

## INTRODUCING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL = FADING AWAY AN ETHNIC LANGUAGE AMONG FUTURE YOUNG GENERATION

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### ABSTRACT

The Indonesian government mandates English classes in primary schools. On the other hand, it has an intention to preserve local languages. The presence of two additional lessons in the same school invites a certain problem. Through the questionnaire distributed randomly to 26 primary school parents whose children learn English and Javanese at school in 4 different cities such as Surabaya, Sidoarjo, Gresik, and Malang, it could be found out that many students got the competencies of lowering the usage of local language at home, switching codes, lowering competence in implementing Javanese script and constructing sentences, unwilling to watch Javanese news, lowering local culture appreciation, and lowering the usage of local language among peers. Furthermore, in the comparative study of English and Javanese learning, the students had a lower interest in competing for language, appreciating culture, and literacy in Javanese.

**Keywords:** Ethnic language, Code switching, Literacy, Culture, Mother tongue.

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### INTRODUCTION

In daily life, most Javanese people interact with others using their heritage language (HL), Javanese. They practice their HL with each other no matter where they are. They improve their speaking and listening skills by constantly practicing these skills. That kind of phenomenon does not line up with their writing and reading abilities. Their competence in HL reading and writing is very low. It is the impact of their absence on their reading and writing development in their HL [1]. Parents have a big role in improving those kinds of competencies. The children have much more time to interact with their parents at home. Parents can introduce the history, culture, and community of HL to their children as much as possible. Cultural recognition in learning HL is playing an important role in guiding learners to achieve proficiency similar to their predecessors [2]. That kind of effort helps the children develop themselves in learning their HL in four skills of language. The success of learning HL will be determined by the level of family awareness in deploying the HL to children. Family awareness, such as taking care of their children in delivering their ideas and other attitudes, is playing an important role in preserving HL. Moreover, the development of HL learning for children does not only depend on family influence. The institution where the children study has an important role in facilitating the children's learning to achieve their HL academically. The students are having their competence in using their HL taught by their people in their environment. The teachers' role in the classroom can develop the students' competencies in literacy to trace the standard or prestige variety.

Nevertheless, to adopt everyday life communication among people all around the globe, people need a language that enables them to deliver their intentions for any purpose. To anticipate that kind of thing, the people in Asia stimulate themselves by issuing the notion of Asian Free Trade Area (AFTA). To establish that kind of effort, people need to learn English as a lingua franca. It enables them to get in touch with other people in the world to fulfill their purposes, such as jobs, education, and many others [3].

Moreover, Indonesia is one of the Asian countries that feel the impact of adapting to AFTA. The Indonesian government, through the Department of National Education in 1994, cited in Aribowo in 2018 stated that teaching English can start in primary school. In delivering the lesson,

the teacher needs to emphasize vocabulary building, pronunciation practice, sentence building, listening, reading, and writing skills to enable the students to interact with other English users. On the other hand, the government needs to preserve the local languages to prevent them from declining. One of them is Javanese. The students prefer learning English to learning Javanese because of the need. The English language is present in gadgets and any social media platform as a lingua franca. The teacher needs to struggle with how to keep the development of the local language in academic and social life [4].

Wibawa and Nafalski in 2010 said that the Javanese lesson is not interesting for the students in Javanese schools. The students think that the lesson is irrelevant to the language they practice in daily life, especially for East Java learners. The content of the lesson is about the central Java dialect. It is very different from the East Java dialect. It results in unmotivated Javanese learners. To enhance such kinds of conditions, Wibawa and Nafalski in 2010 suggested an Intelligent Tutoring System to facilitate learners' learning the proper Javanese language. This kind of tool is completed by a natural dialog with the Artificial Javanese Intelligent Tutor (AJI-Tutor).

The environment plays an important role in educating children to learn Javanese. In the family, for example, parents do not pay attention to their children's competence in using proper Javanese in daily life. It results in the low quality of Javanese usage. In particular, the communication between young people and the elderly [5]. Moreover, the presence of newcomers in the environment leads the children to leave Javanese and use Bahasa Indonesia instead. It is causing the Javanese to fall further behind [6]. Quantitatively, Javanese is ranked eleventh among the languages in the world. It is used by 75.500.000 people. This kind of achievement does not reflect the quality of the language [7]. The influence of the globalization era on Javanese puts old fashion on the island. The people feel embarrassed using Javanese in their community [8]. Sumarlam, the professor of literature and art at the in-state University of Sebelas Maret, said that people nowadays tend to switch some Javanese words into English or Indonesian. It leads to the ruin of Javanese. It is cited in Yudhono in 2011.

