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Religiousness in Javanese Language and Culture Communication: A Sociopragmatic Study in Java Island, Indonesia

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Abstract

This research aims to explore religious aspects in the Javanese language through a sociopragmatic approach, focusing on the regions of Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta in Java Island. The study examines how religious elements are reflected in the daily use of the Javanese language, both in spoken and written forms. The research methods used include observation, interviews, and document analysis to collect comprehensive data. The study reveals that religious aspects in the Javanese language not only reflect the beliefs and religious practices of the Javanese people but also play a crucial role in shaping social interactions and language structure. Religious elements are evident in various contexts, such as the use of specific terms in formal and informal communication, the expression of prayers or gratitude, and the use of language as a medium in religious rituals. The findings indicate that the Javanese language possesses interconnected social and spiritual functions, enriching the understanding of the relationship between language and culture. This research also contributes to sociolinguistic and pragmatic studies, particularly in understanding the role of language as a reflection of deeply rooted religious values in society. Consequently, this research opens further discussions on the preservation of the Javanese language as a cultural heritage rich in religious values.

Keywords: Java Island, Javanese Language, Oral and Written Discourse, Religious, Sociopragmatics

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Introduction

The Javanese language is one of Indonesia's regional languages rich in cultural and religious values (Siregar, 2021). In Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta, Javanese serves not only as a communication tool but also as a medium for expressing religious values (Wulandari & Nurdianti, 2023). Both in oral and written traditions, Javanese is often used to convey prayers, chants, or teachings imbued with spiritual values (Pamungkas et al., 2024). The language also acts as a bridge to maintain the relationship between humans and the Creator through distinctive religious expressions. For instance, terms like "ngaturaken" or "nyuwun pangestu" reflect deep reverence toward God and others. Additionally, Javanese embodies life philosophies found in proverbs and wise sayings, such as "urip iku urup," which teaches the importance of living a life that benefits others. Thus, Javanese functions not only as a daily communication tool but also plays a vital role in conveying the religious values and life philosophies of the Javanese people. Its existence symbolizes cultural identity while reflecting the spiritual wealth of the community.

The Javanese language contains an abundance of vocabulary, expressions, and linguistic forms that reflect religious aspects (Sumbulah et al., 2022). This is evident in various traditions and spiritual practices of Javanese society. Javanese features numerous words and terms used specifically in religious and spiritual contexts (Suroso & Rohmadi, 2023). For example, the words "donga" (prayer), "puja" (praise), and "slametan" (thanksgiving ceremony) illustrate not only spiritual concepts but also carry profound meanings tied to the beliefs and religious practices of the Javanese people. Javanese is frequently employed in expressions and mantras recited during traditional ceremonies or religious rituals (Muharrom et al., 2023). These mantras often possess distinctive linguistic structures rich in symbolism. For instance, mantras in the "Ruwatan" ceremony are used to cleanse oneself from misfortune, while those in "Tirakatan" seek blessings. In various Javanese traditional ceremonies, such as weddings, births, and funerals, Javanese is extensively used. These ceremonies are typically initiated with prayers and mantras in Javanese, regarded as sacred. The language used in such contexts is often formal and imbued with reverence. Many religious texts in Javanese tradition are written in the Javanese language, including *Serat Wedhatama*, *Serat Centhini*, and the works of Sunan Kalijaga (Syihabuddin et al., 2024). These texts not only convey moral and spiritual teachings but also contain deep and complex life philosophies, presented in beautiful and meaningful language. In Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) across Java, religious teachings are frequently delivered in Javanese. Classic Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*) studied in *pesantren* are often translated or accompanied by explanations in Javanese, facilitating students'

understanding of religious teachings. Javanese is used to explain theological concepts, Islamic law, and mysticism (tasawuf). In daily life, many Javanese people continue to use Javanese in their personal prayers. Prayers before meals, before sleep, or when starting work are often recited in Javanese. This highlights how Javanese remains an integral part of everyday spiritual life. Thus, the Javanese language serves not only as a means of communication but also as an essential medium for preserving and transmitting the spiritual traditions and religious values of Javanese society. Its use in various religious aspects underscores the continued relevance and significance of the Javanese language in spiritual life today.

