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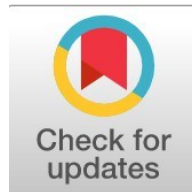
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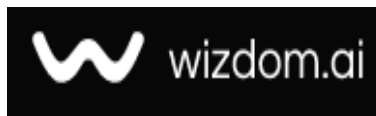
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Preservation of Javanese Language in Islamic Boarding School Learning as a Strengtheners of the Paradigm of Conservatism and Traditionalism in Islamic Education

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Abstract

General Background: Regional languages play a crucial role in shaping cultural identity and educational traditions within Indonesian Islamic institutions. **Specific Background:** In traditional Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in Java, the Javanese language has long functioned as a medium for learning classical Islamic texts, moral education, and daily interaction, particularly within salafiyah pesantren. **Knowledge Gap:** Despite extensive discussions on pesantren and local culture, limited scholarly attention has been given to Javanese language preservation as a core mechanism reinforcing conservatism and traditionalism in Islamic education amid modernization. **Aims:** This study aims to examine how the preservation of the Javanese language in pesantren learning practices strengthens paradigms of conservatism and traditionalism in Islamic education. **Results:** Using a qualitative case study approach in three traditional pesantren in Central Java, the findings show that Javanese functions as a pedagogical medium, a transmitter of adab, hierarchy, and scholarly authority, and a cultural strategy to maintain traditional Islamic values. **Novelty:** This study positions Javanese language preservation not merely as cultural maintenance but as an epistemological foundation sustaining conservative and traditional Islamic educational paradigms. **Implications:** The findings highlight the importance of integrating local language preservation into Islamic education policies to sustain moral formation, cultural identity, and continuity of classical Islamic traditions alongside selective educational adaptation.

Highlights:

- ♦ Javanese serves as a primary medium for transmitting classical Islamic knowledge and moral values.
- ♦ Language practices reinforce hierarchy, adab, and scholarly authority within boarding school communities.

- ♦ Linguistic maintenance operates as a cultural strategy amid educational modernization pressures.

Keywords : Javanese Language Preservation, Pesantren Education, Islamic Conservatism, Educational Traditionalism, Local Culture

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Introduction

Language not only functions as a means of communication, but also as an instrument for shaping the identity, knowledge, and civilization of a society [1]. In Indonesia, the diversity of regional languages is a cultural heritage that reflects the ethnolinguistic wealth of the nation. One of the regional languages that has a long history and philosophical depth is Javanese. This language is not just a system of sounds and meanings, but also reflects the social structure, ethics and worldview of the Javanese people [2]. In the context of traditional Islamic education in Indonesia, especially in the pesantren environment, Javanese has a very strategic position as a medium of religious learning and inheritance of moral values. However, the existence of Javanese language is now facing great challenges in the midst of globalization, modernization of education, and changes in communication patterns of the younger generation [3].

Pesantren as the oldest Islamic educational institution in Indonesia has a distinctive character that distinguishes it from other formal educational institutions [4]. Historically, pesantren have grown and developed as centers of da'wah, education, and social transformation that are deeply rooted in local culture. One of the characteristics of traditional or salafiyah pesantren is the use of local languages, especially Javanese, in the learning process and daily social interaction. This language is used in the recitation of the yellow classical books, religious lectures, and communication between santri and kiai [5]. The use of Javanese not only facilitates the understanding of classical Arabic texts, but also becomes a means of character building, moral discipline, and manners in the lives of santri.

On the other hand, the dynamics of modernization of Islamic education bring significant changes in the pesantren system. Many pesantren now adopt a khalafiyah model with a formal curriculum that prioritizes the use of Indonesian, Arabic, and English [6]. This change certainly has a positive impact in improving the academic competence and competitiveness of santri. However, on the other hand, this shift raises concerns about the erosion of the function of local languages in Islamic education. Javanese, which was once the main medium for transmitting Islamic knowledge and values, is now being replaced by languages that are considered more modern and universal [7]. This phenomenon raises important questions: how do traditional pesantren maintain the Javanese language in the midst of educational modernization? And to what extent does the language preservation play a role in strengthening the paradigm of conservatism and traditionalism in Islamic education?