From all the factors influencing the downgrade of Javanese usage among the Javanese people, the government needs to find some approaches to

improve students' competence in using Javanese in both school and the environment. To satisfy the aim of this study, the research questions are stated below.

1. How do the primary school students implement their Javanese language competence in their daily life?
2. How do primary school students get less attention to Javanese usage compared with English?

## METHOD

To gain the data, questionnaires were distributed to 26 parents of primary school students in four cities: Malang, Sidoarjo, Surabaya, and Gresik, randomly. Their children learned English and Javanese in their schools during the same period of time. The questionnaires are asking about gaining score in English and Javanese, using English at home, code-switching, enjoying cartoons, reading English short stories, composing Javanese, constructing Javanese sentences, watching Javanese news, watching a local play (Ludruk), and using Javanese among the children. Choosing parents as the respondents to meet the accuracy of the answers, parents are the agents who take control of the students both at home and at school. They know their children very well when using languages in the environment and at school. Parents commonly take control of their children's academic development. There were 26 respondents, comprised of 6-7 in each city. There were 2 schools that got involved in every city. It means that there were 3-4 parents who represented the sixth-grader parents in each school. The sixth graders are those who have learned sufficient material in Javanese and English. The data found was percentage based on the categories strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The findings were retrieved from the Google Drive application "Google forms." The questionnaire was delivered in Bahasa Indonesia to allow the participants to respond more easily to the statements. The responses to each question of the questionnaire were analyzed using mixed methods to answer the research questions and meet the goal of the study. The result of this study was dedicated to the teachers, parents, and pedagogical authorities for further actions.

## RESULTS

The questionnaires were distributed to 26 parents. It could be drawn up into a table of responses as a result. The table comprises 4 levels of quality: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree in percentage. The responses to the questionnaires can be seen in the Table 1 below.

## DISCUSSION

The data which were found from questionnaires were analyzed using a mixed-method approach. The author's opinion is also used to clarify the results. There are two questions that need to be answered in this research. Some comments describe the finding that the goal was met. The discussion can be seen below.

### Research question 1

How do the primary school students implement their Javanese language competence in their daily life?

The responses numbered 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 were used to answer the question above.

From the Table 2 above, it can be seen that 73% of respondents said that their children often use their ethnic language at home. It is a sign that their HL survives in the middle of globalization. Furthermore, 19% of 73% of respondents strongly stated that their students actively use their mother tongue for communication in their family. To preserve the local language, people can adapt the inward-looking factor. It involves using a mother tongue for communication among the members of the family.

Furthermore, 27% of respondents declared that their children do not often use their local language to interact with other members of the family in daily life. It means that more than one-fourth of the students discourage using their HL for the continuum. By declining the use of their mother tongue, they will develop a lack of vocabulary in their head. It causes a hindrance to using the language in everyday life. It enables the local language to go extinct [9].

Indeed, the use of Javanese at home by the students is good. 73% of the students practice it with the other members of the family. It means that they just use Ngoko. It is the ordinary language used among people with similar strata or age. On the other hand, 27% of the students do not speak Javanese at home. It is alarming for the survival of the ethnic language. That number has the potential to grow larger if the caregiver does not care about it.

To practice speaking, most of the students do not switch coding. It is proven by the parents' responses. 58% of them said that their children do not switch codes while practicing Javanese speaking with other people. Furthermore, 4% out of 58% of the respondents emphasized their children's competence in vocabulary building. It shows that most of them have sufficient vocabulary in their head. However, it contrasts with the fact that the students' score in Javanese is quite low. The students had difficulty recognizing the words and pronunciation uttered by the teachers. Utari in 2012 said that most students use their mother tongue in daily life, but the Javanese used in the classroom is different from the one they use. It results in the hindrance of the students learning Javanese.

On the other hand, 42% of respondents said that their children switch coding while practicing conversation with other people. It tends to decline the students' competence in speaking. The environment plays a big role in this case. It is in line with Subroto *et al.*'s statement in 2007 that the Javanese is great in the number of users but low in quality. It is a kind of alarm for the pedagogy of care-givers to better the method of teaching.