Kejawen is a belief system widely embraced by the Javanese people, reflecting the complex interaction between culture and religion (Soenjoto, 2022). As a syncretic faith, Kejawen blends elements of animism, Hindu-Buddhism, and Islam (Al Amin et al., 2020). Animism, the indigenous belief of the Javanese, venerates ancestral spirits and natural forces (Aragon, 2021). This animistic influence is evident in various traditional ceremonies and rituals aimed at maintaining harmony with nature and seeking blessings from ancestral spirits (Allo et al., 2024). Hindu and Buddhist influences began entering Java in the first century CE and continued to flourish until the 15th century, contributing teachings on karma, reincarnation, and meditation that became integral to Kejawen. Islam began to spread in Java during the 15th century, influencing Kejawen with monotheistic concepts and Islamic practices (Idham, 2021). However, in Kejawen, Islam is applied flexibly, often adapted to local customs and traditions. The Javanese language plays a crucial role in expressing spiritual concepts within Kejawen. One of the key concepts is harmony with nature (*keseimbangan alam*), where humans are seen as part of the universe, required to live in balance with nature (Kristina, 2021). This belief is frequently conveyed through Javanese proverbs such as "*urip iku sawang sinawang*" (life is about perceiving and being perceived), highlighting the importance of understanding and respecting the surrounding environment and life. Traditional ceremonies like Slametan and Ruwatan exemplify efforts to maintain harmony with nature and ancestral spirits, using Javanese prayers and mantras. Another central concept is wisdom of life (*kebijaksanaan hidup*). Kejawen imparts life wisdom passed down through generations via *wayang* (shadow puppet stories), *tembang* (songs), and *serat* (ancient manuscripts). The Javanese language is a medium for conveying moral values and philosophies of life, such as "*sabdo pandito ratu*" (the words of a wise man are akin to those of a king). *Serat Wedhatama*, an essential Kejawen text written in Javanese, teaches ethical and philosophical lessons on life. The final concept is spiritual power (*kekuatan spiritual*). In Kejawen, spiritual strength is attained through meditation, *tirakat* (fasting and

ascetic practices), and prayer (Sartini, 2021). The Javanese language is used in numerous rituals and spiritual practices to seek strength and protection from God and ancestral spirits. Javanese mantras, such as "mantra kekebalan" (invulnerability mantra) or "mantra keberkahan" (blessing mantra), are believed to hold magical power, granting protection or fortune when recited sincerely and correctly. Kejawen reflects the rich cultural and religious heritage of Java, demonstrating how local traditions interact and merge with external influences such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam (Ruslan et al., 2024). The Javanese language serves as a vital medium for expressing Kejawen's spiritual concepts, preserving harmony with nature, spreading life wisdom, and nurturing spiritual power. Through the use of language, Kejawen's teachings and values remain vibrant and relevant in the lives of the Javanese people today.

Islam has been the majority religion in Java for centuries, and its influence is clearly reflected in the Javanese language. As Islam spread across Java, numerous terms and concepts from Arabic were adopted into Javanese (Tohe, 2021). Words such as "iman" (faith), "sholat" (prayer), and "puasa" (fasting) have become part of the everyday vocabulary of the Javanese people. This demonstrates how religious terms from Arabic have been integrated into Javanese language and culture. In addition to direct borrowings, many Arabic terms underwent phonetic changes to better suit the Javanese tongue. For example, "zakāt" became "zakat", "hajj" turned into "haji", and "ṣalāh" evolved into "sholat". Many religious texts in Javanese are translations or adaptations of classical Islamic literature (Zuhri, 2022). *Serat Wirid Hidayat Jati*, a work by Sunan Kalijaga, is one example of a Javanese religious text containing Islamic teachings. Translations of the Qur'an into Javanese, such as *Tafsir Tarjuman Al-Mustafid*, enrich the language and culture of Java with Islamic values. In *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), Javanese is often used as the medium of instruction for studying *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts) written in Arabic. Students learn Islamic jurisprudence, Qur'anic exegesis, and hadith through explanations delivered in Javanese to facilitate comprehension. During religious rituals such as *pengajian* (Islamic study gatherings), *tahlilan* (prayer recitations for the deceased), and *selamatan* (thanksgiving ceremonies), Javanese is used to offer prayers and convey Islamic values to the community (Rusmana, et al., 2024). Prayers like "donga slametan" (thanksgiving prayer) and "donga tahlil" (prayers during tahlilan) are often recited in Javanese, interspersed with Arabic terms. Islam has also influenced Javanese literature and arts, including *tembang* (songs), *wayang* (shadow puppet theater), and *serat* (ancient manuscripts). For example, *Serat Centhini*, a renowned Javanese literary work rich in Islamic teachings and values, narrates the spiritual journey and religious