Conservatism and traditionalism in the context of Islamic education are not a form of rejection of modernity, but a strategy to maintain Islamic values that are considered fundamental. Conservatism in Islamic education focuses on preserving classical teachings, methodologies and ethics that have proven to shape the morality and spirituality of Muslims for centuries [8]. Meanwhile, traditionalism emphasizes the importance of continuity of local scientific and cultural traditions within the framework of education. In the context of Javanese pesantren, the preservation of local languages is part of the effort to maintain the unique intellectual tradition of Islam Nusantara, namely Islam that grows and develops in harmony with local culture. Javanese in this case is not just a learning tool, but a symbol of epistemological conservatism and continuity of classical Islamic scientific traditions [9].

Various previous studies have highlighted the role of pesantren in the preservation of local culture and traditional values. For example, Dhofier (1982) explains that pesantren is an institution that not only functions to educate ulama, but also to maintain the cultural and social heritage of Javanese society [10]. Similarly, Mastuhu (1994) asserts that the pesantren education system is built on a strong moral, spiritual, and cultural foundation [11]. Javanese language, in this context, becomes one of the important elements that maintain the continuity. However, there have not been many studies that specifically examine the role of Javanese as an instrument of conservatism and traditionalism in Islamic education in pesantren, especially in the modern era that demands innovation and adaptation to global developments.

In practice, the use of Javanese in pesantren has a multidimensional function. First, Javanese is used as a pedagogical tool in teaching the yellow classical books. In the bandongan and sorogan methods, kiai read classical Arabic texts and translate them into Javanese with the *gandul* or *pegon* style of meaning. This system not only helps santri understand the text, but also introduces them to a system of Islamic thought bound to the Javanese cultural context. Second, Javanese plays a role in the formation of santri manners [12]. The levels of speech in Javanese *ngoko*, medium *krama*, and *krama inggil* teach the importance of social hierarchy, respect for teachers (*ta'dhim*), and politeness in interaction. Third, the Javanese language becomes a symbol of pesantren cultural identity. In the midst of language homogenization due to globalization, the use of local languages confirms the continuity of the distinctive Islamic identity of the archipelago, rooted in local culture but still universal in its values [13].

However, the challenges to Javanese language preservation are increasingly complex [14]. Globalization, urbanization, and digital media penetration have changed the communication patterns of the younger generation, including santri. Many santri are now more fluent in Indonesian or even slang than in the refined Javanese language [15]. This phenomenon reflects a value shift in society that has begun to abandon regional languages as a cultural identity. In the context of pesantren education, this condition has the potential to erode traditional values that have been maintained through language [16]. As an institution that plays a major role in shaping the character and morality of the young Muslim generation, pesantren are faced with a dilemma between maintaining tradition or following the flow of modernity. Therefore, the study of Javanese language preservation in pesantren is important to understand how Islamic educational institutions can maintain a balance between tradition and modernity.

From a theoretical perspective, Javanese language preservation in pesantren can be analyzed through two main approaches. First, the theory of language maintenance proposed by Fishman (1991) asserts that the sustainability of a language is highly

dependent on the social and institutional domains that use it [17]. Pesantren, as social and religious institutions, function as an important domain in maintaining the existence of local languages. Second, the conservatism theory of Islamic education, Langgulang (1991) explains that Islamic education has the function of maintaining the continuity of spiritual and cultural values so as not to be uprooted from its traditional roots [18]. In this framework, Javanese language preservation is not just a linguistic activity, but also a manifestation of efforts to maintain classical Islamic turats (intellectual heritage) that have acculturated with local culture.

In addition to functioning as an educational tool, Javanese language in pesantren also has ideological meaning. The use of local languages in the context of religious education is a form of resistance to the homogenization of culture and language due to modernization. By maintaining the Javanese language, pesantren indirectly assert their position as the guardians of local Islamic traditions that are tolerant, polite, and characterized. This phenomenon is in line with the concept of Islam Nusantara developed by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) scholars, namely Islam that is able to adapt to local culture without losing its Islamic substance [19]. Thus, the preservation of Javanese language in pesantren is not just a linguistic problem, but also part of cultural politics and religious identity in Indonesia.

