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# Recommendations without action: criticism of the Javanese Language Congress and the Javanese Cultural Congress in Indonesia

Dhoni Zustiyanoro 

Javanese Literature Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES), Semarang, Indonesia

## ABSTRACT

This paper criticizes the Javanese Language Congress and the Javanese Cultural Congress, which are held every five years in Indonesia, but the results are insufficient to preserve and develop the Javanese language and culture. The Javanese people's language and culture must be preserved because they hold the values of wisdom and life guidelines that become character. That includes being internalized into the school curriculum. All problems are ironic because Congress spent such a large state budget. Even though it has the largest population, academic studies show that the Javanese language and culture are vulnerable due to globalisation and popular culture among teenagers. This paper argues that the two congresses need to be more progressive so that the meeting results can advance the Javanese language and culture. By highlighting the issue of recommendations without tangible actions, this study underscores the importance of redefining the purpose and structure of these congresses to ensure that they serve as platforms for discourse and effective implementation. The findings emphasize the significance of aligning stakeholders' efforts to drive meaningful change, fostering greater collaboration between government bodies, educational institutions, cultural communities, and individuals invested in Javanese language and culture. Moreover, the study's insights can inform the development of comprehensive implementation strategies, inspiring future research to delve deeper into the societal impact of congresses and contributing to more proactive and impactful preservation and promotion of Javanese linguistic and cultural heritage.

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## 1. Introduction

People in Java, Indonesia, believe that language and culture are important to them. Historically, regional languages have been an important part of the unity and nationalism of Indonesian citizens (The Jakarta Post, 2017a, 2017b). Java is Indonesia's largest island, home to 60 per cent of the post-colonial nation's population. Javanese is spoken by people in Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta, with more than 80 million speakers and 47 dialects (Laksono, 2011; Lewis et al., 2013). In schools, through regional regulations of East Java, Central Java, and Yogyakarta (three provinces whose citizens speak Javanese), elementary schools, junior high schools, and high schools are required to teach Javanese language lessons (Yulianto et al., 2023; Zustiyanoro et al., 2020).

The Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia has a slogan, 'Prioritize Indonesian, preserve local languages, and master foreign languages' (Kemdikbud, 2017). Every February 21, government and educational institutions commemorate Mother Language Day, celebrated by using their first language and wearing traditional clothes. In commemorating the Youth Pledge every October 28, an important event in the history of the Indonesian independence movement, the government continues to remind the public to 'Uphold the language of unity, the Indonesian language'. This sentence means that Indonesian

**CONTACT** Dhoni Zustiyanoro  [petanikota@mail.unnes.ac.id](mailto:petanikota@mail.unnes.ac.id)  Javanese Literature Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES), Semarang, Indonesia.

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is the language of unity, but regional languages in Indonesia must be mastered and maintained so that they do not become extinct in the future (Muhyidin, 2010; The Jakarta Post, 2017c).

To evaluate and strengthen regulations, the governments of the three provinces held the Javanese Language Congress (Kongres Bahasa Jawa/KBJ) and the Javanese Cultural Congress (Kongres Kebudayaan Jawa/KKJ) alternately. The last Javanese Cultural Congress was held in the Special Region of Yogyakarta in November 2022. The congress entitled 'Kabudayaan Jawa Anjayeng Bawana' (Worldwide Javanese Culture) was first held in Solo in 2014, and the second KKJ was held in Surabaya in 2018. The Javanese Language Congress was held in 2023 for the seventh time with the theme 'Gayeng Gumregut Ngrumat Basa Jawa' (Happy caring for the Javanese language), while the first implementation took place in 1991 in Semarang.

So far, the two congresses have consisted of speakers from various backgrounds, ranging from academics, and practitioners of language and culture, to teachers and regional officials (Figure 1). The committee curated the topic to focus on the direction of the congress and to make the discussion more focused. However, in this article, I argue that the congress, funded by the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD) with the result being recommendations to governors in three provinces, lacks action to encourage progressive changes to policies for preserving, developing, and innovating Javanese language and culture.

'Language is the spirit of culture,' said a government official when opening a cultural seminar. This sentence makes it difficult for the Javanese people and local governments in the three provinces to differentiate and sort out Javanese language and cultural policies. As a cultural product, language becomes a mirror of the social reality of the society where language grows and develops. The diversity of regional languages in Indonesia, reflected in the variety of dialects, reflects the wealth of national identity. In Javanese, for example, there are various dialects other than the 'mainstream Javanese' of Solo and Yogyakarta, such as Banyumasan, Tegalana, Semarangana, east Java, and Osing. *Mainstream Javanese* is the problematic 'standard Javanese' issue that arose since the colonial era (Florida, 1987; Margana, 2004).

