

Dialectological analysis of East Java's Arekan, Mataraman, and Pendhalungan regional linguistic features

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ABSTRACT

Javanese is often broadly categorised into Central Javanese, East Javanese, and Yogyakarta varieties; however, such a classification obscures the substantial internal dialectal variation within East Java. This article aims to analyse the dialectal differentiation (lexical, phonological, morphological, and sociolinguistic) in three regions of East Java. It emphasised the differences in accent and dialect among speakers from different regions. The data were collected through interviews with 9 informants: three from the Arekan region (Lamongan, Gresik, and Surabaya); three from the Mataraman region (Madiun, Kediri, and Blitar); and three from the Pendhalungan region (Probolinggo, Situbondo, and Jember). The participants were aged 20–40 and mostly from mid-level social backgrounds. Participants were assigned a theme for dialogue in their mother tongue, which was recorded with a voice recorder. The recording results were then analysed. To delve further, participants were interviewed to explore their family backgrounds, educational histories, and the environments in which they grew up. The research findings revealed many dialectal differences among the three areas in East Java, including vocabulary, word formation, and accent. The dialect differences reflect the intricate history and varied identities of Javanese people across East Java. Understanding these differences enriches not only the study of linguistics but also the broader appreciation of Indonesia's cultural mosaic.

Keywords: Accent; Arekan; dialectal differentiation; Mataraman; Pendhalungan

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental aspect of human life and interaction, serving as a crucial medium for expressing ideas, emotions, and needs. Philosophers particularly rely on language to communicate their reflections and conclusions, making it indispensable for understanding complex philosophical concepts (Hastuti & Rini, 2023). As Choudhury (2013) emphasises, language functions as a means of expression through which humans convey feelings, thoughts, and desires. The study of language, or

linguistics, encompasses various branches such as phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, each exploring different features of how language operates.

The study of regional languages is a vital area within linguistics, dedicated to examining the linguistic varieties used by communities characterised by frequent social interactions. These regional languages not only serve as means of communication but also embody the social

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dynamics and identities of their speakers. Prior dialectological research in Java has shown that Javanese speakers use politeness strategies when making requests, thereby indicating greater awareness of linguistic etiquette (Sukarno, 2018). These regional variations in vocabulary, pronunciation, and register use are not merely linguistic differences but are deeply embedded in the complexity and richness of Javanese dialects, revealing how geographic and social factors contribute to linguistic variation. Zulfahita et al. (2019) further emphasise that the persistence of regional languages depends on their regular use within particular communities or geographic locales, a phenomenon that reinforces social bonds and cultural identity. This interplay between language and community underscores the essential role of dialects in reflecting and shaping the cultural landscape of their speakers.

Indonesia exemplifies linguistic diversity, with numerous regional languages that reflect its rich cultural heritage (Lewis et al., 2016). Among these, Javanese stands out as a major regional language spoken across the island of Java (Eberhard et al., 2024). Importantly, Javanese is not a single, uniform language but consists of multiple dialects that vary by region. For example, the Surabaya and Malang dialects in eastern Java each have distinctive phonological and lexical characteristics. Similarly, the Pantura dialects spoken in coastal areas such as Gresik, Tuban, and Lamongan exhibit unique linguistic features shaped by their northern coastal environment. This diversity within Javanese demonstrates how regional languages reflect both cultural and geographical variation. Therefore, this study focuses on dialectal differences among Javanese speakers in East Java, particularly in the North Coast (Pantura) area, the Mataraman region, and the Pendhalungan Area.

The Pantura region, which includes Tuban, Lamongan, Bojonegoro, and Gresik, is known for its dynamic linguistic environment, shaped by trade, migration, and cultural interaction among speakers of Bahasa Indonesia, Madurese, and other local languages (FBSUNNES, 2025). Javanese spoken in this region tends to favour the *Ngoko* (informal) register, with limited use of *Krama*, and displays unique lexical and phonological features that distinguish it from other varieties. The vocabulary is often more colloquial, and code-switching into Bahasa Indonesia is common, reflecting the region's urban and multicultural character.

In contrast, the Mataraman area—comprising cities and regencies such as Madiun, Kediri, Tulungagung, and Ponorogo—preserves more conservative features of the Javanese language. Historically associated with the cultural Influence of Central Java and the legacy of the Mataram kingdom, this region exhibits greater adherence to the use of *Krama* and *madya* levels, reflecting

traditional values of politeness and social hierarchy (Insani et al., 2025). The dialect spoken in the Mataraman area is often perceived as more “refined” or “halus,” and speakers demonstrate higher awareness of linguistic etiquette.

These regional variations in vocabulary, pronunciation, and register use are not merely linguistic differences but are deeply embedded in speakers' cultural identities and social interactions (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021). Understanding these differences is crucial for applied linguistics, especially in areas such as language planning, education, sociolinguistics, and cultural preservation. However, there is a lack of comprehensive, systematic studies that directly compare the phonological, lexical, and sociopragmatic features of Arekan, Mataraman, and Pendhalungan dialects. Consequently, the nuanced ways in which these distinct dialectal systems reflect and shape regional identities remain poorly understood, limiting the effectiveness of applied linguistic interventions.

The dialectal differences among Javanese speakers in the East Java regions of Pantura and Arekan, Mataraman, and Pendhalungan can be analysed by identifying lexical variations, semantic shifts, and region-specific expressions. While the phonological differences between the two regions, including variation in vowel and consonant pronunciation, intonation patterns, syllable structures, and the presence of phonological processes such as assimilation that distinguish the speech of Pantura speakers from that of Mataraman speakers, can be classified, and the sociolinguistic factors (e.g., age, education, formality, occupation) influencing dialect use in each region can be investigated.

Dialect

Dialect is a specific form of language used by a particular group of people, typically connected by geographical proximity or social factors (Hnatyuk et al., 2021). The number of speakers and the area itself can be any size. As a result, a dialect for a bigger area can have several sub-dialects, which can then contain dialects for smaller areas, and so on. There is no clear distinction between a language and a dialect, nor are there accepted criteria for separating them, despite several paradigms that often yield contradictory findings.