The main purpose of this study is to understand how the practice of Javanese language preservation is carried out in the learning process in pesantren and how this practice strengthens the paradigm of conservatism and traditionalism in Islamic education. In addition, this research also aims to identify the social, moral, and spiritual meanings behind the use of Javanese in pesantren life. Conceptually, this research wants to emphasize that conservatism in Islamic education is not a form of stagnation, but rather a strategy to maintain noble values in the midst of changing times.

The main questions to be answered in this study include: (1) What are the forms of Javanese language preservation in learning practices in traditional pesantren? (2) How does the use of Javanese contribute to strengthening the paradigm of conservatism and traditionalism in Islamic education? (3) What are the challenges faced by pesantren in maintaining Javanese in the midst of modernization and globalization of education?

The benefits of this research are expected to be theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this research enriches the study of the relationship between language, culture, and Islamic education by placing Javanese language as a cultural variable in the analysis of Islamic education conservatism. Practically, the results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of local culture-based Islamic education policies, especially in the context of regional language revitalization in the pesantren environment [20]. In addition, this research can be a reference for educators, kiai, and policy makers in designing strategies to preserve traditional languages and values without ignoring the need for educational innovation.

Furthermore, the preservation of Javanese language in pesantren shows its relevance to the national agenda of cultural preservation [21]. In the era of digital disruption, regional languages are increasingly losing space in the public sphere. Pesantren, with their unique social and cultural structures, have the potential to be the last bastion of regional language preservation [22]. The Javanese language that lives in pesantren is not a static language, but continues to adapt to the growing religious and social context. Thus, language preservation in pesantren is not only a form of conservatism, but also a creative process in maintaining national identity [23].

The awareness of the importance of language as part of traditional Islamic education shows that pesantren are not institutions that are closed to change, but rather institutions that are able to maintain traditions in a dynamic way [24]. In this case, conservatism does not mean rejecting renewal, but selecting new values that are in accordance with Islamic principles and local culture [25]. The preservation of the Javanese language is proof that tradition can go hand in hand with innovation as long as both are placed within the framework of Islamic values that are *rahmatanlil 'alamin*.

Thus, this research departs from the assumption that Javanese has a strategic role in maintaining the value system, identity, and scientific authority in *pesantren*. Through language, the values of conservatism and traditionalism of Islamic education are inherited and reproduced socially and spiritually. The preservation of Javanese language in *pesantren*, therefore, is not only important for the continuity of local culture, but also for strengthening the character and morality of the *santri* generation in the midst of fast-paced and complex changes.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method [26]. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for understanding socio-cultural phenomena in depth in a natural context, especially in examining the practice of Javanese language preservation in pesantren as a form of strengthening the values of conservatism and traditionalism in Islamic education. As stated by Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative research allows researchers to interpret the meaning constructed by participants of their own experiences in a particular social context [27]. The case study method is used to explore the real practice of Javanese language preservation in several traditional pesantren, because this phenomenon is contextual and complex. Case studies allow researchers to holistically examine the learning process, social interactions, and values internalized in the use of Javanese language in pesantren. This research seeks to explore not only how language is used, but also why and in what context the language has ideological meaning for the pesantren community.

The research paradigm is interpretative, where the researcher acts as the main instrument in collecting and interpreting data. The research results are not intended to be generalized, but rather to provide a deep understanding (thick description) of language preservation practices and the conservative values that accompany them [28].

This research was conducted in three traditional (salafiyah) pesantren in Pekalongan Regency, Central Java, namely: a) Al-Munawwir Islamic Boarding School, Kajen is known for its yellow book bandongan system using subtle Javanese; b) Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School, Kedungwuni emphasizes the tradition of wetonan recitation with Javanese-Indonesian translation; c) Al-Hidayah Islamic Boarding School, Bojong still maintains daily communication in Javanese, both in learning activities and social interactions between students. The three pesantren were selected by purposive sampling based on the criteria: (1) still actively using Javanese in the learning process, (2) oriented to the salafiyah education system, (3) having more than 300 students, and (4) willing to be the research location. The research subjects included kiai, ustaz, senior and junior santri, and pesantren managers. The total number of informants was 24 people, consisting of 3 kiai, 6 ustaz, 12 santri, and 3 administrative managers. This number is considered adequate to produce rich and representative data on the phenomenon under study.

