

Transformation of Javanese Song Lyrics and Their Representation in Maintaining Local Language in the VUCA Era

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Abstract

This paper discusses the transformation trend of Javanese songs that can represent postmodernism following the development of the internet, social media, and other digital technologies. This phenomenon is interesting to study because the Vuca posture (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) is characterized by conditions full of uncertainty, chaos, ambiguity, and complexity that touch almost all aspects of life, including the world of music. This paper aims to a. inventory the singers as representatives of Javanese music characterized by dialects; and b. discuss the transformative contextualization of the trend of Javanese songs with Vuca conditions. Through a qualitative descriptive approach, this study produces a. inventory of Javanese singers as a transformative form of postmodernity in Vuca conditions; b. transformative trend of Javanese songs with East Javanese and Yogya-Soloan dialects, which successfully provide options in the context of maintaining culture, especially Javanese, in the Vuca era which is full of uncertainty over the identity and representation of the country's culture due to the unstoppable rise of other popular music, both foreign and local. This transformation can potentially be a model for other regional language music.

Keywords: VUCA, postmodernity, cultural identity, language

1. Introduction

The Javanese language music trend that has recently emerged in popular culture in Indonesia, has an important role in maintaining the Javanese language. The younger generation, who generally easily absorb foreign cultures such as American Broadway (in the 70s), the Islamic trend in the post-reformation which continued with the Japanese Harajuku trend and K-Pop and Drakor (Korea), has the potential to erode local identities, one of which is Javanese culture and language. However, the creativity and transformation of Javanese culture manifested through Javanese pop songs, has succeeded in balancing the global trend because in reality, the younger generation is quite enthusiastic in accepting Javanese songs that are the result of this transformation. The presence of Javanese pop songs, driven by Didi Kempot with his distinctive genre works totaling hundreds of songs. Although previously there were Javanese songs such as in the genre of Karawitan and Campursari songs pioneered by Manthous, Didi Kempot's work proved to be more acceptable to young people and even his songs were famous abroad, as the Javanese diaspora both in Suriname and Suriname-Netherlands. The transformation of Javanese songs shows a new phenomenon which in Robert Escarpit's perspective (2005) is called Blocus, or a

blockade breaker followed by new trends such as the emergence of songs by Denny Cak Nan, Ndarboy Genk, Guyon Waton, and other Javanese pop singers.

The currently popular Javanese pop songs have succeeded in inspiring the younger generation to approach and be proud of the existence of the local culture and language through songs. These Javanese songs can represent the psychological and social reality of today's youth, and the Javanese language presented through Javanese songs. The Javanese lyrics can be likened to an encyclopedia that not only contains vocabulary but also meaningful values that are effective. Javanese songs in today's pop music trend are not just entertainment "heartache is danced to", but also have the function of preserving regional languages for the younger generation.

Unwittingly and programmed by the government, these songs correlate with the conditions of maintaining the Javanese language, especially for the younger generation as the successors of the existence of the Javanese language in the future. In this case, Javanese pop songs can function as a social institution for maintaining Javanese language. Therefore, the existence of Javanese pop songs needs to be maintained with various dialects presented such as East Javanese and Jogja-Solo, and it is hoped that it will be followed by other dialects. The positive value and important role of the emergence of Javanese songs with contemporary dialects is an interesting study for observers and observers of the Javanese language, including Maryaeni (2006); Fitriah (2020); Indiariani & Ningrum (2017); and Anggeline et. all (2022).

The development of digital media, the massive use of the internet and other information technologies in everyday life for the world of young people, is a challenge for musical works in Indonesia. However, local representation also benefits from the development of this technology in the postmodern era, removing the barriers that have so far limited the space for innovation and transformation in work. Mohd Aris et.all (2022) explains that VUCA - written as Vuca in this article, is an acronym for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity, by Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus in 1987, is referred to as an era of "fast everything", full of uncertainty, and various conditions blending into one, including in terms of culture. The developer of elementary education learning technology Ita Utari (2023) calls the Vuca world the current world influenced by the development of information technology which has an impact on the speed of change, unpredictable, difficult to control, the influence of many factors, and very subjective truth. The existence of traditional values is faced with the phenomenon of global modernity, so in order to continue to provide insight for the younger generation, it must be transformed, including the linguistic aspect through song lyrics. The correlation between language and the Vuca era is discussed in depth by Lisnawati, et. all (2023).