Another reason the Javanese people need to maintain their language is that it has historical value and unique local wisdom that is not shared by other cultures outside their community. Academic studies on this matter have continued to be carried out until now (Kidwell & Triyoko, 2021; Sutarto, 2007; Yulianto et al., 2023). However, ironically, all parties fail when discussing efforts to preserve and develop the Javanese language. One of the reasons for this failure was ignoring the psychological and sociological aspects of the generation of speakers. In addition, the policy regarding the development of the Javanese language is also far from involving information technology. In fact, in Indonesia, internet and social media users are very high, reaching 73.7% of the total population in 2020 (Gunawan et al., 2021).

The number of speakers of regional languages continues to decrease. The main reason for the declining number of speakers of regional languages is generations of speakers who no longer use it as a mode



**Figure 1.** Speakers speaking at the first Javanese Cultural Congress, 10–13 November 2014 in Surakarta. (Dhoni Zustiyanoro).

of speech or expression—let alone learn it—both at the family, community, and school levels. Data presented by the Head of the Language Development and Fostering Agency of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture at the Nusantara Regional Language Congress in Bandung in 2016, out of a total of 617 regional languages in Indonesia, 15 of them are extinct. He also stated that 139 regional languages were threatened as safe, stable, declining, and endangered. He said that as many as 15 languages that had become extinct because they were no longer spoken came from Maluku and Papua (Septiyana & Margiansyah, 2017; Tempo, 2016). The level of a drain on the use of the Javanese language is indeed more common in early adulthood (18-40 years) when compared to middle adults (41-60 years) or advanced adults (over 60 years). Based on the family context, the highest drain occurs when parents and children carry out learning activities or discussions about something serious or formal. The lowest drain occurs when parents and children are at odds or angry (Winiasih, 2016).

In the post-colonial period, the Indonesian government made regulations to protect regional languages. The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia Article 32, paragraph 2 states, 'The state respects and maintains regional languages as national cultural assets'. It clarifies the purpose of the state to participate in maintaining regional languages. School as a channel of formal education is one of the important pillars in the regeneration of speakers. Law Number 20 of 2003 Article 33, paragraph 2 states, 'Local languages can be used as the language of instruction in the early stages of education if needed in conveying certain knowledge and skills'. This law, once again, shows the government's alignment and opens the possibility for schools to be proactive and innovative in carrying out various policies within their respective scopes. In recent years, a daily movement has been using regional languages, including within the government bureaucracy. In some areas, state civil servants are encouraged to use the language and regional dress in full in one day.

Historically, the Javanese Language Congress and the Javanese Cultural Congress were initiated based on previously held meetings, even since Indonesia was not yet independent. In July 1918, a *Congress voor Javaansche Cultuur ont-wikkeling* was held, one of which discussed the future of the Javanese language. The decision of the meeting in 1918 was the establishment of the Javanese Cultural Institute, known as the *Java Institute* (Darusuprta, 1991; Pols, 2018). After that, this institution held five meetings between 1919-1930, which was called the Java Institute Congress. The meeting also resulted in important decisions that are still influential today, including guidelines for writing Javanese in the Latin script 'Edjaan Sriwedari' (1926) and establishing public high schools in Bandung and Surakarta. Before that time, a Javanese language training institute during the colonial period was founded in 1932. This institution was tasked with copying Javanese literary texts that were in the interests of colonial representatives (Margana, 2004).

Javanese language and culture must be encouraged to be more advanced for various reasons. This spirit is in line with the decolonisation principle, which wants to promote cultural independence and let go of the doctrine of universality, as well as a form of resistance against the dominant discourse (Zustiyantoro, 2023), apart from continuing to suspect the effects of colonialism whose roots go back far back from the past (Zustiyantoro et al., 2022). The Javanese Language Congress and the Javanese Cultural Congress today need to carry the spirit of decolonisation and, therefore, need to be encouraged so that the results can provide more concrete action for efforts to maintain the Javanese language and culture in the future. This paper elaborates on the fact that the decline of the Javanese language and culture is becoming increasingly evident (Putri, 2018; Widodo, 2017; Yulianti, 2013), and this should have been anticipated if the two congresses could have real action, as well as question it. That matters because the public funds Congress through citizens' taxes. A historical approach from a post-colonial perspective (Philpott, 2000) is also offered by tracing the roots of colonialism behind it (Aragon, 2012; Darby, 2018).