Data were collected through three main techniques: participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation [29]. Participatory Observation; Researchers made direct observations of the yellowclassical book learning process, halaqah activities, bandongan, and daily interactions between santri and kiai. This observation took place for three months (January-March 2024). Field notes include the situation of Javanese language use, language level variations (ngoko, krama, krama inggil), and the social context of its use.

In-depth Interviews; Interviews were conducted with key informants (kiai and ustaz) to gain an understanding of the philosophy of using Javanese in pesantren education. Interviews were also conducted with santri to find out their perceptions of the function and meaning of Javanese language in the learning process and religious life. The interview technique was semi-structured to allow for flexible data exploration [30].

Documentation Study; Documents collected included the pesantren curriculum, recitation schedules, lesson notes, as well as teaching materials in the form of yellowclassical books and Javanese translations [31]. In addition, researchers also collected recitation recordings and transcripts of informal conversations between *santri* and *ustaz* using Javanese.

Results and Discussion

This research was conducted in three traditional *pesantren* in Pekalongan Regency, Central Java, namely Pondok *Pesantren* Al-Hidayah, Pondok *Pesantren* Miftahul Ulum, and Pondok *Pesantren* Al-Mukhlisin. These three *pesantren* were chosen because they have strong *salafiyah* (traditional) characteristics, maintain classical learning methods, and actively use Javanese in daily activities and learning processes. Data were obtained through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with kiai, *ustaz*, and *santri*, as well as document analysis of the curriculum and yellowclassical books used in teaching. Through thematic analysis, three main themes were obtained that explain the role of Javanese language in strengthening the conservatism and traditionalism of Islamic education in *pesantren*: (1) the function of Javanese language as a medium of learning and value transmission; (2) Javanese language as a symbol of hierarchy, adab, and authority; and (3) language preservation as a form of resistance to educational modernization.

1. Javanese Language as a Medium of Learning and Value Transmission

The results showed that Javanese has a central role in the learning process in traditional *pesantren*. In the recitation of the yellowclassical books, the kiai and *ustaz* use the *bandongan* and *sorogan* methods with oral explanations using Javanese. *Santri* listen to explanations of classical Arabic texts given *gandul* meanings in *Pegon* Arabic script with Javanese translations. This system not only helps students understand the meaning of the text, but also becomes a process of inheriting the Islamic intellectual tradition of the archipelago. One of the *ustaz* at Pondok Al-Hidayah explained:

"The Javanese language in the recitation of the kitab is not just a translation, but also a means of instilling values. Santri learn the meaning of the book, but also learn manners, ways of thinking, and adab through language." (Interview)

This phenomenon shows that Javanese functions as a cultural mediator between classical Arabic texts and the context of *santri* life. Language becomes a tool of knowledge transformation that bridges two cultural systems: Classical Islam and Javanese culture. Epistemologically, this practice illustrates the concept of Islamic indigenization, in which Islamic teachings are interpreted within the framework of local culture without reducing the essence of its teachings [14]. In this context, the preservation of Javanese language in *pesantren* can be understood as an effort to maintain the authenticity of traditional Islamic knowledge with a contextual approach to Javanese society.

In addition to being an aid to understanding, Javanese is also used in moral and spiritual development activities for *santri*. In daily lectures, kiai often insert Javanese proverbs and sayings such as "*ngeliningorakeli*" (going with the flow without drifting away), "*uripikuurup*" (life must give light), and "*elinglanwaspada*" (remember and be vigilant). These expressions contain religious values that are in line with Islamic teachings, such as tawakal, sincerity, and simplicity. Thus, Javanese language serves a dual function: as a cognitive tool in understanding religious knowledge and as a moral medium in the formation of *santri* character.