The trend of Javanese pop music as mentioned above, is one representation of the existence of locality supported by postmodern conditions. In the past, only singers with special talents and access along with certain cultural representations were considered to have the ability and recognition for existence. In the context of Javanese, for example, Gesang, Waljinah, Manthous, and Didi Kempot who, apart from being based on their capacity, also benefited from representing Javanese cultural centers such as Solo and Jogja. However, after the arrival of the postmodern era supported and characterized by internet access and its consequences, singers emerged with Javanese songs outside the convention centers, such as Denny Cak Nan who comes from Ngawi Regency, East Java Province.

Based on the above phenomenon, it is important to present a research concept that is oriented towards efforts to elevate the existence of locality in the context of arts and culture as a counterbalance to the current rapidly developing Vuca era trend. In the context of art and language, especially related to Javanese society, the presence and development of Javanese-language music trends is a success in transforming and innovating as a counter to the rise and development of foreign arts and culture in Indonesia. The urgency of this research is based on the phenomenon of the Vuca era which is so rapid that it requires a comparison based on local aspects as a form of control over the conditions of life that are so fast and always changing.

2. Research Methods

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that refers to the perspective put forward by Moleong (1989). As understood, qualitative research emerges from the perspective of the complexity and relativity of phenomena in social reality. Qualitative methodology is a basic theory that builds theoretical concepts based on patterns of action and interaction between and among various types of social units (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), which conceptualizes relationships to gain access to the environment or establish good relationships with research participants (Maxwell, 1996), and a more structured, emergent, and inductive data collection approach (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Furthermore, large-scale qualitative data needs to be included in data analysis that examines at least three types of linguistically mediated data: interviews, texts, and transcripts (Silverman, 2002). In line with the above perspective, Faruk (2012) explains that research methods are related to the meaning of data whose

meaning is not directly reflected through the data, so it requires a theoretical approach and is based on research hypotheses.

The population in this study is Javanese pop songs that are popular lately, either performed live by the singer or arranged by other singers. The sample in this study is some Javanese pop songs that represent certain dialects or regions taken from a series of Javanese pop songs on YouTube channels. The trend of songs characterized by East Javanese and Jogja-Soloan dialects was deliberately taken based on considerations of their popularity in society. While the unit of analysis in this study focuses on the linguistic aspect of the lyrics of Javanese pop songs as a identity and cultural representation reflected in the song lyrics

3. Results and Discussion

In this section, data will be presented about singers or music groups who often perform popular Javanese songs. The data is presented in the table (table 1) in this paper. In the next section, the data will be discussed especially in their correlation with related studies that are relevant to the context of this study. Furthermore, the data in this study in the form of the singer's name, region of origin, and the Javanese dialect used, will be analyzed in the context of Vuca as well as in terms of the representation of the Javanese dialect used. The presentation of the data in this study is presented in the following table.

Table 1. List of Javanese Pop singers along with their region of origin and the dialect

No	Singer/Group Name	Origin	Dialects
1	Denny Cak Nan	East Java	Jawa Timuran/East Java
2	Ndarboy Genk	Yogyakarta	Jogja-Solo
3	Guyon Waton	Yogyakarta	Jogja-Solo
4	Ilux	East Java	Jawa Timuran/East Java
5	Happy Asmara	East Java	Jawa Timuran/East Java
6	Hendra Kumbara	Central Java	Jogja-Solo
7	Suliyana	East Java	Jawa Timuran/East Java
8	Gilga Sahid	East Java	Jawa Timuran/East Java

3.1. Transformation of Javanese Songs in the Indonesian Music

It is undeniable that nowadays, Javanese songs are often heard in the categories of *langgam*, *keroncong*, *campursari*, *pop*, and *pop koplo* which give their color to music in Indonesia, especially for the Javanese people. These songs can compete with fans of foreign music, pop, dangdut, and currently popular music trends such as boy bands and girl bands from Korea. This phenomenon arises because, in addition to the number of loyal Javanese speakers who are dominant in Indonesia, it is also because Javanese music can transform to follow the times. As a result, music can compete and be on par with trendy foreign music.

After Didi Kempot's death, Denny Cak Nan became a young musician who performed with Javanese lyrics and received significant attention from the Indonesian people, especially fans of Javanese music. His popularity, apart from the contextualization of his song lyrics which are interesting and relevant to the current trends and psychological conditions of young people, is also supported by social media, such as YouTube, which is a channel for people to access his songs. This condition is a comparison of various cultural trends from abroad lately and provides a reference for the young generation of Indonesia, especially as Javanese speakers, to stay close to the representation of their national culture, namely the Indonesian language.

