages (Anwar & Rasyid, 2023).

Wonomulyo, a multicultural subdistrict inhabited by Mandar, Bugis, Toraja, and Javanese communities, provides a relevant setting for examining this transformation. The Javanese population, established through transmigration in the mid-twentieth century, has maintained various cultural practices, including language use within family and community domains (Fathurrahman & Lestari, 2022). However, interethnic interaction, the dominance of Indonesian in education, and the influence of digital communication increasingly constrain the functional space of Javanese (Yuliana & Wibowo, 2022).

From the perspective of the philosophy of language, linguistic practices are inseparable from the formation of worldview and moral understanding (Hidayat & Ramadhani, 2024). The weakening of Javanese usage in Wonomulyo therefore has implications beyond communicative efficiency, as it may affect the transmission of ethical concepts, politeness systems, and culturally embedded meanings (Rohman, 2020). This study offers a novel contribution by integrating sociolinguistic analysis with philosophical interpretation particularly semantic, hermeneutic, and ontological perspectives to understand the existential significance of Javanese in a migrant, multicultural context outside Java.

Accordingly, this research examines the existence of the Javanese language in Wonomulyo, identifies factors that support and inhibit its maintenance, and interprets its cultural meaning through theories in the philosophy of language. The findings are expected to contribute to sociolinguistic and philosophical discourse while offering practical insights for regional language preservation in contemporary multicultural societies.

Literature Review

Language Existence in Multicultural Contexts

In multicultural societies, the existence of a language cannot be understood merely through patterns of use but must be analyzed in relation to identity formation, power relations, and intergroup contact. (Parekh, 2000) conceptualizes language as both a marker of cultural belonging and a medium of social integration, while (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015) emphasize that minority language existence is always negotiated within asymmetric power relations involving dominant languages.

Synthesizing these perspectives, language existence in this study is operationalized through interrelated indicators: domains of use, identity function, interethnic interaction, and the influence of Indonesian as the dominant language. Previous studies demonstrate that sustained use in intimate and ritual domains often signifies symbolic resilience, even when a language loses ground in institutional settings (Anwar & Rasyid, 2023; Puspitasari & Rahardjo, 2021).

Within Wonomulyo's multicultural setting, the use of Javanese in family interactions and rituals such as *selamatan* and *kenduren* reflects its continued symbolic relevance. However, interethnic communication patterns and the functional dominance of Indonesian suggest that Javanese operates within a restricted domain, indicating a form of "partial existence" rather than full functional vitality. This study therefore positions language existence not as a binary condition (alive vs. endangered) but as a dynamic negotiation shaped by multicultural interaction and linguistic hierarchy.

Language Maintenance: Structural and Symbolic Dimensions

Language maintenance has traditionally been linked to intergenerational transmission and domain stability (Nasrullah & Rahmawati, 2022). However, recent scholarship highlights that maintenance is not solely a familial process but is strongly influenced by institutional support and symbolic visibility (Rahman & Suryani, 2023; Suhendra, 2022). The linguistic landscape approach, in particular, expands the concept of maintenance to include public representation and ideological recognition.

Integrating these insights, this study conceptualizes language maintenance as a multidimensional process involving family transmission, community-based institutions, cultural religious practices, public visibility, and digital adaptation. Prior studies indicate that even when institutional support is weak, strong cultural networks can temporarily sustain language use, though often in increasingly symbolic forms.

Applied to Wonomulyo, this framework enables a critical assessment of how Javanese maintenance is simultaneously supported and constrained. Community organizations and rituals function as cultural buffers that reinforce language transmission, while schools and formal domains dominated by Indonesian act as structural inhibitors. This tension suggests that Javanese maintenance in Wonomulyo is shifting from functional use toward symbolic preservation, a pattern consistent with minority languages in multicultural environments.