With a critical perspective, this article corrects and reflects on the holding of the Javanese Language Congress and Javanese Culture Congress in Indonesia by answering these questions: To what extent have these congresses succeeded in creating fundamental changes in the maintenance and development of Javanese language and Javanese culture? What are the factors inhibiting the implementation of these congresses? What is the impact of globalization on the sustainability of efforts to maintain the Javanese language and Javanese culture, and to what extent do these congresses reflect adaptation to global dynamics? The answers to these questions are presented through discussion in the next sub-chapter by presenting historical data on congresses and relevant studies. With a document

analysis study approach, I examined the official documents of both congresses, such as reports, decisions, recommendations, and presentations. I used participant observation to understand public participation and community responses to the two congresses. Qualitative analysis is applied to data and observations to understand the context, complexity and dynamics of implementing recommendations without action.

## 2. The real conditions of contemporary Javanese language and culture

As previously discussed, the fact is that the Javanese language and culture in Indonesian society are increasingly being eroded. Teenagers who will be the next generation of Javanese speakers are no longer interested in consistently using their mother tongue. That case has been widely discussed since the early period when Indonesia became an independent state (Anderson, 1990; Jones, 2013; Padmosoekotjo, 1956, 1987). During the New Order era, when Javanese culture dominated in many fields (Philpott, 2000), the use of the Javanese language faded (Errington, 1998; Suwarna, 1996). Population movements from villages to cities have now affected the use of regional languages in Indonesia. Parents consider that using Indonesian, and thus not having to learn Javanese seriously, is necessary and increases career opportunities and the future, especially when coupled with a mastery of a foreign language.

Research and recent mass media reports have indeed shown this setback. Field research by Airlangga University lecturers on the younger generation in East Java shows that youth who are less than 25 years old prefer to speak Indonesian when conversing with older people (Putri, 2018). The effort to avoid using the Javanese language was due to their anxiety because they felt they had not mastered the Javanese *krama* variety correctly. At the speech level of the Javanese language, the Javanese *krama* variety must be used by young speakers for those who are older. Teenagers in Madiun, East Java, do not speak Javanese to their parents. They tend to use Javanese or Indonesian *ngoko*. This language behaviour occurs because teenagers in Madiun cannot distinguish how to speak when dealing with parents and peers (Yulianto et al., 2023).

In Yogyakarta, only 50 per cent of students can speak Javanese *krama*. This variety of languages is often used to instil adherence to strict language rules and instil character in the next generation of Javanese culture. In Central Java, Governor Ganjar Pranowo has appealed to government officials and teachers to wear traditional clothes and speak Javanese every Thursday (Detik, 2022). However, the implementation stopped at an appeal without evaluation and sanctions.

In the context of policies related to Javanese culture, the problem can become more complex. Javanese culture is recognized as a complex mix of ideas, norms, rules, and values that are adopted and used by most Javanese people to support their lives. Of the 364 ethnicities in Indonesia, the Javanese have been recognized over time as the most culturally and politically dominant in Indonesia (Irawanto et al., 2011). The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture defines *culture* as 'All ideas, behaviours, and human creations developed through a process of learning and adaptation to their environment which functions as a guide for social, national and state life' (Indardjo, 2016). However, the results of an analysis of cultural participation published by the Ministry of Education and Culture show that the community participation rate in traditional cultural activities is still below 3 per cent. Experts suggest redefining past values, one of which is politeness (Suparno et al., 2023). If previous research showed that respected power in Javanese society is closely related to a society characterized by *priayi* (the elite group of society), educated, knowledgeable, and elderly, these indicators have shifted to wealth, position, and fame in this era.

My research on the Javanese language learning landscape during the COVID-19 pandemic showed that Javanese language teachers were still stuttering in responding to and utilizing information technology as a learning tool (Utami & Zustiyantoro, 2022). In several cases, instead of utilizing information technology and social media to bring the Javanese language and culture closer to the next generation, these platforms are considered threats and destroyers of the generation's character.

The contemporary reality of the Javanese language and culture shows the decline in the maintenance of Javanese language and culture in society, and on the other hand, the weak regulations and sanctions by the government. However, this is not a new phenomenon in the light that follows. People's distrust

amid an increasingly political and undemocratic state has made various fields increasingly neglected. Regional language and culture are not a priority in human resource development. The political-economic perspective has forced a developing culture to follow the interests of global capitalism and ignore its essence (Kasiyan, 2019).