This finding reinforces Fishman's (1991) theory on language preservation that the sustainability of a language depends on the extent to which it has social and symbolic functions in its community [17]. In this case, *pesantren* is a vital domain that maintains the function of Javanese not only linguistically, but also spiritually and morally.

2. Javanese Language as a Symbol of Hierarchy, Manners, and Authority

Another aspect that stands out in this study is the use of Javanese as a marker of social hierarchy and morality in the *pesantren* community. The Javanese language has a complex system of speech levels *ngoko*, *krama madya*, and *krama inggil* which are used selectively according to social status, age, and the relationship between speakers. In the *pesantren* environment, this system is adapted as part of the culture of *ta'dhim* (respect) to *kiai* and *ustaz*. *Santri* speak in *krama inggil* to *kiai*, use *krama madya* to *ustaz*, and *ngoko* to fellow students.

This phenomenon not only reflects verbal politeness, but also an expression of Islamic spiritual values. In the view of *kiai* Al-Mukhlisin, the level of speech in Javanese educates *santri* to understand their position and manners towards others:

"*Santri are taught to speak politely, not only to the kiai, but also to other people. This is part of adab, ora mung basa.*" (Interview with *Kiai Mukhlisin*, October 23, 2025)

This statement illustrates that Javanese language does not stand as a linguistic system alone, but becomes a vehicle for internalizing Islamic values such as respect, *tawadhu'*, and *adab*. These values are the core of *pesantren* traditionalism as explained by Al-Ghazali in *Ihya' Ulumuddin*, that knowledge will not be useful without *adab*.

In addition, the linguistic structure in *pesantren* also strengthens the *kiai's* scientific and religious authority. The Javanese language of *krama inggil* creates a symbolic distance between teachers and students, which is not intended to assert power, but to maintain the blessing of knowledge. In *pesantren* culture, *ta'dhim* to the teacher is believed to be the key to success in studying. Through language, spiritual and social hierarchies are maintained with respect and awareness. This strengthens the conservatism paradigm of Islamic education that emphasizes the importance of the continuity of scientific authority from teachers to students in the Islamic scientific sanadic chain.

The study also found that the use of Javanese in the context of social hierarchy in *pesantren* strengthens inter-*santri* solidarity and community identity. Senior *santri* teach juniors not only kitab lessons, but also the ethics of speaking and interacting using appropriate language. This tradition becomes a social mechanism that maintains harmony and order in the *pesantren* community. Thus, Javanese language functions as a moral and social system that maintains the order of *pesantren* life.

3. Javanese Language Preservation as a Form of Resistance to Modernization

One of the most interesting findings of this study is that the preservation of Javanese language in *pesantren* can be understood as a form of cultural resistance to the modernization of education. In the last two decades, many *pesantren* have begun to adopt formal education systems such as the national curriculum, the use of Indonesian or Arabic in learning, and the application of modern pedagogical methods. However, in the traditional *pesantren* studied, Javanese language is consistently maintained as the main medium in non-formal activities and religious rituals.

Kiai in Pondok Miftahul Ulum explained that maintaining Javanese does not mean rejecting progress, but maintaining the identity and noble values of the *pesantren*:

"*We can be modern, but not lose our identity. Basa Jawa is part of the spirit of the pesantren, yen ilang, yoilangkarepe (the soul is lost).*" (Interview)

This statement shows that the preservation of the Javanese language is a form of ideological conservatism, namely the affirmation of Islamic values and local wisdom in the midst of modernization that tends to be homogeneous. *Pesantren* adopt a selective approach to innovation, as the principle of *al-muhafadzah 'ala al-qadim al-shalihwa al-akhdu bi al-jadid al-ashlah* which guides the conservative Islamic tradition.

This phenomenon can be read as a form of "adaptive conservatism" [18], which is an attitude of maintaining traditional values while absorbing elements of modernity that do not conflict with Islamic principles. In practice, *pesantren* use Javanese in the religious and social spheres, but still teach Indonesian and Arabic for academic purposes. This pattern of bilingualism reflects the balance between the preservation of tradition and the need for adaptation to the times.