education of a santri (student of Islam). Wayang kulit, a traditional Javanese performance art, incorporates stories infused with Islamic values, while still retaining older Hindu-Buddhist elements. The influence of Islam on the Javanese language reflects a profound and ongoing process of cultural assimilation (Afandi, 2023). The adoption of Arabic terms, the translation of religious texts, the use of Javanese in religious education and rituals, and the impact on literature and art all highlight how Islam has enriched and broadened the cultural horizons of Java. This integration not only strengthens the religious identity of the Javanese people but also preserves the Javanese language as a vital medium in their spiritual and cultural lives.

The Javanese language encompasses several distinct dialects, such as the Banyumasan dialect, the Surakarta dialect, and the Yogyakarta dialect. Each dialect carries unique characteristics in expressing religious aspects, and despite differences, the essence of religious messages remains preserved and understood by all Javanese speakers (Saddhono & Hartanto, 2021). The Yogyakarta dialect, often referred to as "Ngoko Alus," is known for its refinement and formality. This dialect is frequently used in polite and formal contexts, especially during traditional ceremonies and religious events (Udasmoro et al., 2023). For instance, in prayers and Islamic study gatherings (pengajian), the use of words such as "panjenengan" (you – polite) and "nderek" (to follow – polite) reflects a high level of politeness and respect. In traditional ceremonies like Sekaten (the commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday), the language used is highly formal and reverent, embodying noble Islamic values. Javanese tembang (songs) performed during religious ceremonies often employ the Yogyakarta dialect to create a solemn and sacred atmosphere. The Surakarta dialect, or Basa Krama, is similarly recognized for its refinement, closely resembling the Yogyakarta dialect, though differing in word choices and intonation. In religious contexts, such as traditional Javanese weddings, prayers and advice are often delivered in the Surakarta dialect to evoke formality and reverence. In rituals like Tedhak Siten (a child's first steps on the ground), the use of the refined Surakarta dialect enhances the sacredness and gravity of the occasion. Javanese manuscripts written in Surakarta, such as Serat Wedhatama, employ highly polished language to convey moral and spiritual teachings. The Banyumasan dialect, or Ngapak, is known for its straightforwardness and its closeness to the everyday speech of the people (Heriyanti & Ma'ruf, 2021). In religious contexts, words like "kowe" (you) and "aku" (I) are commonly used in daily conversations and informal religious settings. In Islamic study sessions in the Banyumas region, religious lectures are often delivered in plain and direct language, making them easier for the general public to grasp. During rituals like Slametan or Kenduren (thanksgiving ceremonies), the Banyumasan

dialect is used in prayers and advice, fostering a warm and grounded atmosphere. Despite the dialectal differences in Javanese, the core of religious messages remains intact and comprehensible to all Javanese speakers. Each dialect brings its own flavor to the expression of religious aspects, reflecting the cultural and linguistic diversity within Javanese society. The refined and formal Yogyakarta and Surakarta dialects lend a solemn tone to religious ceremonies, while the straightforward Banyumasan dialect ensures that religious teachings are accessible and relatable to the community. This illustrates the richness of the Javanese language in conveying profound spiritual and religious values.