Philosophy of Language as an Analytical Framework

Rather than treating the philosophy of language as an abstract discourse, this study employs it as an interpretive lens to uncover the deeper meanings embedded in language practices. Wittgenstein's concept of language games allows for an analysis of how Javanese speech levels (*ngoko–krama*) function as socially regulated practices that encode respect, hierarchy, and communal norms. This aligns with sociolinguistic findings that language choice reflects negotiated social identities rather than individual preference.

Heidegger's view of language as the "house of Being" provides a framework for interpreting ritual language use as an expression of existential and cultural continuity, particularly in migrant communities where language anchors collective memory. Meanwhile, Foucault's notion of discourse and power enables a critical examination of how Indonesian dominance through educational policy and institutional regulation restructures linguistic legitimacy and marginalizes regional languages.

By synthesizing these philosophical perspectives with sociolinguistic theory, this study moves beyond descriptive accounts of language shift. It frames the weakening of Javanese not merely as a decline in usage but as a transformation of meaning, authority, and identity within Wonomulyo's multicultural order. In this way, the philosophy of language functions as an analytical bridge connecting empirical language practices with broader questions of cultural existence and power.

Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to examine in depth the existence and maintenance of the Javanese language within the multicultural sociocultural context of Wonomulyo. A qualitative case study is particularly appropriate because it allows for an intensive exploration of language practices, meanings, and values as they are experienced and interpreted by community members within their natural setting. Rather than seeking generalization, this approach prioritizes analytical depth and contextual understanding.

The research was conducted in Wonomulyo District, Polewali Mandar Regency, West Sulawesi Province an area characterized by long-established Javanese transmigrant communities interacting daily with Mandar, Bugis, and Toraja ethnic groups. This setting provides a critical case for understanding how a regional language survives, adapts, or shifts in a multicultural and multilingual environment.

Data Sources and Participant Selection

The study utilizes both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from 30 participants selected through purposive sampling, guided by the principle of information-rich cases. The number of participants was considered sufficient to achieve data saturation, as recurring patterns and themes emerged consistently across interviews and observations.

The participants consisted of:

1. 5 community leaders, representing cultural authority and traditional language norms;
2. 5 teachers, representing institutional language practices and educational influence;
3. 10 parents, representing intergenerational transmission within families;
4. 10 youths or young adults, representing the younger generation and potential language shift.

This composition was intentionally designed to capture generational contrasts and functional differences in language use, enabling a comprehensive analysis of language existence and maintenance across social domains.

Secondary data were obtained from official documents, community archives, academic publications, and previous research related to Javanese language use, language maintenance, and multiculturalism. These sources were used to contextualize and corroborate the primary findings.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection employed multiple qualitative techniques to ensure depth and richness of data. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit participants' perspectives on language use, identity, and attitudes toward Javanese and Indonesian. The semi-structured format allowed flexibility for probing emerging themes while maintaining analytical consistency across participants.

Participant observation was carried out in various settings, including family interactions, community gatherings, markets, schools, and cultural–religious events. This method enabled the researcher to capture actual language practices rather than relying solely on self-reported data. Documentation in the form of field notes, photographs, and video recordings complemented the interviews and observations, providing visual and contextual evidence of language use.

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's (2014) interactive model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Analysis was conducted iteratively, moving back and forth between data collection and interpretation to refine emerging categories and themes. Coding focused on identifying patterns related to language domains, identity functions, maintenance strategies, and power relations.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation was applied by comparing data across community leaders, teachers, parents, and youths. Method triangulation was also employed by integrating interviews, observations, and documentation. These strategies strengthened the depth and reliability of the qualitative analysis by reducing single-source and single-method bias.

Results

The Existence of the Javanese Language in Wonomulyo within a Multicultural Context

The findings show that the Javanese language continues to maintain a significant presence and function within Wonomulyo's multicultural setting, even though the community coexists alongside Mandar, Bugis, and Toraja ethnic groups. In this diverse environment, Javanese serves not only as a linguistic tool but also as a marker of ethnic identity, a symbol of solidarity, and a means of preserving inherited cultural values. For many Javanese residents in Wonomulyo, speaking their ancestral language reaffirms their sense of belonging and strengthens communal bonds, allowing them to maintain continuity with their cultural roots despite living far from Java.