The results of interviews with *santri* also show that they do not consider the use of Javanese as an obstacle, but rather as pride. A senior *santri* stated:

"*I feel that I understand better when the book is translated in Javanese. Javanese language is more meaningful, more touching.*" (Interview)

This statement shows the affective dimension of language in *pesantren* education. Javanese language not only functions as a tool for knowledge transfer, but also builds emotional and spiritual closeness between teachers and students. This is in line with the view of traditional Islamic education theory that knowledge must be transferred with *barakah*, a blessing that cannot be measured materially but is felt spiritually.

a. Language as Identity and Spirituality of the *Pesantren* Community

The findings of this study also confirm that Javanese has a symbolic role in strengthening the distinctive Islamic identity in

Java. In various religious activities such as *tahlilan*, *maulidnabi*, *manakiban*, and public recitation, Javanese is used dominantly. This language is not only used to convey religious messages, but also to build a sense of togetherness and intimacy among the congregation. In this context, Javanese becomes a symbol of “Islam Nusantara”, an Islam that is friendly, polite and respectful of local traditions.

Javanese also has a spiritual function. In prayers and *wirid*, many kiai combine Arabic and Javanese, creating a distinctive form of religious communication. For example, in the closing prayer of a recitation, kiai often add advice in Javanese such as “may the knowledge you learn be useful, and may your life be good.” This kind of prayer shows that local language can strengthen the depth of spiritual meaning through emotional closeness between teacher and student.

In addition, the Javanese language also strengthens social solidarity among students and the community around the *pesantren*. Social activities such as *gotong royong*, *roan*, and *tahlilan* use Javanese as a means of communication that reinforces a sense of togetherness. This shows that the preservation of Javanese language in *pesantren* not only maintains linguistic traditions, but also strengthens the social structure and community values that characterize traditional Islam in Java.

b. Theoretical Analysis and Practical Analysis

Theoretically, the results of this study strengthen the relevance of Fishman's (1991) language preservation theory, that the existence of a language depends on the social institutions that support it [17]. *Pesantren* proved to be the main domain for the sustainability of Javanese language because this institution maintains the social, religious, and cultural functions of the language. Meanwhile, Langgulung's (1991) theory of Islamic education conservatism also proves relevant in explaining how *pesantren* view language as an integral part of the Islamic education value system [18]. In Langgulung's view, Islamic education does not only aim to transfer knowledge, but also to shape personality and morality based on classical scientific traditions.

Practically, the results of this study provide a number of important implications. First, Javanese language preservation can be used as a local culture-based character education strategy in *pesantren*. Through language, values such as respect, courtesy, and responsibility can be taught contextually. Second, the use of local languages in Islamic education can be a model for strengthening national cultural literacy. Third, this research opens up opportunities to design an integrative *pesantren* curriculum, which combines the teaching of classical books with the preservation of local languages and cultures as part of tradition-based Islamic education.

However, there are a number of challenges that must be faced. The modernization of the national education system tends to suppress the use of local languages due to the orientation towards Indonesian and Arabic. In addition, the younger generation in *pesantren* began to show a decline in the ability to speak Javanese subtly, especially due to the influence of digital media and urbanization. Therefore, there needs to be a policy that supports the revitalization of local languages through strengthening the role of *pesantren* as cultural institutions.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Islamic education institutions can encourage collaboration between academics, cultural experts, and *pesantren* in developing regional language literacy programs. Innovations such as the digitization of Javanese books, Javanese language training for young preachers, and regional language religious speech competitions can be concrete steps to preserve language in a modern context.

Overall, the results of this study show that the preservation of Javanese language in *pesantren* is a concrete form of conservatism and traditionalism in Islamic education. Javanese language is not only a means of communication, but also a symbol of the continuity of classical Islamic values and Javanese cultural wisdom. In language there is ideology, in speech there is morality, and in preservation there is resistance to cultural homogenization. The *pesantren* thus acts as a bastion of tradition that maintains harmony between religion, language, and culture in an epistemological unity that is unique to the archipelago.