### 3. The need to involve youth

The problem can start from here the two Javanese congresses resulting from a consortium of three provinces did not provide a place for young thinkers and activists who consistently work in the Javanese language and culture field. The lack of presence of young people is not a problem if the sources are more focused on actual problems. However, instead of photographing phenomena and based on solutions, resource persons often present concepts in the Javanese language and culture widely known by the public. Because of this, criticism surfaced that the two congresses were merely 'reunion venues' for participants and resource persons.

Indonesia's history has proven that the youth's role is important in shaping the history of revolution and independence. The term *kaum muda* (youth) was first written by Abdul Rivai in his writings in *Bintang Hindia* (1905). Rifai defines the phrase as all Indian/Indonesian people (young or old) no longer willing to follow the ancient rules. Young people are those who wish to glorify themselves through knowledge and knowledge. Since then, this term has quickly become an essential code used collectively and ambitiously to renew the fate of the Indian/Indonesian people through a more rational and progressive program. After that, the youth-led movement became unstoppable. STOVIA youths (*School tot Opleiding van Inlandsche Artsen*, Bumiputera Medical Education School), a school founded by colonials, pioneered the Budi Utomo cultural movement in 1908, young graduates of modern schools developed Sarekat Islam (1912), the emergence of national political parties from the 1920s, the Sumpah Pemuda (Youth Pledge, 1928), until independence in 1945 which Anderson termed the 'youth revolution' (Anderson, 1990). In 1928, the Sumpah Pemuda was declared by a congress that was driven by progressive youths, and in the period after that, it was very influential on Indonesian language politics and nationalism (Foulcher, 2000). Even though it was complex and problematic, as well as many political issues that had to be faced in the post-independence period, the Youth Pledge could become an important representation of the successful youth movement in Indonesian historiography.

Why did the youth not take a role in Congress in the contemporary post-colonial era? Half of the answer may come from within the Javanese culture itself. Young people are often considered *durung Jawa* (not yet fully Javanese, not even skilled) by the older generation (Zustiyantoro, 2020). The online version of the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian Dictionary) defines *youth* as not yet even, odd, and 'the second'. In the classic Javanese literary text *Serat Wedhatama*, Mangkunegara IV (1811-1881) also gave criticism. Youth are those who are lacking: *nalare ting saluwir* (reasoning that is not yet complete), *gumrenggeng anggung gumrungung* (talking too much and too loudly), and *paksa kumaki* (forceful and arrogant). The *Bausastra Dictionary* (Poerwadarminta, 1939) even explicitly defines *mudha* as *bodho* (stupid). The youth's *ewuh* (reluctant) attitude towards older people often hinders open and egalitarian communication.

On the one hand, this unequal relationship also results in the stagnation of innovation in policy. In the context of the two congresses, the speakers who spoke were people of old age, and it was deemed necessary to be highly respected. Another problem was that the congress committee did not always understand the dynamics and current issues of Javanese language and culture in the field, so they could not select speakers with progressive backgrounds and simply come up with permanent names. The Javanese language and culture must engage the younger generation to innovate and advance the future. It is important to do this not just by positioning them as objects of regeneration of language speakers and cultural actors but as subjects whose opinions are heard.

For this reason, young academics and activists engaged in Javanese language and culture, including students in student associations and organisations in Javanese language and literature study programs at several universities, need to be consulted. Communities formed by diligent young people also

regularly organise forums for Javanese studies in the context of language, literature, and philology, as well as Javanese culture in general, such as the Javanese Literature Community, Jangkah, and Sraddhasala, Segajabung, and Omah Wulangreh.

#### 4. Take concrete steps

The Javanese Language Congress and the Javanese Cultural Congress need to encourage local governments to take concrete and measurable steps. For example, creating public open spaces that are inclusive and friendly to Javanese culture. For example, a community in Jakarta that has initiated an independent library in a city park could be a good practice to increase literacy for people in Java. This concept adopts the phenomenon of several developed countries, which turn unused places into storage places for books. Anyone can donate books and borrow them in that place to form a social ecosystem to increase literacy.