Junaidi et al. (2016) describe a dialect as a form of a standard language that shows regional differences or variations, including slight distinctions in phonology, morphosyntax, and semantics influenced by the specific geographic area. The study of dialects, known as dialectology, explores language variation across multiple dimensions, including phonology, morphology, syntax, vocabulary, and semantics.

A dialect can also be defined as a specific form of a language used by a particular group of people, typically connected by geographical proximity or social factors (Hnatyuk et al., 2021). Dialects are distinguished from one another by variations in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical structures. While dialectal distinctions often arise from regional boundaries, they can also reflect differences related to social class, ethnicity, or age group. For example, people from different regions may use unique accents and expressions within the same language, enriching linguistic diversity (University of Sheffield, 2022). This diversity is vital to understanding how language operates within social and cultural contexts, emphasising that dialects serve as markers of identity and community rather than indicators of language correctness.

Dialects are strong indicators of social and personal identity, even though they might not be as respected as standard languages. A person's connection to a specific area, community, or cultural heritage can be indicated by their dialect. Many speakers view their dialect as a source of pride and a sense of community, and it may be a crucial component of who they are as individuals (Sharma, 2023).

Dialects can differ from the standard language in several important aspects, each contributing to their unique qualities, commonly known as Accent. Accents can vary widely even within a single language and often reveal the speaker's region, social class, or ethnicity. For example, the pronunciation of words like "car" or "water" is notably different among British, American, and Australian English. These pronunciation variations are part of what distinguishes dialects from one another and give speakers a sense of belonging and identity.

In addition to accents, vocabulary differences also play a crucial role in distinguishing dialects. Unique words or terms may be common in one dialect but unfamiliar in another. For example, in American English, people living in different regions might call a soft drink "soda" or "pop." In contrast, in British English, a large vehicle is often called a "lorry," whereas in American English, it is known as a "truck." Together, accent and vocabulary shape the distinctive identity of dialects and reflect the cultural and social diversity within a language. This highlights how dialects maintain close ties with their communities while diverging from standardised forms used in formal communication.

Accent or dialect is a key factor that differentiates varieties of spoken English worldwide. Variations between American and British English arise from differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, spelling, and syntax (Kirkpatrick, 2022). Individual factors such as geographic location, region, and social background play significant roles in shaping these linguistic

variations, underscoring the importance of sociolinguistic studies for a better understanding of language diversity (Meyerhoff, 2019). Currently, American English remains dominant globally due to the United States' economic, cultural, and technological Influence (Jenkins, 2003).

This study aims to examine the *lexical, phonological, sociolinguistic, and morphological* differences among the Mataraman, Arekan, and Pendhalungan dialects of East Java. By investigating how language use varies across these regions, the Research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of Javanese dialectal diversity and its implications for language policy, education, and cultural identity in Indonesia.

Lexical Difference

Lexical differences refer to variations in vocabulary and word usage across different dialects and languages, reflecting the distinct ways communities name concepts, objects, or ideas. The lexical differences are influenced by geographical location, social hierarchy, education, and the context in which language is used, contributing to the diversity and richness of lexical knowledge within a language (Fardzilatin & Suryadi, 2021). Furthermore, Septianingsih (2024) stated that lexical diversity and sophistication are often influenced by factors such as social context, education, and language modality. This claim is supported by Kim et al. (2023), who showed that second language learners tend to exhibit greater lexical complexity in written than in spoken responses, highlighting how lexical choices adapt to context and language proficiency. Lexical differences also influence how meaning is conveyed, affecting communication efficiency and style across languages and dialects (Kim et al., 2023; Zulfahita et al., 2019).

Phonological Differences

Phonological differences encompass variations in sound systems across languages and dialects, including contrasts in phoneme inventories, intonation, stress, and rhythm or accents. They serve as audible markers of regional identity. They reflect the historical, cultural, and social influences that have shaped a particular region's speech patterns. Accents can distinguish the regions of the speaker. (Ja'afreh & Al-Saudi, 2024). Phonological differences involve variations in the sound systems of languages or dialects, including differences in phoneme inventories, intonation, stress patterns, and rhythm. Such variations can signify regional or ethnic identities and are often shaped by historical, cultural, and geographic factors (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021). Pereira et al. (2025) analysed phonological variation in World Englishes, noting distinctive features such as syllable timing and retroflex consonants in Indian English or rhoticity and vowel shifts in Australian English. These

phonological traits reflect the influence of speakers' native languages and social backgrounds (Pereira et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2023).

Sociolinguistic Differences

Sociolinguistic differences refer to how language use varies across social factors such as region, ethnicity, social class, gender, and context. These differences influence not only what people say but how they say it, including accent, register, and style (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021). Sociolinguistic research has shown that language serves as a social marker that constructs and reflects identity and power relations within communities (Bettoni, 2023). Furthermore, language serves as a vital tool for constructing and expressing ethnic and cultural identity, with communities using specific linguistic features to signal group membership and heritage (Reyes, 2020). For example, language variation across urban and rural areas or among different ethnic groups reveals how societal structures shape linguistic behaviour and attitudes (Freeman et al., 2022).

Morphological Differences

Morphological differences pertain to how languages form and structure words, such as through prefixes, suffixes, infixes, or compounding. These differences affect grammatical categories, including tense, number, and case. Morphological knowledge and awareness significantly impact vocabulary acquisition and language processing (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2011). Recent studies emphasise the multidimensionality of morphological skills in second-language learning, showing that awareness of morphology enhances word learning and structural comprehension (Tewarat & Afriana, 2024). Structural differences in morphological structure across languages highlight the diverse ways humans systematically encode meaning in words (Freeman et al., 2022; LibreTexts, 2020).

Factors Responsible for Dialect Variations

Dialect variations arise from complex interactions among various factors that shape how language is used across different regions and social groups. One key factor in dialect variation is geographical influence. Physical separation, such as mountains, rivers, or distance between communities, can lead to the development of distinct linguistic features in pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax. These natural barriers restrict interaction between groups, causing languages to evolve differently and form unique dialects (Sultani & Matin, 2025).

Variationist sociolinguistic theory posits that social factors such as age, gender, and community setting are major sources of dialect variation (Tagliamonte, 2021). Socio-economic status and education shape an individual's linguistic repertoire, leading to differences in vocabulary and

pronunciation across social classes (Sharma & Rampton, 2021). Furthermore, language serves as a vital tool for constructing and expressing ethnic and cultural identity, with communities using specific linguistic features to signal group membership and heritage (Reyes, 2020).