While practicing Javanese, 42% of students switched codes. It means that they lack a vocabulary list in their head. They do not have any words in Javanese to utter. They loaned the difficult words from Bahasa Indonesia. If it is growing larger and larger, the existence of the local language is facing a problem.

Table 1: Responses to the questionnaire

No.	Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Dissagree	Strongly disagree
1	My child's score in English is higher than in Javanese.	23%	54%	23%	0%
2	My child frequently uses Javanese every day at home.	19%	54%	27%	0%
3	In conversation, my child mixes Javanese and other languages.	0%	42%	54%	4%
4	My child loves enjoying Cartoon in English.	15%	46%	35%	4%
5	My child loves reading short stories in English.	12%	46%	31%	12%
6	My child is able to compose the Javanese script very well.	15%	42%	29%	12%
7	My child is able to construct sentences very well.	12%	46%	42%	0%
8	My child gets interested in watching Javanese news on tv.	3%	39%	42%	16%
9	My child loves to see "Ludruk" on tv or youtube.	3%	23%	62%	12%
10	My child uses Javanese to interact with other children of his age.	27%	58%	15%	0%

**Table 2: Response number 2 - The frequency of using local language at home**

No.	Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Dissagree	Strongly disagree
2	My child frequently uses Javanese every day at home.	19%	54%	27%	0%

**Table 3: Response number 3 - Switching Codes the Javanese and other languages**

No.	Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Dissagree	Strongly disagree
3	In conversation, my child mixes Javanese and other languages.	0%	42%	54%	4%

**Table 4: Response number 6 - Using Javanese scripts to compose**

No.	Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Dissagree	Strongly disagree
6	My child is able to compose the Javanese script very well.	15%	42%	29%	12%

**Table 5: Response number 7 - Constructing Javanese sentences**

No.	Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Dissagree	Strongly disagree
7	My child is able to construct sentences very well.	12%	46%	42%	0%

**Table 6: Response number 8 - Watching Javanese News**

No.	Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Dissagree	Strongly disagree
8	My child gets interested in watching Javanese news on tv.	3%	39%	42%	16%

**Table 7: Response number 9 - Watching Javanese Culture (Ludruk)**

No.	Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Dissagree	Strongly disagree
9	My child loves to see "Ludruk" on tv or youtube.	3%	23%	62%	12%

Javanese is a huge language in quality. It has its own script. But it is not realized by the young generation to preserve the valuable heritage [10]. This fact is shown by the response of the respondents. 41% of them stated that their children could not compose an essay using the Javanese script. This kind of phenomenon is worsened by 12% out of 41% of the respondents. They agreed that their children could not write a single sentence using the Javanese script.

**Table 8: Response number 10 -Using the Javanese Language among The Peers**

No.	Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Dissagree	Strongly disagree
10	My child uses Javanese to interact with other children of his age.	27%	58%	15%	0%

**Table 9: Response number 1 -Children scores on English and Javanese**

No.	Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Dissagree	Strongly disagree
1	My child's score in English is higher than in Javanese.	23%	54%	23%	0%

**Table 10: Response number 4 -Enjoying English Cartoons**

No.	Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Dissagree	Strongly disagree
4	My child loves enjoying Cartoon in English.	15%	46%	35%	4%

**Table 11: Response number 5 - reading English short stories**

No.	Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Dissagree	Strongly disagree
5	My child loves reading short stories in English.	12%	46%	31%	12%

Despite this, 57% of respondents agreed that their children can adapt to Javanese script when writing a composition. This response is emphasized by 15% out of 57% who agree that their children have very good capabilities in using Javanese script to write a composition. This type of finding indicates that the teacher must work very hard to literate their students in Javanese.

The Javanese script is heritage literature. 41% of the students do not recognize it. How can they preserve their mother tongue if they do not appreciate their literature? It determines that their awareness of preserving valuable literature is very low. It is alarming for the sustainability of our HL.

To construct sentences, the Javanese people need to know to whom they speak. It determines the type of grammar to adapt [4]. 58% of respondents agreed that their children are able to adapt to the grammar rule properly. This kind of fact is boosted by 12% out of 58% of the respondents by saying they strongly agree.

In contrast, 42% of respondents said that their children could not construct Javanese sentences properly. It is in line with Ratnasari and Jadmiko in 2018. They said that not all Javanese people can use Javanese grammar in the right manner. It put the Javanese language in perilous circumstances. It indicates that they do not learn their local language on the right path. This kind of condition leads the students to stay away from using their mother tongue. It could lead to the ethnic language going extinct.