In addition to Didi Kempot and Denny Cak Nan, there are several other singers and songs they have created or performed that have a correlation with the trend of Javanese pop music. Based on the data above, there are two dominant language categories related to the linguistic aspects that appear in the lyrics of the songs, namely East Javanese and Javanese in the Jogja-Solo dialect. This phenomenon certainly shows the large scope of dialects with geographical breadth and cultural representation, both the East Javanese dialect which covers almost all cultural identities of the Javanese people in East Java and the Jogja Solo dialect as a representation of the culture of the Javanese people in the province of East Central Java and Yogyakarta. There

was no significant finding regarding the existence of singers and song lyrics performed using the Banyumasan or Pantura dialect of Javanese known as Ngapak in the trend of Javanese songs in the music scene in Indonesia lately.

The emergence of Javanese songs popularized by Denny Cak Nan, first with a single entitled *Kartonyono Medot Janji*, in 2019. The song represents the identity of young people related to themes of heartbreak, or what is currently trending related to songs with the term broken heart which legitimizes the late Didi Kempot as the "Lord of Broken Heart". In reality, Denny Cak Nan can exist behind the dominance of Didi Kempot who has become legendary as a popular campursasi musician with hundreds of his songs. Denny Cak Nan as a representation of young people who exist a lot through YouTube, along with the poetic associations of his song lyrics which are considered to represent the younger generation, as discussed by Lestari and Sulisty (2021).

In addition to aesthetic issues, Denny Cak Nan's cultural and geographical representation, which is strengthened by various dictions in his song lyrics, presents a different condition compared to previous Javanese-language music maestros. As previously explained, with the existence of Gesang, Waljinah, and Didi Kempot as representations of the identity and culture of the Solo Javanese people and Manthous as representations of the cultural identity and identity of Yogyakarta, Denny Cak Nan as a newcomer can raise the representation of East Javanese identity and language, which of course triggers the emergence of regional spirit for their identity. Moreover, so far, the condition of songs with the East Javanese dialect has not been as popular compared to the Javanese dialect of Yogya-Solo. Thus, the presence of Denny Cak Nan represents the momentum of East Javanese identity which is correlated with the existence of East Javanese songs and is also connected to the number of viewers and popularity of the songs. Studies on Denny Cak Nan's songs include those conducted by Ma'rufi & Ardi (2021); Putri & Sulanjari (2021); Darmawan (2023); and Putri (2024) focus on aesthetic issues.

In addition to Denny Cak Nan's works as a representation of the trend of the existence of Javanese songs in Indonesian music, there are also other singers (see table 1). It can be understood that the closeness of linguistic identity with songs in the Javanese trend that are performed and exist through social media, becomes a "lab" for the younger generation, especially with Javanese representation. Thus, the younger generation can remain close to their cultural identity even though the globalization trend of its various products including musical art that has become an inseparable part of Indonesia, is part of the global representation.

3.2. Javanese Pop Song Lyrics as a Representation of Locality in the VUCA Era

Although the VUCA era is characterized by ambiguity and uncertainty over various conditions that move and change so quickly, local conditions still exist and need to be maintained. Especially in the context of the existence of Javanese pop songs that have become a trend lately. As previously explained, the development of technology along with the conditions of postmodernism supported by the existence of the internet, media, or even AI, has given significance to the development of music, including the trend of Javanese songs as seen in Denny Cak Nan, Ndarboy Genk, and other Javanese musicians. This correlates with the ease of accessing these songs which is in line with the existence of trends from abroad such as the K-Pop culture that is spreading in the world in general.

As explained earlier, the VUCA era is closely related to postmodern conditions, displaying a context of life that has life phenomena, especially based on values from outside cultures. In this context, the potential for the uprooting of the younger generation from their cultural roots is great, which presents a non-human condition that is apathetic to the surrounding environment and ignores cultural values or its locality. This condition certainly causes problems both in the socio-cultural hierarchy in a society, as well as in the continuity of cultural aspects owned by a society because it is starting to be replaced by new values based on other cultural representations.