Historical and political factors equally contribute to dialect differentiation. Migration, colonisation, and the introduction of new governance systems lead to language contact, borrowing, and, at times, language shift. These events introduce new elements to local languages and promote linguistic diversity. Additionally, political decisions on language standardisation and education policies influence the spread or suppression of certain dialects within a country, shaping how dialects evolve and persist (Sultani & Matin, 2025).

Thus, this study also tries to understand the historical background underlying the dialectal differences among the Mataraman, Pendhalungan, and Arekan dialects in the Javanese language. Thus, it is of significant importance for several reasons. First, the Javanese language itself has a rich history spanning over a thousand years, evolving through phases from Old Javanese to Modern Javanese (the Mataram dialect). The political ascendancy of the Mataram Sultanate in the 17th century established the courtly speech of Surakarta and Yogyakarta as the prestige dialect, shifting the literary standard of Javanese away from older traditions and towards this inland variant (Ricklefs, 2001; Wedhawati et al., 2006). This dialect carries the cultural legacy of classical Javanese literature and courtly traditions, reflecting the region's complex social stratification and linguistic politeness levels.

The Pendhalungan dialect emerges from a historical context of intense cultural and ethnic convergence between Javanese and Madurese peoples in East Java. This dialect reflects a hybrid identity born out of colonial and postcolonial socio-economic developments, such as plantation agriculture and migration flows. Linguistically, this convergence is evidenced by distinct phonological and lexical variations. (Nisa et al., 2024). Thus, Pendhalungan illustrates language as a dynamic expression of social history, acculturation, and community identity, showing how Javanese has adapted through sustained contact with other languages and social groups.

The Arekan dialect represents a distinct cultural and linguistic identity centred around Surabaya, Sidoarjo, Gresik and Malang (Gunawan, 2022). The dialect of Arekan represents various ethnicities and cultures, resulting in more open, fluid and egalitarian communication pattern representing the values of equality, solidarity and togetherness in all scope of life. The egalitarian language in Suroboyoan dialect is a manifestation of how people build identity, negotiate the value of equality, while

rejecting hierarchical symbolic domination (Nurdianik et al., 2025). Deriving from Old Javanese roots, the Arekan dialect evolved through interaction with neighbouring languages and dialects, resulting in a unique set of phonological and lexical traits that serve as strong markers of social and cultural identity within the region (Adelaar, 2010)

Studying the historical backgrounds of these dialects is crucial not only to preserve linguistic diversity and cultural heritage but also to deepen understanding of regional identities and social dynamics in East Java. Knowledge of these dialects contributes to broader discussions about language maintenance, cultural preservation, and the historical forces shaping language variation. It allows scholars, educators, and community members to appreciate the intricate relationships between history, culture, and language use in different Javanese-speaking areas, fostering respect and awareness of Indonesia's linguistic richness.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach within the framework of sociolinguistics and dialectology. The goal is to describe and analyse the lexical, phonological, and sociolinguistic features of three Javanese dialects in East Java: Mataraman, Arekan, and Pendhalungan. A comparative dialectological approach is used to identify variations and similarities in natural speech contexts. It is also partially comparative, as it analyses dialectal differences between three distinct regions. Through fieldwork and interview-based data collection, the study documents, classifies, and compares lexical, phonological, sociolinguistic and morphological patterns.

The study was conducted in three major dialect regions of East Java: the Mataraman area (encompassing Madiun, Ponorogo, Blitar, Nganjuk, and Kediri), the Arekan area (including Surabaya, Sidoarjo, and Gresik), and the Pendhalungan area (covering Jember, Bondowoso, and Situbondo). These regions are selected based on established historical and sociolinguistic mappings, which identify them as core representatives of their respective dialect zones (Sudaryanto, 1993). Participants were native Javanese speakers from each area, recruited through purposive sampling to capture linguistic variation across relevant social groups.

Respondents

The population for this study consisted of residents of East Java, specifically in Surabaya and the surrounding regencies of Sukolilo, Gunung Anyar, and Rungkut. Samples were selected to accurately represent the overall population. Informants met criteria adapted from Ayatrohaedi (2003), which

included the following requirements: 1) individuals residing in rural areas, 2) aged between 20 and 40 years, 3) physically and mentally healthy, 4) speakers of Javanese as their first language, 5) proficient in Indonesian, and 6) having completed at least secondary education.

Instruments

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with the informants in this study to understand their background and identify Lexical Differences (Vocabulary), Phonological Differences (Pronunciation), and Morphological Differences. The interview was expected to elicit vocabulary and natural speech patterns. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with informants representing three areas of East Java (Mataraman, Arekan, and Pandhalungan). All of them are people living in East Java, aged 20 to 40, male and female. The topics given in the interviews were: daily life, traditions, emotions and instructions to elicit vocabulary and speech patterns.

Besides the interview, observations of the informants were carried out to identify the Lexical Choices (Vocabulary) and the Phonological Accent (dialect) they used in their communication. The observation was designed around the place, time, and occasion of the informants' natural communication, such as coffee shops in the evening, a campus cafeteria, and a parking area in public places. Audio recordings were also used to capture spontaneous speech samples during the observation period. When some speeches could not be written down, the field notes were taken to notice some special tone that might influence the speech. After data collection, several steps were taken to analyse the data.

Data Collection

The researchers employed an advanced proficiency method to collect adult Javanese language data in East Java. They conducted face-to-face interviews with participants at the research site. During these interviews, the researchers took notes to ensure accurate phonetic transcription and minimise errors. The notes were later cross-checked with audio recordings to complement the recorded data. To maintain data authenticity, the researcher aimed to keep participants unaware of the recording process. Additionally, the researcher used a fishing technique to elicit responses, prompting with gestures or verbal cues, depending on the participant.