The family domain emerges as the most crucial space for sustaining the language. Most participants reported that Javanese remains the primary language used in daily interactions at home, particularly among older generations and middle-aged parents. Within the household, the use of Javanese is strongly tied to the transmission of moral values, norms of politeness, and cultural etiquette especially through the practice of *unggah-ungguh* (levels of speech showing respect). Parents intentionally use Javanese, especially polite varieties, when teaching children about manners, respect, and social behavior. Thus, the home does more than preserve linguistic competence; it becomes a vital environment where cultural identity, ethical teachings, and intergenerational heritage are nurtured through the continued use of the Javanese language.

Interview quotations:

"At home, we still use Javanese because we want the children to understand unggah-ungguh (etiquette)." (Informant L, 54)

"I mix Indonesian and Javanese, but when I give advice to my children, I always use polite Javanese." (Informant A, 38)

He often mixes Indonesian and Javanese, advice to his children is always delivered in polite Javanese because it carries stronger nuances of respect and propriety. Thus, Javanese is positioned as a medium of moral education that teaches manners, humility, and intergenerational respect.

In social contexts such as *selamatan*, *pengajian*, *kenduren*, and *gotong royong*, Javanese operates performatively it revives collective memory and strengthens community solidarity. Field observations during a *selamatan* event revealed that 87% of interactions among community members were conducted in Javanese *ngoko* and *krama lugu*, while Indonesian was used only when addressing non-Javanese guests.

Meanwhile, the younger generation exhibits a clear bilingual tendency. Analysis of informal speech patterns shows that Javanese is used approximately 40–45% of the time (mainly at home and with close friends), whereas Indonesian dominates at 55–60% (especially in schools, public spaces, and digital communication). These findings illustrate the ongoing dynamics of language change and highlight the challenges of maintaining the social and moral functions of Javanese in the face of modernity.

Interview quotation:

“For chatting or social media, I use Indonesian or mix it with English; I rarely use Javanese.” (Informant R, 17)

This statement reflects a broader trend in which the use of Javanese is declining significantly in digital spaces, especially among younger speakers. Online communication platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and other social media are heavily shaped by dominant national and global linguistic norms. As a result, Indonesian and English have become the default languages for digital interaction, while Javanese is increasingly marginalized and perceived as less relevant in technologically mediated communication.

The pattern becomes even more striking when viewed across age groups. Only participants aged 40 years and above continue to use Javanese actively in community WhatsApp groups, where they engage in casual conversations, share information, or coordinate community activities. Younger users, however, tend to switch almost entirely to Indonesian, rarely inserting Javanese except for humorous expressions or specific cultural references. This generational divide suggests that digital communication is gradually distancing itself from local linguistic traditions.

The weakening presence of Javanese in online environments poses a serious threat to its intergenerational transmission. When a language loses its function in everyday digital interaction one of the most dominant communication domains today its symbolic value and practical utility diminish. Consequently, the digital sphere has become a critical site where the continuity of the Javanese language is increasingly challenged.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Maintenance of the Javanese Language

Families consistently regard Javanese as a “language of etiquette,” emphasizing that its value extends far beyond everyday communication. For many households, speaking Javanese especially its polite forms represents a deliberate effort to instill moral values, respect, and social refinement in younger generations. Parents often associate Javanese with teachings about manners, humility, and appropriate behavior, particularly through the practice of *unggah-ungguh*, which structures how individuals show respect in different social contexts. As one participant explained, using Javanese at home is essential because it teaches children how to behave properly and understand the cultural norms expected within the community. This perspective reflects a broader belief that the language carries embedded wisdom and ethical principles, making it a vital cultural resource within the family environment. Through consistent use in daily interactions, Javanese becomes a living tool for shaping character, reinforcing identity, and maintaining intergenerational continuity.

