

WHY IS JAVANESE 'UNGGAH-UNGGUH' DECLINING ?

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays Javanese '*unggah-ungguh*' (speech levels) is declining. Most of Javanese, particularly young generations, are not able to use Javanese *krama* appropriately. The young generations are those who are at kindergartens, elementary schools, junior high schools, and senior high schools. Whereas, they have strategic positions and roles to maintain their mother tongue (Javanese).

The declining of Javanese speech levels should be wisely and integratedly handled through a well-planned program. Javanese, *krama* in particular, is not only a language of communication, but it is also an expressive language. It reflects glorious values, respect others. The choice of the variety used in communication mirrors one's personality. It is closely related to the Javanese view that one's personality and attitude are indicated by his/her ways of speaking and of behavior.

The maintenance of *unggah-ungguh* is urgently needed because it enables to motivate the young generations to be proud of, faithful, and love their mother tongue. By doing so, they have the sense of belonging and responsibility with the Javanese speech levels. Considering that Javanese is a language of literary works and of culture, it is necessarily developed and socialized in the society under the Indonesian nationalism. The maintenance of Javanese speech levels should be supported by family, the government both the legislatives and executives, private and state institutions those who are committed to Javanese speech levels.

Are Javanese parents proud of their children speaking good Indonesian, foreign languages, such as English, German, French, or Mandarin and they still speak Javanese well ? On the other hand, shall we sacrifice *unggah-ungguh* as the protective guarantee for the sake of nationalism and technology ?

Key words: Javanese speech levels (*unggah-ungguh*), declining, codification.

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