Data Analysis

The analysis involved multiple stages. First, the recorded data were transcribed into written form. Next, the recordings were carefully edited to represent the original phonetic sounds accurately. After identifying lexical and phonological variations in Javanese, the researchers compared the

communication contexts where these differences might occur. Finally, the transcribed data were analysed by grouping them according to variations in vocabulary, phonology, morphology, and sociolinguistic factors.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study examines the lexical, phonological, sociolinguistic, and morphological differences between the Javanese dialects spoken in East Java's Mataraman, Arekan, and Pendhalungan. The data presented in Tables 1 through 8 consist of lexical

items identified from recorded dialogue produced by nine respondents.

Lexical Analysis

The lexical differences are used to determine how many words differ between dialects and to identify region-specific vocabulary. The analysis can be completed by aligning the meanings side by side for each dialect and identifying differences by categorising synonyms, borrowings (e.g., Madurese influence in Pendhalungan), and obsolete or traditional words (e.g., Mataraman retaining older Javanese).

Table 1.
Lexical Difference of Arekan, Mataraman, and Pendhalungan

Indonesian	English	Arekan Form	Mataraman Form	Pendhalungan Form
Kamu	You	koen/peno	awakmu	pean/mean
Besok	Tomorrow	mene	sesuk	kesok
Anak	Kid	arek	bocah	arek
Jalan	Street	émbong	dalan	émbong/lurung
Telaga	Lake	tlogo	telogo	ranu
Kakak laki-laki	Brother	cacak	Mas	Cak
Lempar	Throw	sawat	balang	srampang
Jatuh	Fall	logor	ciblok	
Mengejar	Catch up	Nggodak	Ngoyak	Nggundang
Tepat	Exactly	tepak	pas	tepak

The lexical analysis of the Arekan, Mataraman, and Pendhalungan Javanese dialects, as illustrated in Table 1, reveals significant variation in vocabulary usage that reflects the distinct cultural, historical, and social influences shaping each region's speech. A key observation is the presence of synonyms that differ regionally but share the same meaning. For example, the word "you" is realised as "koen/peno" in Arekan, "awakmu" in Mataraman, and "pean/mean" in Pendhalungan. This diversity illustrates how each dialect has developed its own preferred lexical choices for common pronouns, signalling group identity and regional particularities.

Similarly, temporal terms like "besok" (tomorrow) show variation: Arekan uses "mene," Mataraman "sesuk," and Pendhalungan "kesok." These variants represent lexical substitutions that mark dialectal boundaries and possibly the retention or innovation of terms due to geographic isolation or language contact. Lexical variation also emerges in basic nouns such as "anak" (kid), with Arekan and Pendhalungan both using "arek," while Mataraman prefers "bocah." Likewise, "jalan" (street) is "émbong" in Arekan, "dalan" in Mataraman, and either "émbong" or "lurung" in Pendhalungan, highlighting mixed influences and lexical borrowing in the hybrid Pendhalungan speech.

Overall, this lexical differentiation underscores how language functions as a marker of regional identity and cultural heritage. Arekan vocabulary

tends to incorporate urban-coastal terms reflecting a dynamic social milieu; Mataraman maintains a more traditional and formal lexicon aligned with classical Javanese norms; and Pendhalungan exhibits a blend reflective of its hybrid cultural environment, with both retention and borrowing of terms. This vocabulary diversity not only enriches the linguistic tapestry of East Java but also shapes mutual intelligibility, social interaction, and a sense of belonging to the community.

By categorising lexical differences into synonyms, borrowings, and archaic or traditional forms, the analysis captures the complex linguistic ecology in which history, politics, geography, and social contact converge to shape distinctive dialectal vocabularies among the Arekan, Mataraman, and Pendhalungan peoples. Such a detailed lexical study is crucial for understanding language variation, planning in education and media, and preserving linguistic diversity in a multilingual society. Thus, the lexical analysis of Arekan, Mataraman, and Pendhalungan Javanese dialects in Table 1 shows clear patterns of vocabulary variation that mark regional identity and linguistic Influence. Each dialect expresses common concepts and everyday words with distinct lexical choices, highlighting how language serves as a social and cultural marker. More examples of lexical differences in dialogue are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

The Example of Lexical Differences

The sentence:

Besok teman-teman mau pergi naik gunung, kamu ikut?

Our friends are going hiking tomorrow. Will you join?

Dialect	Sentence	Phonetic Transcription (IPA)	Linguistic Note
Arekan	<i>Mene arek-arek kate munggah gunung, koen melok gak?</i>	/mene 'arɛ? 'arɛ? 'kate 'munɣah 'gunoŋ, 'koen 'melo? ga?/	'Arek-arek' friends 'koen' you in Arekan
Mataraman	<i>Sesuk cah-cah arep munggah gunung, kowe melu po ora?</i>	/sə'su? tʃah tʃah 'arəp 'munɣah 'gunoŋ, 'kowe 'melu po 'ora /	'Cah-cah', our friends 'kowe' you in Mataraman
Pendhalungan	<i>Kesuk arek-arek arep munggah gunung, kowe gak melok a?</i>	/kə'su? 'arɛ? 'arɛ? 'arəp 'munɣah 'gunoŋ, 'pean ga? 'melok a?/	'arek-arek' our friends in Pendhalungan

Phonological/Accent Analysis

The second analysis is a phonological/accent analysis to detect differences in pronunciation patterns. It can be accomplished by using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to identify segmental changes, such as vowel quality shifts (e.g., u → o in Pendhalungan).

The phonological analysis of the Arekan, Mataraman, and Pendhalungan Javanese dialects, illustrated in Table 3, highlights key pronunciation differences among these regional varieties, particularly in vowel quality and consonant usage patterns. Such differences provide crucial insight into the variations in the sound system within East Java's Javanese dialect continuum.

Table 3

Phonological Differences of Arekan, Mataraman and Pendhalungan

Words	English	Arekan Form	Mataraman Form	Pendhalungan Form
Belum	Not yet	Gorong	Durung	Gorong
Pulang	Go home	Moleh	Mulih	Balik
Ayam	Chicken	Péték	piték	Péték
Hitam	Black	ithêng	Ireng	Cèlèng
Melihat	See	nontok	Ndèlèng	Ndèlok

One notable phonological feature is the vowel quality shift observed particularly in the Pendhalungan dialect, where the vowel /u/ or /i/ in Mataraman and Arekan frequently changes to /o/ in Pendhalungan, as in "pulang" (go home) realised as [balik] instead of [moleh] or [mulih]. This kind of segmental vowel shift reflects both historical sound changes and influence from neighbouring languages such as Madurese, which has a different vowel system. The vowel change contributes significantly to the distinct regional accent of Pendhalungan speakers and signals a contact-induced phonological innovation.