Interview quotation:

“Speaking Javanese teaches children manners—it’s not just a language.” (Informant T, 62)

Ritual events such as *selamatan*, *pengajian*, and *kenduren* continue to serve as important cultural spaces where Javanese values, expressions, and speech levels are actively maintained. In these communal gatherings, Javanese is used not only as a means of communication but also as a symbolic marker of tradition, respect, and shared identity. Institutions such as the Javanese Association of Wonomulyo and *Karang Taruna* further reinforce this cultural continuity by providing organized spaces for interaction,

cultural activities, and intergenerational learning. These spaces strengthen a sense of belonging and identity among community members.

This phenomenon aligns with the concept of ethnolinguistic vitality proposed by Giles et al. (Putri, 2025), which emphasizes that strong community cohesion significantly enhances the survival of a minority language. However, several inhibiting factors persist. The dominance of Indonesian in formal education means that schools function as powerful agents of language shift. As students spend most of their academic and social lives in Indonesian-speaking environments, the use of Javanese gradually weakens among younger generations.

Interview quotation:

“At school we never use local languages; everything is in Indonesian.” (Teacher, 38)

This statement highlights one of the central tensions in the linguistic landscape of Wonomulyo: although Javanese remains deeply embedded in cultural and community life, the school environment reinforces the dominance of Indonesian as the sole medium of instruction. This institutional preference shapes the linguistic habits of younger generations, who gradually associate Indonesian with education, modernity, and upward mobility, while viewing Javanese as confined to informal or familial contexts.

Despite this pressure, Javanese continues to thrive within cultural and communal spaces. Ritual events such as *selamatan*, *pengajian*, and *kenduren* serve as important cultural arenas where Javanese expressions, norms, and symbolic values are actively practiced and preserved. In these settings, the language functions not only communicatively but performatively, reaffirming shared identity, reinforcing social hierarchy, and strengthening collective memory. Community institutions like the Javanese Association of Wonomulyo and *Karang Taruna* further support language maintenance by providing platforms where Javanese social values, traditional arts, and intergenerational bonding are fostered.

These dynamics reflect Giles et al.’s concept of ethnolinguistic vitality, which argues that strong community cohesion plays a crucial role in supporting the survival of minority languages. In Wonomulyo, the tight-knit nature of the Javanese migrant community and the continued relevance of cultural practices contribute positively to language maintenance. However, the overwhelming use of Indonesian in formal education remains a significant inhibiting factor. Schools, as influential institutions, shape the linguistic preferences and identities of young speakers, making them the most powerful driver of language shift in the community.

Philosophical Analysis of the Existence of the Javanese Language

The philosophical analysis deepens the understanding of the ontological significance of Javanese language practices by illustrating how language, identity, and cultural meaning exist in a mutually reinforcing relationship. From Wittgenstein’s perspective, the meaning of Javanese emerges through its use in everyday “language games,” where speakers enact social norms and cultural values in real interactions (Fidiyanti:2024). These practices are not abstract; they are shaped by principles such as *rukun* (harmonious relations), *tepo seliro* (empathy and restraint), and norms of respectful speech that structure how individuals position themselves within the community. Thus, Javanese is not merely a linguistic system but a lived ethical practice that guides ways of being.

Heidegger’s philosophy further reinforces this view by situating Javanese as a “house of being” a metaphysical dwelling place where identity, morality, memory, and cultural continuity reside. Within this

framework, speaking Javanese becomes an existential act: it is through language that individuals inhabit their world and relate to their heritage. When the use of Javanese begins to diminish, this metaphysical home gradually erodes. The loss is not only linguistic but ontological, meaning that the community loses a crucial anchor for sustaining its sense of self, its moral orientation, and its collective cultural consciousness.