The Javanese language plays a vital role as the medium of instruction in many Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and educational institutions that teach religious values. The use of Javanese in religious and philosophical education helps preserve Javanese cultural and spiritual values (Sobaya et al., 2023). In numerous *pesantren* across Java, Javanese serves as the primary language for studying classical Islamic texts written in Arabic. Students (*santri*) are taught to understand Islamic teachings through Javanese explanations, facilitating their comprehension of complex concepts. Classical Islamic texts, known as *kitab kuning* (yellow books), such as Quranic interpretations (*tafsir*), *hadith*, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and mysticism (*tasawuf*), are often translated or annotated in Javanese. This includes works like *Fathul Mu'in* and *Sullam Taufiq*, which have been translated into Javanese to aid understanding. In many Javanese schools, Javanese is taught as a compulsory subject. These lessons not only cover language but also the cultural and religious values embedded in classical Javanese texts. Classical texts such as *Serat Centhini* and *Serat Wedhatama* remain part of the curriculum, guiding students in understanding Javanese religious and philosophical values. *Serat Centhini*, for instance, contains rich moral and spiritual teachings essential for character development. It is one of the most comprehensive works of Javanese literature, encompassing various aspects of life, including religious teachings, philosophy, and customs. Written in the form of *tembang* (Javanese poetry), this text is often used as teaching material in *pesantren* to impart religious and cultural values. Its stories provide deep insights into leading a spiritual life in accordance with Islamic and Javanese values. *Serat Wedhatama*, authored by KGPAA Mangkunegara IV, focuses on moral and spiritual teachings. This work conveys wisdom and ethics through refined and beautiful language. In *pesantren* and schools, *Serat Wedhatama* is used to instill wisdom and moral values in students, fostering good character and a deeper understanding of religious principles. The use of Javanese in religious education plays a crucial role in preserving Javanese culture and religious values. Through this language, religious teachings and life philosophies passed down from

generation to generation remain vibrant and relevant. Javanese as a medium of instruction sustains Javanese cultural identity while enriching religious understanding among the younger generation. By learning Javanese and classical texts, students not only acquire linguistic skills but also absorb ethical, moral, and spiritual values. This contributes to character building and a deeper appreciation of religious life. Pesantren and schools play an essential role in ensuring that these teachings are delivered in a manner that is accessible and meaningful to the younger generation. Javanese serves as an important tool in preserving and teaching religious values to the youth. Through its use in pesantren, schools, and the study of classical texts like *Serat Centhini* and *Serat Wedhatama*, Javanese ensures that the rich spiritual teachings and life philosophies remain relevant and comprehensible to future generations. This not only safeguards Javanese cultural heritage but also enriches the spiritual life of Javanese society.

This study aims to understand how religious aspects in the Javanese language are expressed and preserved through a sociopragmatic approach. The sociopragmatic approach will be used to analyze how language is employed in social contexts and how religious meanings are maintained in everyday interactions. By understanding these dynamics, this research is expected to provide deeper insights into the role of the Javanese language in the religious life of communities in Java, particularly in Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta.

Methodology

A qualitative approach is employed in this study, using a sociopragmatic method as the analytical framework. The data collection for this study includes Direct observation in the community environments of three provinces: Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta. The analysis aims to understand the use of vocabulary, sentence structure, and expressions that carry religious meaning. These documents are obtained from libraries, pesantren, and personal collections of religious figures. The participants in this study include various community groups from Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta, who are actively involved in religious activities.

Results and Discussion

The Use of Javanese in Religious Contexts

Javanese is used in various religious contexts, ranging from daily prayers, traditional rituals, to major religious ceremonies such as Sekaten and Grebeg. The use of Javanese in these contexts often showcases distinct choices of words, expressions,

and sentence structures laden with religious meaning (Wulandari & Nurdianti, 2023). Daily prayers are a common practice among the Javanese community. Prayer is an integral part of their religious life (Pamungkas et al., 2024). In daily prayers, Javanese is used to convey requests, gratitude, and hopes to God. The use of Javanese in prayer reflects distinct word choices and expressions filled with politeness and respect (Sumbulah et al., 2022). For example: Morning and Evening Prayers, which are recited in the morning and evening, often use the refined and respectful Javanese Krama language form. The sentences in these prayers are typically short yet rich in religious meaning, such as "Mugi Gusti paring berkah lan kaslametan" (May God grant blessings and safety). Another example is Prayers at Family Events, where in events like tahlilan or selamatan, prayers are often led by a religious leader or an elder family member. These prayers use Javanese rich in religious terms and traditions, such as "ngaturaken sembah nuwun" (expressing gratitude) and "nyuwun pangapunten" (asking for forgiveness).