Consonantal variation also exists, although less pronounced than vowels. For example, the word for "black" differs between Arekan [ithêng], Mataraman [ireng], and Pendhalungan [cèlèng], showing segmental differences including initial consonant variation and substitution influenced by

neighbouring ethnic languages or internal dialect evolution. Similarly, the word for "see" varies: Arekan uses [nontok], Mataraman [ndèlèng], and Pendhalungan [ndèlok], differing mainly in final consonant articulation, which affects the perceptual phonetic signature of each dialect.

Phonological processes such as epenthesis, assimilation, and vowel reduction also contribute to rhythmic and intonational differences among the dialects. Arekan dialect tends to have a more clipped or energetic pronunciation typical of urban speech; Mataraman reflects a more open and clear articulation consistent with its formal and conservative speech style; while Pendhalungan displays mixed features, showing both clarity and regionalised influences from Madurese phonology. More examples of phonological differences in dialogue are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

The Example of Phonological Differences

Bapak saya pulang membawa ayam hitam.

My father brings black chicken to go home.

Dialect	Sentence	Phonetic Transcription (IPA)	Linguistic Note
Mataraman	<i>bapakku moleh nggowo pitik ireng</i>	/ba'pakku mo'leh ŋ'gowo pi'tik i'reŋ/	<i>moleh</i> 'pulang' khas Mataraman
Arekan	<i>bapakku kundur nggowo pitik ireng</i>	/ba'pakku kun'dur ŋ'gowo pi'tik i'reŋ/	<i>Kundur</i> sering muncul dalam Arekan
Pendhalungan	<i>Bapakku balik nggowo pitik ireng</i>	/ba'pakku ba'lik ŋ'gowo pi'tik i'reŋ/	<i>balik</i> dipengaruhi kontak Jawa–Madura

Sociolinguistic Interpretation

The next analysis is Sociolinguistic Interpretation among Arekan, Mataraman and Pendhalungan. Sociolinguistics studies how language varies and functions in social contexts (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021). This analytical framework is particularly apt for this study, as it moves beyond merely cataloguing linguistic features to interpreting what these variations mean within their specific social and cultural ecosystems.

Javanese is famously known for its complex system of speech levels (registers)—*Ngoko* (informal), *Madya* (middle), and *Krama* (formal/polite)—which encode social hierarchies,

politeness, and speaker-hearer relationships. Variation in speech levels, address terms, and lexical choices reflects social identity, status, intimacy, and respect norms shaped by regional and cultural contexts (Poedjosoedarmo, 1968). This sociolinguistic variation underscores how language use is deeply intertwined with the social fabric, cultural expectations, and identity in different Javanese-speaking communities.

Table 5 shows that the sociolinguistic interpretation of the Arekan, Mataraman, and Pendhalungan Javanese dialects reveals distinct social and cultural identities expressed through language use in these communities.

Table 5.
Sociolinguistic Interpretation among Arekan, Mataraman and Pendhalungan

Dialect	Politeness level	Perceived Style	Code Switching	Cultural Link
Arekan	Low emphasis on <i>Krama</i> , mostly <i>Ngoko</i>	Direct, energetic, blunt	High with Indonesian, Madurese	Urban-coastal identity
Mataraman	Strong <i>Krama</i> norms	Polite, refined, formal	Moderate with Indonesian	Central Javanese tradition
Pendhalungan	Reduced <i>Krama</i> , hybrid forms	Mixed, fluid, adaptable	High with Madurese and Indonesian	Cultural hybrid zone

The Arekan dialect is characterised by a low emphasis on *Krama* (formal speech) and a heavy reliance on *Ngoko* (informal speech). Speakers of the Arekan dialect tend to communicate in a direct, energetic, and blunt style, reflecting a straightforward, no-nonsense approach typical of urban and coastal settings. The high frequency of code-switching between Indonesian and Madurese in this dialect reflects the region's multilingual nature. It demonstrates a flexible linguistic repertoire to negotiate various social contexts. This linguistic behaviour deeply connects with an urban-coastal identity, where rapid communication and social dynamism are valued, and where language reflects practical and social solidarity among peers.

In contrast, the Mataraman dialect adheres strongly to *Krama* norms, emphasising polite, refined, and formal speech. This dialect adheres more strictly to the traditional Javanese social hierarchy, with an intricate system of polite forms and honorifics that reflect cultural values steeped in Central Javanese tradition. The use of *Krama* in everyday language signals a deep cultural commitment to respect, formality, and social distance from interlocutors of higher status or age. Code-switching to Indonesian is moderate, underscoring a preference for maintaining traditional linguistic practices in formal and social interactions, thereby highlighting a community with a strong sense of historical and cultural continuity.

The Pendhalungan dialect represents a cultural hybrid zone, where speakers use reduced *Krama* and hybrid speech forms. The linguistic style here is mixed, fluid, and adaptable, reflecting sociolinguistic flexibility in a region characterised

by multilingual interaction, particularly with Madurese and Indonesian. The high degree of code-switching between Madurese and Indonesian mirrors the sociocultural reality of the Pendhalungan community, which blends multiple linguistic and ethnic traditions. This dialect's adaptability exemplifies how speakers navigate complex social environments where various cultural identities converge, using language as a tool for pragmatic communication and identity negotiation.

In summary, the three dialects illustrate how sociolinguistic variation manifests in speech level preferences, style, and bilingual practices shaped by differing cultural milieus. Arekan's urban-coastal directness contrasts with Mataraman's traditional politeness and formality, while Pendhalungan's hybrid forms reflect the multicultural and multilingual nature of its community. These distinctions underscore language's role as a key marker of social identity, group membership, and cultural values within the Javanese-speaking world.

Based on the dialogue transcription, Tables 6 and 7 present examples of sociolinguistic interpretation from expressions commonly used by Javanese people to ask a friend to eat and to ask an elder to go home.

