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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Javanese language adaptation among migrant students at MTsN 6 Jombang

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the process of acquiring Javanese as a second language (L2) among out-of-island migrant students at MTsN 6 Jombang, encompassing the role of the madrasah ecosystem, internal and external factors, linguistic barriers, and students' adaptive communication strategies. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed. Data were collected through questionnaires, observations, and in-depth interviews with migrant students, local peers, and teachers. The results demonstrate that: (1) The madrasah ecosystem functions as a rich and inclusive language input environment. Vocabulary absorption occurs through formal interactions in teaching and learning activities as well as informal peer interactions, supported by teachers' code-mixing practices and the traditional translation (*maknani*) of classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*) as pedagogical scaffolding; (2) Internal and external factors are shaped by internal affective anxiety regarding politeness norms (*unggah-ungguh)* and motivational orientations (instrumental and integrative). Externally, exposure to native Javanese-speaking families and mentoring from local peers acting as natural tutors foster a sense of security for migrant students during interactions; (3) Linguistic barriers include hesitation in speaking the polite *Krama* register in oral communication and limited mastery of Javanese script symbols (*Hanacaraka*) in written literacy. To overcome these barriers, students employ several adaptive communication strategies, including code-mixing, clarification requests, peer assistance, and exposure to Javanese language through entertainment media. These findings indicate linguistic adaptation efforts in daily interactions, though without offering measurable evidence of acquisition speed or anxiety reduction.

Keywords: Second Language Acquisition, Javanese Language, Migrant Students, Madrasah Ecosystem, Adaptive Communication Strategies.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is an essential communication tool inseparable from human life (Safitri & Mujianto, 2021; Wulandari, 2022). It serves to convey ideas, concepts, and intended meanings. Beyond communication, language operates as a tool for thought, as individuals formulate ideas according to their cognitive patterns to achieve effective interaction (Fatahillah F., 2024). Fundamentally, language connects personal and interpersonal relationships within social contact. Hymes (Suparno, 2002) states that language regulates social contact through spoken interaction, face-to-face encounters, and social greetings. In other words, language is the primary medium for social integration, greetings, relationship-building, and maintaining interpersonal connections.

Furthermore, language acts as a reflection of identity, culture, and interpersonal relationships that bridge intercultural encounters (Manalu et al., 2025). It provides access to local wisdom, customs, and accumulated knowledge within a specific cultural environment (Siregar et al., 2022). This phenomenon is prominently observed in Jombang Regency, renowned for Islamic education as a distinct attraction. The diversity of madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools facilitates cultural exchange. Through language, religious values and Islamic traditions are transmitted and received by students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Consequently, language serves as a bridge accommodating cultural exchange, unifying diverse student backgrounds, and facilitating the harmonious transfer of Islamic knowledge.

The strong appeal of Islamic education in Jombang Regency drives student mobility from other regions, outer islands, and abroad to study in madrasah environments. According to official data from the Jombang Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs Data Bank (2026), the region boasts hundreds of Islamic educational institutions, including 279 Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, 141 Madrasah Tsanawiyah, 98 Madrasah Aliyah, and 232 Islamic boarding schools. Migrant students transition to this new educational environment requires not only academic adjustments but also sociocultural and linguistic adaptation. This mobility is clearly reflected at MTsN 6 Jombang, a formal non-*pesantren madrasah* that uniquely adopts *pesantren* culture through communal activities such as classical text studies *(kajian kitab*), Quranic literacy (BTQ), and congregational prayers within daily school routines. These communal religious activities and classroom instruction create an input-rich environment. Meanwhile, informal spaces such as cafeteria interactions,

classroom interactions, and peer-group socializing provide crucial opportunities for migrant students to absorb the Javanese language spontaneously.

However, the linguistic adaptation of migrant students at MTsN 6 Jombang is not without obstacles. Unlike the structurally neutral Indonesian language, Javanese features a complex speech-level system (*unggah-ungguh*) imbued with sociolinguistic politeness values, where the Krama register specifically symbolizes politeness and mutual respect (Isfak & Setyawan, 2022). Students from outside Java (e.g., Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Malaysia) frequently experience language shock, awkwardness, and confusion upon entering the madrasah environment. Language shock typically progresses through initial fascination, anxiety or distress, and eventual adaptation (Fitri & Yuliana, 2024). Lacking prior knowledge of Javanese particularly in distinguishing between *ngoko* and *krama* registers, students often fear making verbal errors that could alter meaning or be perceived as impolite, given that Javanese speech carries ethical codes and reflects the speaker's character (Isfak & Setyawan, 2022).

