

Javanese Language and Cultural Identity in Indonesian Local Curriculum

Mr. Hastangka (Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia)

This paper outlines the situation of the Javanese language, which is in danger of eventual extinction due to diminishing numbers of speakers and improper methodologies at schools. The younger generation of speakers is unable to navigate the more formal registers of the language (krama) and lack proficiency in writing the script. The preservation of Javanese is essential for the inherent values it promotes. For example, in Javanese, which values the family unit, there is no word for divorce.

In schools on Java, although the national curriculum has room for local content and language, this study finds that only an hour per week on average is spent on the Javanese language. Further, teachers deliver these lessons in Indonesian or other languages, the methodology is focused on memorizing and students have difficulties following due to lack of resources such as dictionaries. There is a need to better organize the curriculum, and to better recruit teachers. Many existing teachers do not know Javanese well as they were schooled elsewhere. In the community, the perception of Javanese is not positive. It is seen as a language for old people, and other languages, such as English, are valued more. Javanese is not used much in the media, nor are there many writers of Javanese books.

This study has generated an action plan for the revitalization of Javanese and recommends policy reform and financial support at the government level, teacher training and development of learning materials at the school level, and the development of language centers and websites/media at the community level. To this effect, the Educational district office has also developed software that translates Roman script into Javanese script, to be used as a learning resource. This plan will be submitted to education institution with the hope that a stronger language identity will address the larger national identity. .