In *the* Arekan dialect (Mangan, rek!), *Ngoko* (informal) is used with the direct imperative "mangan" (eat) plus "rek," a local solidarity marker. This shows a casual, friendly invitation among peers. The particle "rek" marks urban Arek identity and conveys group belonging and familiarity, reflecting the sociolinguistic norm in Arekan regions, where informal, direct speech among friends is typical.

Table 6.

Scenario 1 — Asking a Friend to Eat

Dialect	Example Sentence	Speech Level & Style	Sociolinguistic Interpretation
Arekan	<i>Mangan, rek!</i>	<i>Ngoko</i> , direct	Casual invitation, <i>Rek</i> adds solidarity and urban Arek identity.
Mataraman	<i>Mangga dhahar, mas.</i>	<i>Krama</i> , polite	Shows deference; <i>mangga</i> and <i>dhahar</i> are formal/high Javanese.
Pendhalungan	<i>Mangan, ta'!</i>	<i>Ngoko</i> with Madurese particle	Informal but warm; <i>ta'</i> from Madurese adds regional identity

Table 7.

Scenario 2 – Talking to an Elder about Going Home

Dialect	Example Sentence	Speech Level & Style	Sociolinguistic Interpretation
Arekan	<i>Aku muleh disik, pak.</i>	<i>Ngoko</i> + respectful address	No <i>Krama</i> , but <i>Pak</i> keeps respect; normal in coastal norms.
Mataraman	<i>Kula wangsul rumiyin, pak.</i>	<i>Krama</i>	Shows full politeness to elders; <i>kula</i> and <i>rumiyin</i> signal high respect.
Pendhalungan	<i>Aku muleh dhisik, pak</i>	<i>Ngoko</i>	reflects the sociolinguistic reality of language contact and flexible politeness strategies in the Pendhalungan zone, where Javanese and Madurese influences intersect

Meanwhile, in the Mataraman dialect (*Mangga dhahar, mas.*), the *Krama* (polite, formal) speech level is used, with the honorific lexicon "mangga" (please) and "dhahar" (eat, high Javanese), plus the polite address "mas" (younger male, respectful). This reflects strong adherence to politeness norms and social hierarchy, showing deference and respect even in casual invitations, typical of more traditional or rural areas with stronger Javanese cultural influence.

Pendhalungan Dialect (*Mangan, ta'!*) also uses *Ngoko*, but with the Madurese particle "ta'", indicating an informal yet warm, regionally marked invitation. The mixture highlights language contact and identity, signalling the speaker's regional affiliation with the cultural hybrid Pendhalungan area while balancing informality with regional solidarity.

Table 7 shows that the Arekan dialect (*Aku muleh disik, pak*) is primarily *Ngoko* (informal) but with a respectful address "pak" (sir). The absence of *Krama* indicates relaxed politeness norms on the coast, where respectful address alone suffices to maintain respect. This reflects coastal sociolinguistic norms that prioritise social respect through titles rather than through strict speech-level changes.

However, the Mataraman dialect (*Kula wangsul rumiyin, pak.*) uses *Krama*, which tightly encodes respect through lexicon ("kula" for "I", "wangsul" for "return", "rumiyin" for "first") and polite pronouns. This full politeness marking shows more formal societal interaction scripts and hierarchical sensitivity, common in inland, culturally conservative Mataraman areas.

Pendhalungan Dialect (*Aku muleh dhisik, pak.*) uses a *Ngoko* hybrid style, retaining the informal pronoun "aku" but mixing it with "dhisik" and the respectful "pak." Politeness relies more on tone and

address than on speech level. This hybrid style reflects the sociolinguistic reality of language contact and flexible politeness strategies in the Pendhalungan zone, where Javanese and Madurese influences intersect.

Based on the discussion about social interpretation, it can be concluded that the use of speech levels (*Ngoko* vs. *Krama*) varies considerably, reflecting regional cultural norms around respect and politeness. Inland Mataraman favours formal *Krama* respectful forms, while coastal Arekan and mixed Pendhalungan areas rely more on address terms and particles with informal bases. Lexical choices (e.g., "mangan" vs. "dhahar," "kula" vs. "aku") signal social status and degrees of politeness embedded in the traditional Javanese system. Local particles and address terms like "rek" (Arekan solidarity), "ta'" (Madurese influence in Pendhalungan), and "pak" (respectful address) highlight social identity and pragmatic politeness strategies. Thus, these dialect differences illustrate Javanese diglossia and multilingual contact, where speech style negotiation balances solidarity, respect, and regional identity in everyday communication.

Morphological Analysis

Morphological analysis is the study of variation in how words are formed. Analysing group words can accomplish it through the processes of affixation (prefix, suffix, compounding) and by checking productivity: Arekan often shortens affixes, Mataraman maintains formal forms, and Pendhalungan shows interference from Madurese morphology. Tables 8, 9, and 10 present a comparison of the same root words in the Mataraman, Arekan, and Pendhalungan dialects, showing how prefixes and suffixes shift across the three varieties.

Table 8.

The Example of Verb Morphological Formation

Function	Arekan	Mataraman	Pendhalungan	Meaning
Imperative	Tulisake	Tulisna	Tulisa	Write it
Passive	Ditulis	Ditulis	Ditulis	To be written
Causative	Ditulisake	Ditulisna	Ditulisna	To make (something) be written

Table 8 shows that in imperative sentences, the Arekan dialect uses the suffix "-ake" (tulisake), the Mataraman dialect uses the suffix "-na" (tulisna), and the Pendhalungan dialect uses the suffix "-a" (tulisa). These suffixes act as imperative markers, shifting a root verb to command form. The suffix variation reflects dialectal phonological and morphological differences but serves a common grammatical function.

Meanwhile, in passive form, all dialects use the prefix "di-" to mark passive voice (ditulis). This

prefix is consistent across dialects, indicating a shared morphological marker for passive construction in Javanese. Furthermore, causative formation is marked by a combination of passive prefix "di-" plus the imperative suffixes indicating "to make (something) be written": Arekan (ditulisake), Mataraman (ditulisna), Pendhalungan (ditulisna). This shows a morphological compound that marks causativity by layering affixes that also interact with dialect-specific suffixes.

Table 9.