Traditional rituals are a tangible manifestation of the integration between traditional beliefs and formal religions. Javanese is used in various traditional rituals to express deep religious meanings. One example of a traditional ritual that uses Javanese is Ruwatan, a ceremony performed to cleanse oneself from bad luck. The Javanese language used in Ruwatan often consists of mantras and specific prayers believed to possess spiritual power (Muharrom et al., 2023). For instance, "Kersaning Hyang Widhi" (by the will of God Almighty). Another traditional ritual is Tingkeban, a ceremony for pregnant women who reach seven months of pregnancy. In this ceremony, Javanese are used to convey prayers for the safety of both the mother and the baby. These prayers are typically delivered by a midwife or local religious figure using Javanese Krama to show respect and the sacredness of the ceremony.

Major religious ceremonies such as Sekaten and Grebeg are significant events in the religious calendar of the Javanese community. The Javanese language used in these ceremonies reflects the richness of tradition and religious values (Suroso & Rohmadi, 2023). Sekaten is a ceremony celebrated to commemorate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Javanese is used in various parts of the event, ranging from official announcements, prayers, to tembang (songs) accompanying the gamelan music. For instance, tembangs like "Ilir-ilir" contain moral and religious messages. Grebeg is a celebration held to mark important Islamic holidays such as Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, and the Prophet's birthday. Javanese is used in the processions and prayers recited during the ceremony. For example, prayers delivered by the Sultan or royal officials use Javanese with great respect and politeness, such as "Pangeran paring rahayu lan berkah" (May God grant safety and blessings).

Javanese is also used in religious teachings at Javanese pesantren (Islamic boarding schools). Ancient texts written in Javanese often serve as primary teaching materials (Zuhri, 2022). For instance, the Kitab Primbon is a book that contains predictions and life guidelines based on the calculation of days, months, and years in the Javanese calendar. The Javanese used in this text is filled with symbolism and religious terminology. Another example is the Serat Wedhatama, a text that contains teachings on morals and ethics, written by Mangkunegara IV. The Javanese language in this text uses a high level of language (*krama inggil*) to convey respect and the nobility of its teachings.

The use of Javanese in religious contexts often reveals distinct characteristics in sentence structure and word choices (Putro et al., 2021). One of these characteristics is *Tingkat Tutur* (levels of speech). Javanese has various levels of speech (*ngoko*, *madya*, *krama*) that are used according to the context and the person being addressed. In religious contexts, the *krama* and *krama inggil* levels are often used to show respect and sacredness. Another distinguishing feature is the use of specific expressions. Javanese has many special expressions used in prayers and religious rituals, such as "*mugi-mugi*" (hopefully), "*dumateng*" (to), and "*ingkang Maha Agung*" (The Most Glorious).

Javanese plays an important role in religious contexts, including daily prayers, traditional rituals, and major religious ceremonies. The use of Javanese in these contexts not only showcases the cultural and religious richness of the Javanese community but also reflects how this language serves as a medium to convey spiritual values and preserve religious traditions passed down through generations. Through a sociopragmatic analysis, this study aims to reveal the depth of meaning and the use of Javanese in the religious life of the community in Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta.

The Influence of Kejawen Belief and Islam

The Javanese community in the provinces of Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta has religious traditions influenced by both Kejawen (Javanese mysticism) and Islam. The influence of these two belief systems is clearly reflected in the use of the Javanese language, both in prayers, mantras, and in traditional ceremonies and religious rituals.

Kejawen is a belief system that combines elements of animism, Hindu-Buddhism, and Islam, creating a unique religious tradition (Al Amin et al., 2020). Kejawen has various rituals and practices that use the Javanese language as the primary medium to convey spiritual values and religious meanings. The Javanese

language in Kejawen mantras and prayers often uses expressions rich in symbolism (Pamungkas et al., 2024). For example, in the mantra "Tirta Kamandanu" (the sacred water of Kamandanu), the term "tirta" (water) carries the meaning of purity and spiritual cleansing. Kejawen prayers are often delivered in Javanese Kawi (Old Javanese), which enhances the sacredness and mystery of the ritual. An example of a prayer like "Manunggaling Kawula Gusti," meaning the unity of the servant with God, reflects the mystical concept within Kejawen. In traditional rituals such as "Tingkeban" (a ceremony for a seven-month pregnancy) or "Tedhak Siten" (a ceremony when a child first steps on the ground), Javanese is used to express prayers and hopes for safety and blessings. For example, "Mugi rahayu lan slamet" (may you be safe and prosperous). The "Ruwatan" ceremony, aimed at removing bad luck, also often uses mantras in Javanese that blend elements of Hindu-Buddhism and Kejawen.