The government tries very hard to preserve the ethnic languages before they become extinct. Javanese news is broadcast on television. The

dialect is adopted by the audience who live around the coverage area [11]. This kind of notion is supported by 42% of the respondents. They agreed that their children get interested in watching their HL news. It is supported by 3% out of 42% of the respondents by stating that their children love to watch Javanese news on television very much.

In contrast, 58% of the respondents declared that their children do not like to watch local language news on television. 16% out of 58% even stated that their children do not like watching Javanese news at all. Reading the news is a part of delivering ideas. Through reading, the students can get much more input. On the other hand, the students can copy the pronunciation and sentence construction delivered by the broadcaster.

The news is a product of writing. It is the form of reading text. It comprises grammar and vocabulary. If it is read by the broadcasters, the students also learn to listen. 42% of the students do not like watching Javanese news on TV or on YouTube. It shows that their eagerness to learn their mother tongue is very low. It hampers them from learning their local language more deeply. It leads them to leave their mother tongue behind, and it threatens their ability to sustain their mother tongue in the future.

The show, like a play in the theater or on YouTube, is a part of culture. It shows the creation of the people. Watching a play means learning the language. By watching a play, the students can learn how to learn sentence construction, intonation, expression, vocabulary, and listening [12]. Ludruk is a kind of play. It originated from Javanese culture. 74% of the respondents agreed that their children do not like watching Ludruk both offline nor online. This kind of declination is supported by 12% out of 74% of the respondents who strongly agree that their children do not like watching Ludruk at all. This means that 74% of the students do not have any interest in honoring their heritage culture. It can be inferred that it is an alarming condition that it is getting extinct.

On the other hand, 26% of the respondents proclaimed that their children like watching Ludruk both online and offline. It is highlighted by 3% out of 23% of respondents that they strongly believed that their children love watching Ludruk both online and offline. That number is just one-fourth of the total respondents who have the intention of preserving their ethnic culture for future generations.

Ludruk, as a form of Javanese play, needs to be preserved. The way to preserve it is by appreciating it. 74% of the students do not like to see Ludruk. That kind of percentage is very great. Almost two-thirds of the students do not honor their valuable heritage. It can make students move their lust to other cultures. It will make their eagerness to recognize their mother tongue fade away.

The outward-looking factor of using English is shown by students to practice their Javanese language in public places 85% of the respondents say that their children use Javanese for communication with other children. This agreement is supported by 27% out of 85% of respondents by stating they strongly agree. It indicates that Javanese is still used among the children. They used it for Ngoko type because it is the conversation among the people of the same ages.

On the other hand, 15% of respondents said that their children do not use the Javanese language to communicate with other children. This number is likely to increase in size if parents, teachers, and the environment do not care about the development of the Javanese language in society [13].

Using a language in daily life shows the effectiveness of the language in society [14]. 15% of the students do not practice their mother tongue with their peers. They use Bahasa Indonesia instead. This fact shows that the Javanese language is not the most favorable one among the young generation [15]. The number of students can grow larger if the

anticipation is not implemented. It leads to the extinction of the local language.

It could be said that the students' competence in some extents, such as lowering the usage of the local language at home, switching codes, lowering competence in implementing Javanese script and constructing sentences, being unwilling to watch Javanese news, lowering local cultural appreciation, and lowering the usage of the local language among peers, is putting the local language under threat [16]. It could lead to their HL being extinct in the future.

### Research question 2

How do the primary school students get less attention in Javanese usage compared with English?

The responses 1, 3, and 6 were used to satisfy the question above.

When the parents were asked about their children's scores in English and Javanese, 77% of the respondents said that their children's scores in English were higher than in Javanese. 23% out of 77% of the respondents strongly agree that their children love studying English more than Javanese [17]. It is proved by the comparison of the scores. From this phenomenon, the parents could see their children's choice by studying English harder for their future. It is in line with Seidlhofer in 2011. He said that by learning English, people hope to be able to use it for any purpose, such as a job, study, communication, and many others.

On the other hand, 23% of the participants said that their children's scores in Javanese are higher than in English. It seems that <1-4<sup>th</sup> of the students in primary school are still optimistic about developing their HL in the classroom [18]. However, it is alarming. The number of students who care about their local language is small [19]. It leads to the extinction of the language like what Mulyana in 2008 said that the competition of languages in one area could lead to the extinction of one of them.