Conclusion

This research shows that the preservation of Javanese language in *pesantren* learning has a strategic and multidimensional meaning for strengthening the paradigm of conservatism and traditionalism in Islamic education in Indonesia. Based on the results of qualitative research through observations, interviews, and document analysis in three traditional *pesantren* in Pekalongan Regency, it can be concluded that Javanese is not just a means of communication, but also an ideological and cultural instrument that shapes the character, values, and thinking system of *santri* and the *pesantren* community as a whole.

First, Javanese language in *pesantren* functions as the main medium in the transmission of classical Islamic values and cultural locality. The use of Javanese in learning activities, especially in teaching the yellowclassical books through the *bandongan* and *sorogan* methods, creates a familiar and traditional learning atmosphere. This language helps *santri* understand religious texts with a local context that is easier to understand. Moreover, the interpretation of the books in Javanese *Pegon* shows a form of indigenization of Islamic knowledge, which is an effort to contextualize Islamic teachings in local culture without changing the substance of its teachings. This process strengthens the conservatism of *pesantren* in maintaining the purity of Islamic teaching sources, as well as maintaining the local language as a cultural identity.

Second, the preservation of Javanese language in *pesantren* is a concrete manifestation of traditionalism in Islamic education. The Javanese speech level system (*ngoko*, *krama*, and *krama inggil*) is in line with the social structure and morality of *pesantren* that emphasize *ta'dhim* to teachers and respect for others. Through language practices, *santri* are trained to respect hierarchy, manners, and values that are passed down from generation to generation. This tradition fosters a sense of community, spiritual discipline, and continuity of values that are the main characteristics of traditional Islamic education. Thus, Javanese is not only a vehicle for communication, but also a vehicle for the transmission of Islamic manners and ethics.

Third, this study found that the preservation of Javanese language in *pesantren* is also a form of resistance to the flow of modernization and globalization that tends to erode local identity. Although *pesantren* are now starting to adapt to the national education system, they still maintain the Javanese language as a symbol of tradition continuity and cultural pride. This selective attitude towards modernity reflects the paradigm of Islamic conservatism as described by Hasan Langgulung, namely maintaining good old values (*al-qadim al-shalih*) while accepting new things that are better (*al-jadid al-ashlah*). *Pesantren* emphasize that educational innovation is acceptable as long as it does not deny the roots of Islamic tradition and identity.

Fourth, the results of this study show that there are serious challenges to the sustainability of Javanese language preservation in *pesantren*, especially due to the increasing dominance of Indonesian and Arabic in the formal curriculum and the low interest of the younger generation in local languages. However, this challenge also opens up opportunities to develop learning models that integrate local and global values harmoniously. By utilizing a contextual approach, learning technology, and strengthening cultural literacy, *pesantren* can become a center for regional language revitalization that is adaptive to the times.

Theoretically, this study confirms the relevance of Fishman's (1991) language preservation theory in the context of Islamic educational institutions, that language can survive if it still has strong social and symbolic functions in its user community [17]. In the context of *pesantren*, the social function is rooted in the spiritual and social relationship between *kiai* and *santri*. While ideologically, the findings of this study strengthen Langgulung's (1991) theory of conservatism in Islamic education, that the preservation of traditional values and morality is the foundation for the formation of knowledgeable and civilized people [18].

Thus, the preservation of Javanese language in *pesantren* is not only relevant to preserve cultural heritage, but also plays an important role in maintaining the identity of Indonesian Islamic education which is deeply rooted in traditional values. Language becomes a binding medium between classical Islamic teachings, local wisdom, and the challenges of modernity. This study recommends that Islamic education policies provide greater space for the preservation of local languages in the *pesantren* curriculum, both through the teaching of books, religious rituals, and cultural activities. Further research is expected to expand the coverage to modern *pesantren* or non-Javanese areas to see similar dynamics in other linguistic contexts, so as to create a comprehensive map of the role of local languages in strengthening conservatism and traditionalism in Islamic education in the archipelago.

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