Islam, which is the majority religion in Java, has had a significant influence on the Javanese language and culture (Tohe, 2021). Arabic terms and Islamic concepts have been adapted into Javanese, creating a rich fusion of local traditions and Islamic teachings. Many Arabic terms have been absorbed into the Javanese language, especially in religious contexts. Examples include "sholat" (prayer), "puasa" (fasting), and "ngaji" (reciting the Quran). The use of these terms demonstrates the deep integration of the Javanese language with Islamic teachings. Islamic prayers spoken in Javanese often include Arabic words that are adopted and adjusted to the structure of the Javanese language. For example, the prayer "mugi-mugi paring rahmat lan berkah" (may Allah grant mercy and blessings). Major religious ceremonies such as Maulid Nabi, Idul Fitri, and Idul Adha in Java are often blended with Javanese cultural elements. For example, during the Sekaten celebration, Javanese gamelan music is played, and Javanese songs praising the Prophet Muhammad SAW are sung. The "Grebeg" procession, held in Yogyakarta and Surakarta during major Islamic holidays, uses Javanese language in official speeches and prayers. The Sultan or royal officials deliver prayers in Javanese mixed with Arabic terms, showing respect for both Islamic traditions and Javanese culture.

Javanese society often blends elements of Kejawen and Islam in daily life. The use of the Javanese language in everyday religious practices reflects this syncretism (Ajie et al., 2023). In daily prayers, people often mix Javanese and Arabic. For example, "Bismillah, mugi Gusti Allah paring berkah" (In the name of Allah, may God grant blessings). In religious study sessions or tahlilan (memorial prayers), the recitation of prayers and dhikr is done in Arabic, but the explanations are given in Javanese to ensure a deeper understanding. Expressions such as "Alhamdulillah" (praise be to God) and "InshaAllah" (if Allah wills) are often used in everyday conversation, but

with a Javanese introduction, such as "Alhamdulillah, kula sehat-sehat" (Alhamdulillah, I am in good health). Javanese is used to explain Islamic concepts to children and the younger generation, ensuring that religious teachings are well understood within the local cultural context.

The influence of Kejawen beliefs and Islam on the Javanese language is highly significant, creating a unique and rich blend of local traditions and religious teachings. In a religious context, Javanese functions not only as a tool for communication but also as a medium for conveying spiritual values and preserving cultural heritage passed down through generations. This research demonstrates how the Javanese community integrates elements of Kejawen and Islam in their language and religious practices, creating a distinctive form of religiosity deeply rooted in local culture.

The Role of the Javanese Language in Religious Education and Learning

In schools and pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta, Javanese is often used as the medium of instruction for religious teachings. Ancient texts written in Old Javanese or Middle Javanese are still taught to understand the religious teachings and philosophy of the Javanese people. This demonstrates that Javanese plays an important role in preserving and imparting religious values to the younger generation.

Pesantren is a traditional Islamic educational institution in Java that combines religious education with local culture (Isbah, 2020). In pesantren, Javanese is used in various aspects of religious teaching (Gumelar & Saddhono, 2024). Classical Islamic texts, such as Tafsir Al-Jalalayn or other Kitab Kuning (yellow books), are often taught using Javanese as the language of instruction. For instance, the Tafsir Al-Jalalayn is translated and explained in Javanese to help students (santri) better understand its content. The use of Javanese to explain these texts helps link Islamic teachings with the local cultural context, making them more relevant and easier for the students to grasp. Some pesantren also use texts written in Old Javanese or Middle Javanese to teach moral values and ethics. Books like Serat Wedhatama and Serat Wulangreh contain teachings rich in life philosophy and morality. The Serat Wedhatama, for example, imparts wisdom and good manners through songs and advice that remain relevant to modern life. This text is often taught through reading and understanding the texts, followed by discussions of their meanings in Javanese.