From the phenomenon above, the teachers need to struggle with how to win the students' interest in learning Javanese [20]. They need to consider Jegede's statement in 2012 that to teach the local language, the three factors that teachers, parents, and the environment need to elaborate on to gain the optimum result of the teaching-learning process.

In the competition between two local content subjects, English and Javanese, the Javanese were in second position. The different scores between English and Javanese are quite sharp. It is 77%: 23%. It shows that Javanese is not a favorable language to learn [21]. It seems that learning the Javanese language causes them to be burdened and frustrated if the teacher does not create something interesting in the teaching-learning process [22].

The use of video or animation sounds interesting for the students. It seems that the students develop themselves to become autonomous [23]. They learn the language out of the classroom. It enables them to learn a real setting of a language such as humor, expressions, and many others such as Ratnasari and Jadmiko's suggestion in 2018. Moreover, 61% of the respondents said that their children love to see English cartoons. This kind of finding is emphasized by 12% out of 61.5% of respondents by saying that their children very much like to see English cartoons.

Therefore, 39% of the respondents said that their children do not like to see English cartoons. This response is supported by 4% out of 39% of the respondents by saying that their children do not like seeing English cartoons at all. Nevertheless, some portions of the attention toward the development of English outside the classroom are greater than others. The Javanese teachers need to copy the method used by English teachers both inside and outside the classroom [24].

Culture is the creation of people in the form of action or thought [25]. Ludruk and cartoons are part of our culture. People can learn English and Javanese by watching them [26]. They are the authentic materials. 25% of the students like to watch Ludruk. It is much lower compared with watching Cartoon 61%. It seems that Ludruk does not interest the students' eagerness to see.

The short story is a part of literature. Both language and literature are inseparable [27]. These are two kinds of things that support each other. To succeed in learning a language, students need to learn the language through literature [28]. 58% of the respondents said that their children love to read English short stories. From that number, 12% of the respondents said that their children love to read English short stories very much. It seems that most of the students love to learn English.

On the other side, 43% of the respondents stated that their children do not like reading English storybooks. It is emphasized by 12% out of 43% of respondents. They said that their children do not like reading English short stories at all. This kind of phenomenon can be triggered by some factors, like a lack of vocabulary and interest. Both reading and vocabulary are inseparable. One is completing the other [29].

Moreover, from the two comparisons between agree and disagree, 58% of the respondents declared that their children love to read English short stories. It reflects the success of teaching English by leading the students to be autonomous. This kind of success can be copied by Javanese teachers to better the students' interest in reading literature [30].

Reading is the source for learning languages [31]. The comparison of reading English short stories and watching local language news is 58%: 42%. It puts watching local language news in the second position. It is <50%. The level of Javanese literacy interest is still low. It will influence the success of the students in learning the local language [32].

It could be deduced that the students have a lower interest in competing for language, appreciating culture, and literacy in Javanese compared with in English. It is very important to create something interesting for the teaching-learning process of Javanese [33].

#### Ideas for improvement

To teach Javanese, teachers need to consider some areas, like lowering the usage of the local language at home, switching codes, lowering competence in implementing Javanese script and constructing sentences, being unwilling to watch Javanese news, lowering local cultural appreciation, and lowering the usage of the local language among peers [34]. It is a method for improving the results of primary school Javanese language study [35]. In engaging in the teaching-learning process, teachers need to learn why students have less interest in competing for language, appreciating culture, and literacy in Javanese compared with in English [36]. With the recent development of technology, teaching languages could be enhanced [37]. Teachers can facilitate their students' learning languages by providing materials and methods from the internet [38]. Teachers benefit from using recent findings from studies in the classroom by adapting them [39]. Moreover, other researchers can incorporate some of the findings into their studies to add a different point of view.

#### CONCLUSION

In the era of globalization, parents, teachers, and the environment all need to take part in bettering students' ability to learn Javanese. Some competencies, like lowering the usage of the local language at home, switching codes, lowering competence in implementing Javanese script, and constructing sentences, being unwilling to watch Javanese news, lowering local cultural appreciation, and lowering the usage of the local language among peers, need to be fixed. Moreover, the students also have a lower interest in competing for language, appreciating culture, and literacy in Javanese compared with in English. To keep the local

language alive, the pedagogical care-givers need to change those kinds of defects.

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