Nevertheless, as MTsN 6 Jombang is a formal non-boarding *madrasah*, migrant students must independently adapt to Javanese amid these social dynamics. Differences in dialect, accent, and local language structures frequently pose major barriers to building harmonious intercultural interactions at school (Fitri & Yuliana, 2024). Unaddressed communication barriers without a supportive environment risk isolating migrant students socially, alienating them from the madrasah community, and hindering their comprehension of classroom instructions. This highlights the urgency of examining how Javanese second language (L2) acquisition naturally occurs within the madrasah community.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is the process by which a person acquires a target language after their first language has been established. This process occurs naturally through meaningful social interaction, rather than merely through formal instruction of language rules (Wahyuni et al., 2025). This aligns with Krashen (2009) Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, which distinguishes between learning and acquisition. Acquisition is described as an implicit, informal, and natural process occurring subconsciously when learners focus on meaning in daily communication. In this study, L2 is operationally defined as the target language (Javanese) acquired by migrant students after mastering their native language, or as an additional language for bilingual students who have not mastered the local Jombang dialect. This process is further optimized by the Input Hypothesis, where target language input becomes comprehensible input aided by

extralinguistic context and daily communicative situations. At MTsN 6 Jombang, Javanese input is acquired through listening to peers, receiving teacher instructions or corrections, and participating in communal activities. Such input becomes more comprehensible when accompanied by situational context, translation, repetition, or clarification. This study explores how students leverage this support to understand spoken messages and respond to social interactions.

Fundamentally, second language acquisition and bilingual dynamics within Islamic educational institutions have drawn significant research interest. Fatahillah F. (2024) revealed that during foreign students' L2 acquisition, informal language exposure within Islamic boarding schools exercised a far more dominant influence on speech familiarization than formal in-class BIPA instruction. Furthermore, Husein et al. (2025) emphasized through a psycho-sociolinguistic approach that the dormitory ecosystem functions as a dynamic language laboratory; inter-student interactions, daily routines, and social surroundings collectively stimulate internal motivation and naturally facilitate L2 acquisition. Additionally, Nahrudin (2023) highlighted that L2 lexical limitations often trigger bilingualism and code-switching/mixing during daily social interactions as strategies to accommodate various language functions. Furthermore, Ramadhani et al. (2024) affirmed that social interactions, learning environments, and exposure to local cultural norms play a significant role in shaping motivation and accelerating L2 acquisition among children from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Social support within daily living and interactional environments effectively bridges self-confidence barriers and facilitates more active L2 usage.

Despite these insights, previous studies have predominantly focused on Indonesian or Arabic acquisition within boarding pesantren or residential madrasahs. This creates a research gap regarding how local language acquisition specifically Javanese as L2 occurs among migrant students in formal non-boarding and non-residential educational institutions. In this context, Javanese mastery among migrant students begins with absorbing daily vocabulary and gradually develops into linguistic awareness through increased communication frequency at school (Fuadi et al., 2017; Maruti & Parji, 2023). Moreover, effective L2 absorption is strongly supported by cultural exposure and informal media surrounding the learner. Fuadi et al. (2017) demonstrated that Javanese popular media, such as Javanese dangdut music, significantly enhances vocabulary building while fostering positive affective attitudes and interest among non-Javanese learners toward the

target language. At MTsN 6 Jombang, the madrasah ecosystem blending *pesantren* culture with adolescent social dynamics creates a rich linguistic space. Spontaneous peer interactions, local cultural exposure, and a supportive social environment help migrant students understand Javanese expressions and politeness norms naturally and contextually.

Based on these dynamics, this study is crucial for thoroughly examining the Javanese L2 acquisition process among migrant students at MTsN 6 Jombang. It aims to provide an in-depth portrait of the *madrasah* as a natural setting for Javanese acquisition in daily communication. To achieve this goal, this study focuses its investigation on exploring the *madrasah* ecosystem's role in facilitating natural Javanese acquisition (natural setting) among migrant students at MTsN 6 Jombang, identifying various internal and external influencing factors, and analyzing the linguistic barriers faced by students along with their adaptive strategies for mastering Javanese within the MTsN 6 Jombang environment.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore in-depth the process of Javanese language acquisition as a second language among out-of-island migrant students at MTsN 6 Jombang (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Yin, 2017). The case study approach was selected because it is highly effective for comprehensively, intricately, and deeply understanding social and educational phenomena within real-life contexts (Assayakurrohim et al., 2023; Ilhami et al., 2024; Septiana et al., 2024). The researcher observed and documented the subjects' speech at MTsN 6 Jombang through digital audio recording and concise field notes, across both formal domains in classroom learning and informal domains such as the cafeteria, dormitories, and extracurricular activities. This position was maintained as a passive observer without actively participating in the subjects' daily spoken interactions to preserve the naturalness of the linguistic data and to avoid response distortion resulting from the observer's presence.