In schools in Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta, Javanese is also included in the curriculum as a mandatory subject. This is part of the context of teaching religion and cultural values (Wulandari & Nurdianti, 2023; Saputra et al., 2024). In Islamic Religious Education classes, Javanese is often used to explain basic Islamic concepts.

For example, teachers may explain the pillars of Islam and the pillars of faith in Javanese to make it easier for students to understand. Stories from the lives of the prophets and Islamic history are also told in Javanese, helping students connect religious values with their own culture and traditions. Javanese is used to teach values related to religion and tradition, such as respect for parents (*unggah-ungguh*), mutual cooperation (*gotong-royong*), and community togetherness. These lessons are often delivered through folktales, songs, and proverbs, which are rich in meaning and moral teachings.

Javanese plays a crucial role in preserving religious values passed down from generation to generation (Aristiyanto et al., 2023). In religious ceremonies such as *tahlilan*, study groups, and *selamatan*, Javanese is used to convey prayers and advice. This helps maintain the authenticity of traditions and strengthen religious and cultural identity. For instance, during *tahlilan* ceremonies, prayers and *dhikr* are often recited in Javanese, creating a solemn atmosphere filled with religious significance. Traditional songs (*tembang*) and Javanese literature containing religious and moral teachings are taught in schools and *pesantren*. For example, the *Macapat* song is used to teach about life and religious teachings through songs and poems filled with meaning. Javanese literature such as *Serat Centhini* and *Serat Wulangreh* contains life advice and spiritual teachings that are taught to students to enrich their knowledge of religious and cultural values.

Javanese is not only taught in formal educational institutions but also used in everyday life as a means to apply and internalize religious teachings and moral values (Rohmadi et al., 2023). Religious expressions in Javanese, such as "*alhamdulillah*" (praise be to God), "*insya Allah*" (if God wills), and "*mugi-mugi*" (hopefully), are frequently used in daily conversations. This demonstrates how Javanese helps maintain religious awareness in everyday life. Parents in Java often teach prayers and religious stories to their children in Javanese. This helps children understand and internalize religious values from an early age. The tradition of storytelling in Javanese, including stories from Islamic history and local legends, helps instill moral and religious values in children.

Dialect Variations and Their Influence on Religious Meaning in Javanese

Javanese has several dialects that vary across regions, such as the dialects of Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta. These variations influence religious expressions in Javanese, in terms of word choice, sentence structure, and levels of formality. However, the core of the religious message remains preserved and consistent across these dialects. For instance, in Central Java, the Javanese language

tends to be more formal and respectful, with a strong emphasis on etiquette, while in East Java, Javanese is used in a more flexible and dynamic manner. Despite these differences, the essence of the religious message remains intact across these dialects.

The Central Javanese dialect is known for its formal and polite usage. The Javanese language in this region tends to employ *krama* (polite speech) and *krama inggil* (very polite speech), especially in religious contexts and traditional ceremonies (Udasmoro et al., 2023). Prayers and mantras in the Central Javanese dialect are often delivered using *krama* to convey respect and sanctity. For example, in the prayer "Mugi Gusti paring berkah lan rahayu" (May God grant blessings and safety), the use of words like "mugi" and "paring" reflects a high level of politeness. Traditional ceremonies such as "Tingkeban" and "Tedhak Siten" use *krama* to express prayers and hopes, enhancing the religious and sacred atmosphere. Religious expressions in the Central Javanese dialect, such as "nyuwun pangapunten" (asking for forgiveness) and "atur sembah nuwun" (expressing gratitude), reflect a high level of courtesy and respect. In gatherings like *pengajian* (Islamic study) and *tahlilan*, *krama* is used to recite prayers and *dhikr*, creating a solemn and respectful atmosphere.