The literacy rate in Indonesia, as often discussed, is very low (Sakhiyya et al., 2023; Sutisna et al., 2021). Literacy in formal education in Indonesia, unfortunately, is still limited to being interpreted as reading activities before lessons begin (Sakhiyya & Hapsari, 2021). At the same time, the fact is that the literacy movement at the grassroots, carried out by communities in various regions in Indonesia, is more progressive. Communities can carry out movements that impact and contribute directly to increasing interest in reading and making it a reference in improving the quality of life. This argument aligns with Freire's concept of critical literacy, that reading the world through words will increase one's critical awareness (Freire & Macedo, 1987). The same effort can be adopted to increase reading interest in Javanese books and media. Reading in Javanese is difficult in society and schools (Zustiyantoro et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated students' interest in reading. However, instead of studying online, students are distracted by online games, social media, and text messages (Utami & Zustiyantoro, 2022). For literacy to increase, opening massive new libraries and consistently updating books is important. The government cannot rely on volunteers, whose numbers are not large and lack funds, includes efforts to create digital libraries that the younger generation can access openly and freely. Although the government and the private sector can work together to achieve goals, the government must take a larger portion and remain open to new initiatives. That is one of the weaknesses in the contemporary bureaucracy in Indonesia, which is difficult to deconstruct its bad habits, even though the government has carried out the Bureaucratic Reform program.

In the contemporary context, policymakers still need to take advantage of the sophistication of information technology to introduce the Javanese language and culture to the younger generation. Social media in Indonesia, popular with school-aged teenagers, is enlivened with entertainment content and shows off wealth. There is a unique saying, 'I am viral; therefore, I exist', which illustrates that existence on social media is essential for teenagers. One thing they look forward to from the uploaded content is the number of viewers, the number of likes, and the number of comments. There is minimal Javanese language and cultural content on social media such as Instagram, TikTok, Youtube, or Twitter. At the very least, social media can be an entry point to introduce teenagers to popular Javanese language and culture. However, the use of the internet also hurts individuals and their environment. One of the critical issues that have become the focus of the last two decades is internet addiction disorder and gadget addiction disorder. Internet addiction arises due to excessive use of the internet causing negative impacts or tendencies to cause symptoms of abuse (Gunawan et al., 2021). For this reason, social media is also an opportunity and a challenge for education in Indonesia.

#### 5. Capacity of teachers and independent institutions

Another complicated issue in Indonesia is the recruitment of Javanese language teachers. As mentioned earlier, teachers are an important factor in regenerating Javanese speakers for the younger generation. However, the recruitment of teachers by the government remains an unresolved problem. In the 2021 recruitment, there are no vacancies for registration as government employees (Tribun Jogja, 2021), while active teachers continue to decrease due to the end of their working period. After the protests escalated, the government forced itself to recruit Javanese language teachers. However,

they must teach Arts and Culture in class after being declared passed. This complicates the problem at the school because the teacher's qualifications are out of sync with the class lessons. Some scholars argue that the key to successful learning is qualified teachers through a teacher recruitment system (Ball & Forzani, 2009). However, the argument simplifies the problem. The success that will determine the quality of education and teacher recruitment factors must also pay attention to the curriculum, income levels, increasing competence, and forming an ecosystem to force teachers to continue learning because other scholars argue that most teachers may be professional in teaching students. However, new or novice teachers lack the skills and positions to be effective mentors (Sykes et al., 2010). If students are not interested in this lesson, one reason is that the teacher is not competent to teach; students will certainly view this lesson as very difficult, especially if it does not contribute to their future profession. In reality, teacher capacity continues to be weakened by the government. In 2022, the Ministry of Education surprisingly included the National Education System Bill in the National Legislation Program for the House of Representatives, which sparked public protests. In it, among other things, the government differentiates the rights received by teachers in state schools and private schools. In Indonesia, teachers who do not have a salary equivalent to the city/district minimum wage or lower are unable to meet their basic needs. Low wages mean teachers must look for additional work to meet family needs. This busyness makes them unable to concentrate on improving their competencies and developing their students' talents.

Without an independent institution that enforces the rules, the implementation of the congress results will not be monitored. The independent institution formed from the Javanese Language Congress and the Javanese Cultural Congress is important to ensure that the government carries out the recommendations made by the Congress. This institution will become a steering committee that can give warnings if the government does not move to carry out productive policies to develop the Javanese language and culture. The authority of these independent institutions also needs to be expanded by providing direct accountability to the governors in each region. The realisation of programs and activities is needed to increase community cultural participation. This independent institution must involve experts, academics, and practitioners. An independent body was created to make congressional recommendations enforceable. The government's cultural endowment fund, allocated for cultural activities in IDR 5 trillion (Kompas, 2022), can finance this institution.