From Foucault's standpoint, the weakening of Javanese can also be understood as the result of power relations embedded in discourse (Nasution:2024). National language policies, formal institutional structures, and modernization processes privilege Indonesian and global languages, relegating Javanese to a subordinated position. This marginalization limits its presence in public domains, reduces its symbolic capital, and influences speakers' perceptions of its value. Consequently, the struggle of Javanese in Wonomulyo is not only a cultural issue but also a political and ideological one: it reflects broader tensions between dominant and marginalized discourses within the sociolinguistic landscape of Indonesia.

The Interplay Between Local Identity, Modernization, and Multiculturalism

The study reveals a creative and evolving dynamic between local identity, modernization, and multiculturalism, highlighting how traditional Javanese practices coexist and interact seamlessly with contemporary cultural trends within the Wonomulyo community. Rather than experiencing a sharp divide between past and present, the community engages in a fluid process of identity negotiation in which cultural symbols, linguistic norms, and traditional values continue to find meaningful relevance in modern spaces. This fluidity demonstrates that local identity is not static; instead, it adapts, transforms, and repositions itself in response to social and technological change.

A striking example of this adaptive creativity is seen among local youth who incorporate Javanese expressions, humor, proverbs, and storytelling styles into TikTok and YouTube content. These digital productions often mix Javanese with Indonesian or English, creating hybrid forms that reflect both local heritage and global media aesthetics. Through these practices, young people engage in a subtle act of cultural preservation: they do not merely repeat tradition, but reinterpret it in ways that resonate with contemporary sensibilities. Their online creativity shows that tradition can be reimagined and revitalized rather than simply preserved in static forms. This illustrates that digital spaces, although often dominated by national and global languages, still offer potential avenues for sustaining local linguistic identity.

In addition, Wonomulyo's diverse population comprising Javanese, Mandar, Bugis, Toraja, and other ethnic groups creates a multicultural environment that fosters cross-linguistic tolerance, social harmony, and cultural exchange. Daily interactions in markets, schools, workplaces, religious gatherings, and neighborhood events reveal a high degree of linguistic accommodation, where speakers shift between languages depending on social context and interlocutor. Such interactions encourage mutual understanding and respect, preventing linguistic hierarchies from becoming rigid or exclusionary.

This inclusive sociolinguistic atmosphere aligns closely with (Parekh's 2000) theory of multicultural integration, which posits that diverse cultural groups can coexist peacefully when mutual recognition and respect are cultivated. In the case of Wonomulyo, multiculturalism not only coexists with local identity but enhances it, allowing Javanese speakers to express their cultural heritage while engaging confidently with a broader multilingual community. As a result, the town becomes an example of how modernization and multiculturalism, rather than threatening local languages, can enrich language practices and inspire creative forms of identity in an increasingly interconnected world.

Implications and Theoretical Reflections

The practical implications of this study highlight the urgent need for more systematic and coordinated efforts to sustain the Javanese language in Wonomulyo, especially as modernization and digital communication increasingly shape linguistic behavior. One crucial step is for local governments to integrate Javanese as part of the school curriculum, ensuring that children receive early and consistent exposure to the language through formal education. Beyond the classroom, community initiatives also play a vital role. Efforts such as producing digital educational content in Javanese whether in the form of short videos, storytelling series, or interactive learning materials can help reposition the language within contemporary media spaces that appeal to younger generations. Community-based activities, including cultural festivals, paribasan competitions, and etiquette classes (*unggah-ungguh*), provide meaningful spaces where cultural pride, intergenerational bonding, and linguistic appreciation can be strengthened. Additionally, promoting philosophical literacy within the community reinforces the fundamental understanding that language, identity, and existence are deeply interconnected; sustaining Javanese thus becomes an act of preserving cultural being, not merely maintaining a communication tool.

The theoretical implications of this research extend the discussion within sociolinguistics by demonstrating that language maintenance goes far beyond demographic survival or frequency of use. It also encompasses ontological and ethical dimensions, as language embodies cultural meaning, moral values, and collective consciousness. By incorporating semantic, hermeneutic, and ontological perspectives, this study shows how the existence of a language shapes ways of being and interacting within a community. Moreover, the findings reveal that migrant Javanese communities, such as those in Wonomulyo, develop distinctive patterns of language maintenance that differ from Javanese communities in their place of origin. These differences shed new light on how identity, adaptation, and cultural resilience operate in diasporic settings, contributing valuable insights to broader theories of language vitality, multilingualism, and cultural continuity.