The Yogyakarta dialect also uses Javanese *krama*, but with distinctive local variations. Javanese in Yogyakarta is known for its refinement and politeness, as well as its richness in religious and philosophical expressions (Saddhono & Hartanto, 2021). In religious education in Yogyakarta, Javanese is used to explain religious concepts in a gentle and respectful manner. For example, when explaining the pillars of Islam, teachers will use *krama* to ensure respect for the teachings of religion. Texts such as *Serat Wedhatama* are taught in Javanese *krama* to impart moral and spiritual values to students. In religious rituals and ceremonies such as the "Sekaten" and "Grebeg" ceremonies in Yogyakarta, Javanese *krama* is used in prayers and official speeches. This reflects the integration of royal traditions and Islamic teachings, with Javanese *krama* as the bridge. In rituals like "Tahlilan," Javanese *krama* is used to convey prayers and praises, creating an atmosphere full of respect and solemnity.

The East Javanese dialect is more flexible and dynamic compared to the Central Javanese and Yogyakarta dialects. The use of Javanese *ngoko* (informal) and *madya* (medium) is more common, although in religious contexts, a level of formality is still maintained (Ekawati & Katrini, 2022). In daily life, the people of East Java may often use *ngoko* or *madya*, but in religious contexts and rituals, they switch to *krama* to show respect. Daily prayers and *dhikr* might be simpler in structure, but they still retain deep religious meaning. For example, "Gusti paring rahmat lan berkah" (God grants grace and blessings). In traditional ceremonies such as "Ruwatan" or "Selamatan," Javanese *madya* or *krama* is used depending on the level of formality of

the event. The use of this language shows the flexibility and adaptation of the East Javanese dialect in various religious contexts. Expressions like "mugi-mugi" (hopefully) and "nyuwun pangapunten" (asking for forgiveness) continue to be used to convey prayers and hopes, adjusted to the local dialect.

Despite variations in the use of dialects, the core of religious messages remains consistent across regions. Religious terms from Arabic, such as "Allah," "Rasul," and "Al-Quran," are used consistently across dialects, helping to maintain the unity of meaning in religious teachings. Prayers and dhikr that include Arabic words remain the same across dialects, with only the delivery potentially differing depending on the level of formality of the Javanese language used. Moral and ethical teachings conveyed through Javanese are also the same, despite dialectal variations. For example, concepts such as "gotong-royong" (cooperation) and "unggah-ungguh" (etiquette) are taught across all regions with local dialect adjustments. The teaching of texts like *Serat Wedhatama* and *Serat Wulangreh*, which contain religious and philosophical values, remains relevant in all dialects, ensuring that moral and spiritual messages are well received by all Javanese communities.

The dialectal variations in Javanese language add unique color and richness to the religious expressions of the Javanese people in Central Java, Yogyakarta, and East Java. Despite differences in the use of language levels and word choices, the essence of religious messages remains intact. The use of krama language in formal and ritual contexts, along with the adaptation of language in daily life, demonstrates the flexibility and dynamism of Javanese. Thus, Javanese language serves as an important tool in preserving and spreading religious values within society, ensuring that traditions and religious teachings remain alive and relevant in everyday life.

Conclusions

The religious aspects of the Javanese language reflect the beliefs and religious practices of the Javanese people in Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta. Through a sociopragmatic approach, this study reveals that Javanese language is not only a tool for communication but also a means of preserving and conveying rich religious values. The variations in dialects and the use of language in religious contexts demonstrate that Javanese possesses remarkable flexibility and cultural richness. In religious rituals, such as slametan or tahlilan, Javanese is often used to express prayers and respect for ancestors. Religious expressions, such as "mugi rahayu" or "paringan berkah," reflect hopes and petitions to God with profound spiritual nuances. Moreover, ancient Javanese literary texts, such as *serat* and *kidung*, contain moral and spiritual teachings that remain relevant to this day. The Javanese language also plays an important role in teaching religious values through oral traditions, such as *tembang*

macapat. In daily interactions, the use of speech levels, such as *krama* and *krama inggil*, reflects respect for social hierarchies, which are also grounded in religious values. Thus, the Javanese language is not only a reflection of culture but also a medium that connects society with the spiritual teachings they adhere to.

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Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants to ensure their voluntary participation. The confidentiality and anonymity of all respondents were strictly maintained throughout the research to protect their privacy and well-being.

Conflicts of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this research, "Religiousness in Javanese Language and Culture Communication: A Sociopragmatic Study in Java Island, Indonesia." This research was conducted independently, and no external parties influenced the study's design, implementation, or conclusions. Furthermore, no financial or personal relationships could influence the findings presented in this article.

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