The Example of Verb Morphological Formation

Function	Arekan	Mataraman	Pendhalungan	Meaning
Imperative	gawe'na	gawe'en	gawea/ gawe'n	make/use it
First-person prefix	tak gawe	dak gawe	takgawe	I make
Passive	digawé	digawé	digawé	to be made

Table 9 shows that in imperative sentences, Arekan uses the suffix "-na" (gawe'na), Mataraman "-en" (gawe'en), and Pendhalungan "-a/-n" (gawea/gawe'n). Again, imperative suffixes vary but serve to signal command forms. For expressing the first-person prefix, Arekan uses "tak" (tak gawe), Mataraman "dak" (dak gawe), and Pendhalungan combines the prefix more tightly as "takgawe". This

represents subject marking by prefixes, showing phonological variation in the subject pronoun form and its attachment to the verb. Meanwhile, the passive form is marked by the prefix "di-" (digawé), consistent across dialects, mirroring the passive marking seen in "write."

Table 10.

The Example of Verb Morphological Formation

Function	Arekan	Mataraman	Pendhalungan	Meaning
Imperative	gowona	gowo'en	gowo'a	bring it
First-person prefix	tak gowo	dak gowo	takgowo	I bring
Passive	digowo	Digowo	digowo	to be brought

Table 10 shows that the imperative form in the Arekan dialect uses the suffix "-na" (gowona), the Mataraman "-en" (gowo'en), and the Pendhalungan "-a" (gowo'a). Thus, it shows the same pattern of imperative suffix variation as other verbs. Meanwhile, the first-person prefix in Arekan uses "tak", Mataraman uses "dak", and Pendhalungan combines it as "takgowo", reflecting the same subject-prefixing pattern. The passive form is the prefix "di-" (digowo), which is consistent for the Arekan, Mataraman and Pendhalungan dialects.

Based on the analysis presented in Tables 8, 9, and 10, several key morphological patterns across the dialects can be identified. First, the passive voice is consistently marked by the prefix "di-", demonstrating a stable morphological feature. In contrast, the imperative mood exhibits significant dialectal variation through its suffixes: the Arekan dialect favours *-ake/-na/-na*, Mataraman uses *-na/-*

en", and Pendhalungan employs *-a/-n*". This indicates that imperative encoding is a key site of dialect-specific morphological variation. Secondly, causative forms are constructed by combining the passive prefix "di-" with these dialect-specific imperative suffixes, thereby forming a layered affixation structure that marks causativity. Finally, the first-person subject is marked by the prefixes *tak-* (Arekan) and *dak-* (Mataraman), as well as portmanteau forms such as *takgawe* (Pendhalungan), reflecting distinct phonological and morphological strategies for pronoun incorporation across the three dialects.

This morphological variation across the three Javanese dialects exemplifies how affixation (prefixes and suffixes) expresses grammatical categories—imperative, passive, causative, and subject marking—while phonological and morphological shifts in affix forms highlight

dialectal differences. These reflect both shared morphological structures and dialectal innovation in the realisation and combination of affixes with root verbs.

The Influence of Intricate History on the Differences of Dialects among People from Different Areas in East Java

The history and richly varied identities of the Javanese people in East Java have played a substantial role in shaping the numerous differences among Javanese dialects across the region. This linguistic diversity is rooted in both the geographic spread and the sociopolitical evolution of Java, which led to contact with outside groups and the development of distinct dialects within different communities. Unlike Central Java or Yogyakarta, East Java serves as a crossroads, historically shaped by shifting kingdoms, colonial rule, and assimilation with neighbouring ethnic groups such as the Madurese and Osing, as well as by Sundanese influences from the West and Balinese influences from the East (Adelaar, 2010; Nothofer, 1980). This complexity in historical development and cultural encounter has contributed to the emergence of several prominent Javanese dialects in East Java, each reflecting the unique social dynamics and historical narrative of its region (Connors, 2008; Errington, 1985).

Historically, some regions of East Java, such as the western parts of Blitar, were heavily influenced by migration from Central Java, particularly following major events such as the Diponegoro War. People brought with them the Central Javanese “Mataraman” variety, which has since remained influential in some western East Java regions, with speech varieties that retain vocabulary and pronunciation typical of Solo-Yogya Javanese (Ricklefs, 2001). Conversely, further east, closer to Malang or Surabaya, language contact with groups speaking unique East Javanese dialects (such as Arekan spoken in Surabaya) has created new forms that are very distinct from those in the western part of the province (Connors, 2008). This east-west split is not only geographic but also cultural, as central and eastern Java developed distinct political and social centres over history, influencing the identity and, thus, the speech of their inhabitants (Nothofer, 1980).

Arekan Dialect

Surabaya and its surroundings are known for their energetic, straightforward “Arekan” dialect, with marked phonological and lexical differences from Western dialects. Commonly, words in the Arekan dialect adopt a rougher, more direct style and show less use of the refined levels of speech (*Krama*) that are standard in Central Javanese. For instance, the word “rice” is pronounced “sego” in Surabaya, whereas it remains “sega” in Banyumasan (western

Java) dialects. Another example is the use of the ending ‘a’: while Surabaya and other east Javanese variants often retain this vowel, central and western dialects may shift to ‘o’ or drop it altogether.

Another key example is the Arekan dialect of the northern coastal areas (including Gresik, Lamongan, and Sidoarjo), where interactions with Chinese, Arab, and Madurese traders further enriched the language. Arekan Javanese places less emphasis on speech-level distinctions (“*Krama*” vs. “*Ngoko*”—formal vs. informal speech) than its Central Javanese counterpart, reflecting the fluid social hierarchies shaped by maritime trade and urban mixing.

Mataraman Dialect

In contrast, the Mataraman dialect, prominent in southern and western parts of East Java (Blitar, Tulungagung, Kediri, Madiun), is closer to Central Javanese speech. This region's historical alignment with the Mataram kingdom encouraged the preservation of refined levels of the Javanese language, with greater adherence to “*Krama*” forms and finer gradations of politeness. As a result, the Mataraman dialect is valued for its politeness and cultural sophistication, distinguishing itself from the rougher urban dialects.