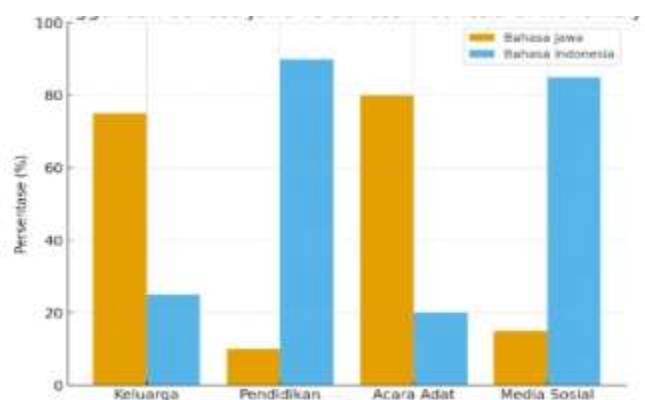


Figure 1. presents the percentage of Javanese versus Indonesian language use in Wonomulyo

Accordingly, the level of Javanese language existence in the social domain is as follows.

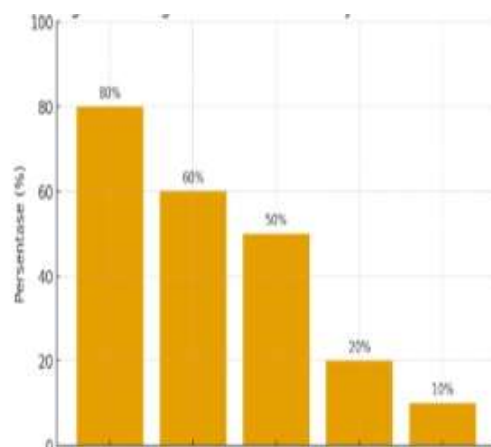


Figure 2. the level of Javanese language existence in the social domain is as follows

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Javanese language in Wonomulyo maintains a moderate–strong level of vitality despite sustained contact with Mandar and Bugis communities. However, rather than treating vitality as a stable condition, this study problematizes earlier assumptions that equate domain persistence with linguistic sustainability. Drawing on (Fishman, 2020) domain theory, Javanese remains dominant in family and ritual domains while being marginal in education and public spaces. Unlike (Permatasari, 2022), who interpret similar patterns as early indicators of language endangerment, the Wonomulyo case suggests that restricted domain use does not automatically signal decline when symbolic authority and cultural regulation remain strong. This finding challenges a domain-centric reading of language vitality by showing that interethnic negotiation can compensate for institutional marginalization.

From the perspective of Wardhaugh and Fuller’s framework on language and power, previous studies often imply that multicultural contact accelerates linguistic assimilation. In contrast, the Wonomulyo case reveals that multiculturalism can function as a stabilizing rather than erosive force when a language holds recognized symbolic capital. The persistence of *unggah-ungguh* norms illustrates how linguistic hierarchy operates as a cultural boundary marker that reinforces identity even under conditions of intensive interethnic interaction. This finding extends earlier work by introducing interethnic recognition not merely internal loyalty as a critical variable in minority language maintenance.

When interpreted through Giles et al.’s Ethnolinguistic Vitality Model (Ting & Teng, 2021), Javanese in Wonomulyo presents a paradox: high symbolic prestige within the community but low instrumental value in public and institutional domains. While (Kholidah, 2021) emphasizes the decisive role of schools in enhancing vitality, this study critically demonstrates that vitality can persist in the absence of institutional support, albeit in a fragile form. The heavy reliance on family-based transmission confirms (Nasrullah & Rahmawati, 2022) argument but also exposes its limitation: domestic transmission alone is insufficient to prevent gradual functional narrowing, particularly among youth facing mobility and modern lifestyle pressures.