The government's interest in cultural institutions has changed in Indonesia from the colonial era until the Reformation (Jones, 2013). The Indonesian government has always had an interest in public order. One way to do this is through cultural doctrine. Jones further explained that during President Soeharto's New Order era, who was in power for 32 years, his government used cultural development and simplified culture as mere art. That policy made society, especially after the crushing of those accused of being involved in communism in Indonesia in 1965–1966, not take advantage of art for propaganda and the spread of leftist ideology. Herlambang explained how the violence after 1965, namely the restrictions on the left and its various narratives, was also carried out massively through culture by the state (Herlambang, 2013). At that time, the government bureaucracy continued colonialism by curbing citizens' freedom, systematic terror, eliminating political opponents, and exercising hegemony of 'nationalism', which aligned with the state's interests. At the same time fosters corrupt practices and perpetuates a paternalistic culture and authoritarianism (Jackson, 1978).

In the period after the 1998 Reformation, a student movement with civil society that succeeded in overthrowing Suharto's authoritarian regime, cultural institutions showed progress but could not become adequate regulators to strengthen Indonesia's diverse culture. The mainstreaming of Islam in Indonesia (Rakhmani, 2016) aligns with identity politics, which is used primarily for electoral political interests. Contemporary social and humanities research shows that, especially in the 2016 and 2019 presidential elections in Indonesia, identity politics is used to win contestations (Bourchier, 2019; Hadiz, 2018), although it was predicted based on pre-election research that people would still choose presidents with integrity, credibility, and defending the people (Fernandes, 2018). This argument shows that historically, institutions under the Indonesian government have not always been able to be completely independent, including in the lead-up to political contestation. Some of the reasons are that government institutions are often formed or regulated by the government in power, and appointing officials or heads of

institutions involves the executive or legislature, so the policies taken can indicate political preferences at the time.

## 6. Conclusion

Many problems prevented the Javanese Language Congress and the Javanese Cultural Congress from taking on a role in preserving the Javanese language and culture. This paper has explained how the problem started from the internal Congress, and on the other hand, it was also caused by the government not taking sides with regional language and culture issues. Internally, I suggest that Congress should not hesitate to involve activists and progressive youth. My argument is in line with the history of Indonesia, where all important revolutions have always had youth members, from the Sumpah Pemuda (1928) to Indonesia's independence (1945), to the Reformation (1998). This paper also shows that, although problematic, the use of information technology and social media can be feeders to attract young people's interest in the Javanese language and culture. Therefore, the two congresses must invite the younger generation to play a more significant role in the future because they will be the successors of the Javanese language and culture. Ignoring the role of youth shows that the government has not learned from history.

This paper also underlines the government's political position to support increasing the capacity of Javanese language teachers. The problem with teachers is not only in recruiting qualified teachers by educational qualifications but also in increasing the competence of teachers already teaching students. At a time of public apathy towards government institutions to create good services, political support for the Javanese language and culture can be a way to show that the government is serious about the field that is in contact with the people of Java every day. In the end, although it must be admitted that all restrictions and limitations are rooted in the past, the two Java-related congresses need to carry the spirit of decolonisation awareness. Once again, the decolonisation perspective is important to understand the effects of colonialism, which have so far been accepted and have become a habit but restrain and limit progress. However, this research is limited to the study of policies, the phenomena that result from those policies, and community movements and grassroots activism around approaches that need to be revised. I have shown that cultural activism to develop the Javanese language concerns society. Further studies are required to examine activism, including digital activism, which has positively impacted the Javanese language for the younger generation.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## About the author



**Dhoni Zustiyanoro** is a lecturer at the Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES). He is the Director of the Center for Literary and Cultural Studies (CLCS), a non-profit social and humanities research organisation. He wrote a doctoral thesis on the importance of decolonisation in Javanese literary studies. Dhoni is also active in postcolonial studies in several forums. At the UNNES Javanese Literature Study Program, he teaches Literary Psychology, Creative Writing, and Javanese Prose Studies courses. His research focuses on the relationship between psychology, sociology, and the effects of colonialism on Javanese literature and culture. He is involved in cultural activity and academic freedom in the activism movement through the Indonesian Caucus for Academic Freedom. Dhoni is a former journalist who continues to write critical essays for the mass media, interviewed as a cultural expert on Javanese and contemporary cultural issues.

## ORCID

Dhoni Zustiyanoro  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7904-9231>

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