In Blitar, the eastern area exhibits more influence from the Malang dialect. At the same time, the West is closer to Kediri's variety, each exhibiting a unique vocabulary for local objects. For example, a kitchen draining tool may be called “kalo” in western Blitar, but “irik” in the east. Further complexity is seen in border areas affected by both Javanese and Madurese contact, leading to distinctive blended dialects and vocabularies (Cahyaningsih, 2015).

The easternmost region, including Banyuwangi, further illustrates dialectal complexity. Here, the Osing people speak a form of Old Javanese, known as the Osing dialect, which retains pre-Islamic and pre-Mataram era linguistic features and is markedly distinct from both Arekan and Mataraman Javanese. The dialect's vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar reflect both an ancient Javanese substratum and the influence of the neighbouring Balinese culture.

Pendhalungan Dialect

The Pendhalungan dialect in East Java is deeply influenced by the intricate history of cultural and ethnic interactions, primarily between the Javanese and Madurese peoples. This dialect is not merely a linguistic form but a cultural marker born out of a long history of migration, acculturation, and social integration in the region. Pendhalungan culture, including its dialect, is an outcome of the merging of two dominant cultural identities—Javanese and Madurese—which has created a unique hybrid identity, especially prevalent in areas such as

Probolinggo, Jember, and parts of Banyuwangi and Lumajang.

Historically, these regions experienced significant migration and interaction during the Dutch colonial period, when the growth of cities such as Jember was fueled by the influx of diverse communities, including not only Javanese and Madurese but also Arabs, Chinese, and others. This demographic mix led to a melting-pot culture and a new identity that sought to promote social cohesion and regional distinctiveness. Pendhalungan, therefore, emerged as a cultural identity that went beyond solely ethnic Javanese or Madurese roots, blending aspects of both traditions.

Linguistically, the Pendhalungan dialect exhibits characteristics of both Javanese and Madurese. It dominantly uses Javanese vocabulary but is strongly influenced by the Madurese accent and phonology. For example, phonological features such as the doubling and release of phonemes (e.g., the word "kabbhe" instead of the Javanese "kabeh" meaning "all") and morphological interferences, including affixation and reduplication patterns common in Madurese, are found in this dialect. Additionally, the dialect shows code-mixing, with speakers frequently blending elements of both languages. This reflects how the dialect functions as a dynamic linguistic system, shaped by everyday social interactions and the need to express a shared, hybridised identity.

The Pendhalungan dialect is thus a living testimony to the historical and social processes in East Java, where migration, colonial economic development, and interethnic relationships have created a linguistic blend representing cultural hybridity. It is widely used among communities traditionally engaged in farming, fishing, or plantation work, integrating rural and urban influences while maintaining its distinct identity.

In summary, the intricate history of migration and cultural amalgamation in East Java has profoundly influenced the Pendhalungan dialect, making it a distinct linguistic expression symbolising the coexistence and fusion of Javanese and Madurese identities. This dialect not only varies in vocabulary and phonology from standard Javanese but also embodies the historical narrative of the region's people and their complex social fabric (Rohaniyah et al., 2025).

These examples highlight that the differences between Javanese dialects in East Java are not merely about vocabulary or pronunciation but are deeply rooted in the rich, layered history and the confluence of identities that characterise each subregion. The history of kingdoms, the spread of Islam, colonialism, trade, and interethnic interaction each left their mark, making East Java a dialectal mosaic where language is a living record of its people's journey and transformation.

CONCLUSION

The study of Javanese dialects in East Java—Arekan, Mataraman, and Pendhalungan—reveals a rich linguistic diversity deeply intertwined with the region's historical, cultural, and social dynamics. Each dialect exhibits distinctive lexical, phonological, morphological, and sociolinguistic features that reflect the unique identity and heritage of its speakers. The Arekan dialect, centred in urban and coastal areas such as Surabaya, is characterised by its energetic, direct style, heavy use of the informal Ngoko speech level, and frequent code-switching with Indonesian and Madurese. This linguistic profile mirrors the region's dynamic, multicultural environment and maritime trading history, fostering a pragmatic, solidarity-driven communication style.

In contrast, the Mataraman dialect upholds more traditional Javanese values through the strong use of Krama speech levels, refined and formal lexical choices, and a responsible adherence to social hierarchies embedded in language use. Rooted in the cultural legacy of the Mataram kingdom and Central Java, the Mataraman dialect represents a linguistic conservatism that aligns with the region's historical and social context. Its moderate interaction with Indonesian, alongside the preservation of classic Javanese politeness structures, underscores a community maintaining cultural continuity amid modernisation.

The Pendhalungan dialect stands out as a hybrid linguistic form emerging from centuries of interaction and migration between Javanese and Madurese peoples. It is marked by fluid, adaptable speech forms blending Javanese and Madurese phonology, morphology, and vocabulary, along with widespread code-switching. This dialect symbolises the cultural hybridity and social complexities of East Java's Tapal Kuda area, where multicultural coexistence has shaped a unique regional identity expressed through language.

Overall, the dialectal distinctions in vocabulary, pronunciation, morphological formation, and speech levels are not merely linguistic artifacts but active markers of social identity, historical memory, and cultural belonging. The interplay of formal and informal registers, regional lexical choices, and multilingual influences embodies the ongoing negotiation of tradition and change in East Java society. Consequently, the dialects serve as living testimonies to the historical processes, migration patterns, and evolving community practices that define this linguistically vibrant region. Understanding these dialectal variations enriches both linguistic scholarship and cultural appreciation, underscoring the importance of preserving Indonesia's diverse linguistic heritage within its broader mosaic.

Future research should adopt more methodologically rigorous and diversified

approaches to deepen the analysis of East Javanese dialectal variation. Large-scale corpus-based studies incorporating spoken and digital discourse would enable systematic comparisons of lexical frequency, morphological patterns, and code-switching behaviour across Arekan, Mataraman, and Pendhalungan varieties. In addition, acoustic and phonetic analyses using instrumental measurements could provide quantitative evidence of phonological variation and sound change. Longitudinal and apparent-time studies may further reveal generational shifts in dialect use driven by urbanisation, education, and digital media. Finally, mixed-methods designs integrating sociolinguistic interviews, participant observation, and experimental elicitation tasks would strengthen the empirical basis for examining how dialectal features are produced, perceived, and evaluated in different social contexts.

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