Digital media use among younger speakers further complicates existing narratives. Whereas Astuti and (Astut & Pratiwi, 2021) frame digitalization primarily as a catalyst for language shift, the present study identifies a dual process. Indonesian dominates everyday digital communication, yet Javanese survives

through selective and performative uses, such as humor, ritual documentation, and identity signaling. This partial digital revitalization challenges the binary opposition between “digital shift” and “language maintenance” and suggests that digital spaces can serve as symbolic rather than functional domains of language use a dimension insufficiently explored in earlier studies.

Language shift among youth in Wonomulyo is therefore best understood as functional and ideological rather than substitutive. Unlike (Yani & Suradi 2025), who emphasize competence loss as the main driver of shift, this study demonstrates that language choice is deeply embedded in identity orientation. Indonesian indexes modernity and upward mobility, while Javanese indexes intimacy, respect, and moral order. This finding refines earlier explanations that prioritize policy and technology by foregrounding identity negotiation as a central mechanism of language choice.

Philosophically, this study advances previous interpretations by situating language persistence within dynamic meaning-making processes. Wittgenstein’s concept of language games is evident in the regulated use of *ngoko* and *krama*, but the Wonomulyo context reveals hybrid language games shaped by multicultural interaction an aspect absent from monolingual-centered analyses such as (Koeshandoyo, 2024). Heidegger’s notion of language as the “house of Being” is also extended: while (Sari & Lestari, 2022) restrict existential significance to native speakers, this study shows that Javanese acquires shared existential meaning in communal rituals involving non-Javanese participants, thereby functioning as a medium of intercultural cohesion.

From a Foucauldian perspective, the dominance of Indonesian in formal domains reflects institutionalized power relations. However, unlike (Kholidah, 2021) conclusion that policy dominance inevitably marginalizes local languages, this study demonstrates that cultural authority exercised through ritual leadership and communal norms enables symbolic resistance. Power, in this context, operates not only through regulation but also through locally legitimized cultural practices.

Synthesizing these findings, this study reconceptualizes hybridity beyond descriptive coexistence (Rukayah & Hartati, 2023) It proposes an operational model in which traditional domains sustain identity, modern domains facilitate adaptation, ritual practices consolidate symbolic authority, and digital media enable selective revitalization. This integrated model advances existing scholarship by linking sociolinguistic structure, philosophical meaning, and power relations within a single analytical framework.

Theoretically, this research deepens Fishman’s domain theory by incorporating interethnic negotiation, extends Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory by distinguishing symbolic and instrumental value, and operationalizes philosophical concepts as analytical tools rather than abstract narratives. Practically, the findings underscore the urgency of institutional reinforcement through local curriculum integration, community-driven cultural programs, strategic digital content production, and intercultural events that elevate Javanese values. By moving beyond single-factor explanations, this study offers a multi-layered interpretive model that more comprehensively explains the dynamics of Javanese language existence in a multicultural society.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Javanese language in Wonomulyo retains significant vitality within family, community, and cultural–ritual domains, where it functions as both a communicative resource and a marker of cultural identity, social values, and collective memory. Ritual practices such as *selamatan*, *kenduren*, and traditional arts continue to support intergenerational transmission; however, a functional shift is evident

among younger generations who increasingly favor Indonesian and mixed codes in educational and digital contexts. This shift is driven by modernization, globalization, and limited institutional support rather than by a complete loss of linguistic competence. Interpreted through Wittgenstein's concept of language games and Heidegger's notion of language as the "house of being," the findings indicate that the weakening of Javanese entails not only reduced usage but also a gradual transformation of cultural meaning and identity. Overall, the study highlights that the sustainability of Javanese in a multicultural setting depends on the interaction between symbolic value, intergenerational practice, and structural support across family, community, and institutional domains.

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