There needs to be an approach to the younger generation towards its cultural aspects in the form of packaging or models that are relatively preferred by the younger generation. A transformative breakthrough is needed from the conventional model to a modern direction following the trend that is currently popular with the younger generation. This phenomenon is also reflected in the lyrics of Javanese pop songs (see table 1). Conceptually, postmodernism is defined by Lyotard in Sim (2003), that postmodernism cannot be separated from modernism itself. The word modernism contains the meaning of advanced, glittering, and progressive. Modernism always promises us to bring about change to a more established world where all needs can be met. Rationality will help us face myths and baseless traditional beliefs, which make humans helpless in facing this world (Maksum, 2014:309). With this explanation, postmodernism is present as an impact of Western modernity which presents criticism of customs since their existence which is marked by the renaissance era. The contextualization of the explanation in this study is the presence of a postmodern perspective which is a continuation of Western modernism, presenting various possibilities for access including humanity to various

representations of identity. The impact is that the condition of artificial values based on other cultures often presents problems because the values offered are often not in line with the cultural values of society, so it is possible to present non-human conditions.

Based on the findings of the research team, it can be observed that the presence of the Korean trend in Indonesia is a representation of the presence of postmodernism which has the potential to impact non-human conditions, namely the erosion of local values and their replacement with values from foreign cultures which are often artificial. Based on the impression of modern versus ancient, the younger generation tends to admire the Korean dance style popularized by both Girls and Boy Bands, rather than continuing its cultural traditions in the form of dance such as dance. In fact, in the message of values wrapped in traditional dance, there are noble values that have a correlation with *kawruh* (knowledge) and character formation. The values in traditional dance, among others, are discussed by Kurniati & Kustantyo (2018); Mursito & Lestari (2023); Sawaludin & Salahudin (2016); Ansaar (2020); Sudarno (2017); and Jampi; Nawir; & Hadisaputra (2019). In relation to the context of song lyrics, the linguistic aspect has a sense of value that can be understood and experienced by the speakers which correlates with the formation of character and knowledge of a value. The existence of this correlation can be related to general cultural expression, feelings, or in the aesthetic composition itself. In the context of literature, it is related to rhyme, choice of words or diction, and other linguistic elements that have a correlation with cultural expression and its influence on character. Like pearls of wisdom and proverbs that also provide knowledge and knowledge for their community. Studies on the influence of language on community character, among others, are discussed by Mujib (2009) and Kustyarini (2017).

Based on the review above, the linguistic representation presented in the lyrics of Javanese pop songs as a representation of cultural aspects that can be enjoyed in the music trends of the young generation in Indonesia is divided into two classifications, namely East Javanese and Yogya Solo. This phenomenon is certainly based on the representation of the linguistic dialect brought by the singers in their songs. Denny Cak Nan together with Ilux, Suliwa, and Happy Asmara represent songs using East Javanese lyrics. While Ndarboy Genk, Guyon Waton, and Hendra Kumbara perform songs with lyrics in the Javanese Yogya-Solo dialect. The representation of the East Javanese dialect in the lyrics of Denny Cak Nan's song entitled *Kartonyono Medot Janji* is as follows.

*“Loro ati iki
Tak mbarno karo tak nggo latihan
Sok nek wis oleh gantimu
Wes ra kajok aku
Mergo wis tau, wis tau jeru”*

Based on the part of the song lyrics, it can be understood that the context of the Javanese language used is the East Javanese dialect. The choice of words (*tak mbarno*), (*ra kajok*), and (*jeru*) shows the representation of the East Javanese dialect which has the meaning (don't let it go), (don't be surprised), and (deeply)}. The representation of this linguistic identity certainly has differences with the context of the Yogya-Solo dialect of Javanese, because the possible choices of diction used are (*tak tok ne*), (*ora kaget*), and (*jero*).

The representation of the local language in the form of the East Javanese dialect is also reflected in the song *Sampek Tuwek* by Denny Cak Nan. The song is one of the hits that has been played 92 million times at the time of this research. The song was first released in 2019. The song lyrics that represent the local East Javanese dialect are as follows.

*Sampek tuwek we ra bakal tak culno
Masio wis ra wancine sayang-sayangan neng kene
Siji-sijine wong sing nggawe ayeme ati
Nggawe uripku seneng mesem saben bengi*

Based on the lyrics of the song above, it can be observed that there is a linguistic diction that represents the East Javanese dialect. The choice of diction (*sampek tuwek*), (*culno*), and (*masio*) shows the local character of the East Javanese dialect in the song. The diction (*sampek tuwek*) which in Indonesian means (until old), in the context of the Javanese dialect of Yogya-Solo has other variations such as (*ngasi/nganti/tekan tua*). The diction (*masio*) in the context of the East Javanese dialect of Javanese, has the meaning (*although*) and (*culno*) with the meaning (release) in Indonesian. The equivalent word (*culno*) in the Javanese dialect of Yogya-Solo for the diction is (*cul ke*) and the diction (*masio*) has an equivalent word in the Javanese dialect of Yogya-Solo, namely (*senajan*).

The representation of the Javanese language of the Yogya-Solo dialect in the trend of Javanese songs is reflected in the lyrics of the song *Koyo Jogja Istimewa* sung by Ndarboy Genk. Although the geographical identity of the song mentions the city of Jogja which of course also refers to linguistic issues, the representation of the Yogya-Solo dialect can be identified and reflected in the song. The part of the song lyrics that reflects this part is reflected in the following quote.

*“Bungah tenan rasane
Wong kang lagi gandrung
Tak perjuangke
Tekan Janur melengkung”*

The lyrics of the song *Koyo Jogja Istimewa* sung by Ndarboy Genk above, can be identified regarding the representation of the Javanese language in the Yogya-Solo dialect. It can be identified by the use of the diction (*tak perjuangke*) and (*tekan*) chosen by Ndarboy Genk in the lyrics of the song, with the meaning {(I fight for it) and (until)}. This can be compared with another Javanese dialect, namely East Javanese, with the choice of words indicating that this aspect is a representation of the Javanese language in the Yogya-Solo dialect. In the context of the East Javanese dialect, the diction (*tak perjuangke*) and (*tekan*) has variations {(*tak perjuangno*) and (*sampek*)} if the concept is realized in the East Javanese dialect.

In the context of Vuca which is inevitable and has become an inseparable part of the culture of Indonesian society due to the recent trend of postmodernism, of course, there are negative aspects that influence the condition of Non-humans as stated by Jean Francois Lyotard in Sim (2003) and Sulistyono (2018). The representation of cultural identity in the trend of Javanese songs can be a control and comparison of the existence of foreign cultural influences through songs sourced from foreign cultures such as the presence of K-Pop. The trend of Javanese songs in music in Indonesia with various easily accessible accesses through *YouTube* channels, *Spotify*, and others, can be a control over the massive Vuca conditions, including in the context of songs and other cultural products.

4. Conclusion

Based on the description of the results and discussion above, the Vuca era with the acronym Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity, characterized by such rapid conditions as the character of the postmodernism trend, also has an impact on the existence of Javanese pop songs outside the conventions of Javanese music so far such as Jogja and Solo. This condition can be understood because in addition to the level of technological and media sophistication that makes it easier for people to access various things, the representation of linguistic identity outside the Javanese language patron with various arts that have been considered as barometers, can exceed these boundaries with existence and popularity.

Denny Cak Nan as a young singer who sings his songs with lyrics in East Javanese dialect, is a representation of the Vuca trend supported by easy access to various media that support his popularity. In addition to being caused by media trends, his song lyrics that use East Javanese dialect correlate with identity representation, especially by the large number of Javanese people who use East Javanese. This representation of identity encourages sensitivity and correlates with the number of followers who are always loyal to following the development of his music. This situation shows that the representation of identity represented in the song lyrics and the linguistic aspects displayed influences the market aspect for the singers, also seen in the existence of Ndarboy Genk, Guyon Waton, and Hendra Kumbara who sing Javanese songs with the Yogya-Solo dialect.

Regarding the relevance between Vuca conditions and local aspects in Javanese song lyrics in recent trends, it shows a confusing dualism condition. On the one hand, Vuca conditions with easy access provide space for the entry and dominant existence of foreign cultures in Indonesia, such as in the existence of K-Pop which originates from Korean culture. However, on the other hand, Vuca conditions as a fast and overlapping era also support the existence of Javanese songs outside the main patron in the assumption of Javanese cultural centers such as Surakarta and Yogyakarta. This also has an impact on the potential for young people to be close to the cultural and linguistic aspects they have, through various representations of identity, culture, and especially language presented through the lyrics of these songs which on the one hand can be used as a basis for identity for the younger generation. The transformation of the trend of Javanese songs in the East Javanese and Jogja-Soloan dialects has been able to contribute to the preservation of local culture that is unshakeable due to the rise of other music trends that are popular with the community, especially young people today.

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