Informants in this study were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on specific criteria aligned with the focus on second language acquisition (Lawrence A. Palinkas Horwitz et al., 2016). The primary informants comprised 5 (five) migrant students from outside Java, such as Sumatera, Kalimantan, and Malaysia (IU.S1 to IU-S5). These primary informants were characterized by their origin outside Java and had non-Javanese first languages (L1), such as Indonesian, Malay, Banjar, and Palembang. The profile of the primary informants in this study is presented in Table 1 below:

Informant Code	Region of Origin	First Language (L1)	Home Language (Origin)	Status of Javanese Language
IU-S1	Selangor, Malaysia	Malay	Malay (Pure)	Pure Second Language (L2)
IU-S2	South Sumatra	Indonesian & Palembang	Indonesian & Palembang	Second Language (L2)
IU-S3	Metro, East Lampung	Indonesian / Javanese	Indonesian & Javanese	Additional Language (Local Variety)
IU-S4	Batam	Indonesian	Indonesian & Malay/Mixed	Second Language (L2)
IU-S5	South Kalimantan	Banjar & Indonesian	Banjar & Indonesian	Additional Language

Table 1. Profile of Primary Informants

In addition to the primary informants, this study involved seven supporting informants consisting of one science teacher (IP-GBIA), one English teacher (IP-GBIG), one classical text teacher (IP-GKK), one mathematics teacher (IP-GM), one discipline enforcement teacher (IP-GPD), one local student who is a native speaker of Javanese in the Jombang dialect (IP-SL), and one cafeteria vendor (IP-PK) to conduct cross-verification and enrich the sociolinguistic data perspective. The details of the profile and methodological roles of the supporting informants are presented in Table 2 below:

Informant Code	Role / Position	Primary Language (L1)	Experience / Context of Interaction
IPGBIA	Science Teacher	Javanese (Jombang Dialect)	Science teacher at MTsN 6 Jombang
IP.GBIG	English Teacher	Javanese & Indonesian	General subject teacher
IP.GKK	Classical Text Teacher	Javanese & Arabic	Teacher of classical Islamic text (Risalatul Mahidh) in the madrasah hall
IP.GM	Mathematics Teacher	Javanese (Jombang	General subject

		Dialect)	teacher & homeroom teacher for migrant students
IP.GPD	Discipline Enforcement Teacher	Javanese (Jombang Dialect)	General subject teacher & student discipline officer
IP.SL1	Local Native Student	Javanese (Jombang Dialect)	Peer classmate in classroom and school environment
IP.SL2	Local Native Student	Javanese (Jombang Dialect)	Peer classmate in classroom and school environment
IP.PK	Cafeteria Vendor	Javanese (Jombang Dialect)	Nasi pecel vendor in the madrasah cafeteria

Table 2. Profile of Supporting Informants

The involvement of supporting informants was crucial to guarantee data validity, ensuring that information gathered from primary migrant student informants (IU-S1 to IU-S5) was objectively corroborated from the perspective of educators and native speakers in the MTsN 6 Jombang environment.

Data collection was carried out through four integrated main techniques (A. Bowen, 2009; Septiana et al., 2024). First, an initial questionnaire was distributed to primary informants to gather background language profile data, intensity of Javanese language exposure, and preliminary mapping of sociolinguistic challenges. These questionnaire data were then followed up and deepened through semi-structured in-depth interviews with primary and supporting informants to explore first-hand experiences regarding how migrant students undergo the process of Javanese language acquisition, the obstacles faced, and their adaptation strategies (Subakti et al., 2023). Second, non-participant observation accompanied by field notes was conducted during linguistic interactions in classrooms, cafeteria areas, and extracurricular activities. Third, document analysis was conducted on students' written assignments related to the Javanese language subject.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model analysis technique by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which comprises three main sequential stages. The first stage began with data condensation through progressive coding, starting from initial line-by-line coding of interview transcripts and field notes to tag code-switching, code-mixing,

errors, and politeness utterances. Subsequently, data from interview transcripts and field notes were analyzed by rereading the complete data transcripts, marking key sections related to Javanese language acquisition, and categorizing them into main themes. These themes included the role of the madrasah ecosystem, internal and external factors, and migrant students' adaptation strategies. The second stage involved data display in the form of detailed narrative text and thematic matrices to clearly illustrate the relationships between data categories. This flow is illustrated through Figure 1 below:

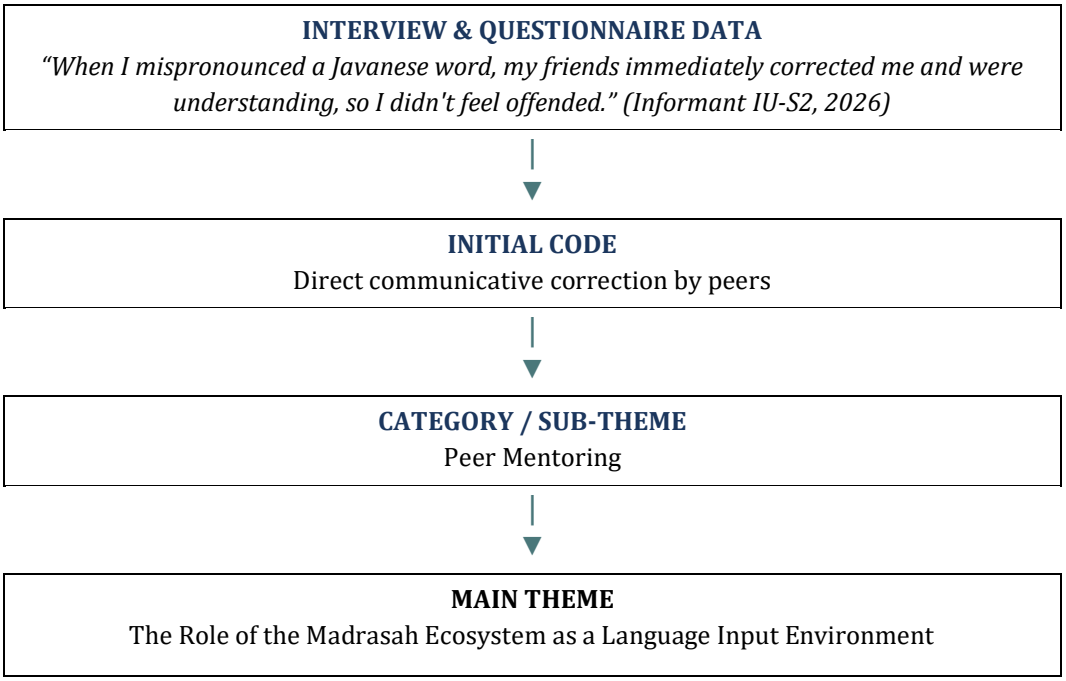


Figure 1. Raw Data Coding Flow

The third stage involved drawing and verifying conclusions continuously throughout the research process. To ensure data trustworthiness and validity, the researcher applied source triangulation techniques by comparing data from migrant students, Javanese language teachers, English teachers, classical text teachers, and local students, as well as method triangulation by verifying consistency across in-depth interviews, passive non-participant observations, and student assignment document analysis until data saturation was reached (Moleong, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The discussion of the research findings is structured around three primary domains of second language (L2) acquisition: (1) the role of the madrasah ecosystem as a natural

language input facility; (2) internal and external factors influencing language acquisition; and (3) linguistic barriers alongside adaptive communication strategies.

The Role of the Madrasah Ecosystem as an Input-Rich Environment

Javanese language acquisition among migrant students at MTsN 6 Jombang provides strong empirical confirmation of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory formulated by Krashen (2009), particularly regarding the Comprehensible Input Hypothesis and the Affective Filter Hypothesis. MTsN 6 Jombang functions as a natural language input environment where L2 absorption is facilitated through informal peer interactions in classrooms, cafeteria areas, and living environments. Repeated oral exposure from native local students makes a tangible contribution to migrant students' L2 lexical absorption.

Based on non-participant observations outside instructional hours, interactions in cafeteria areas and classrooms serve as dynamic spaces for lexical exchange. When experiencing semantic ambiguity, migrant students actively employ confirmation strategies with local peers. This pattern is corroborated by supporting informant IP-SL (local student):

> Back in Grade VII, IU-S2 still couldn't understand and was confused because he didn't know the meanings. If he didn't know what something meant, he would ask directly, *What does this mean?* For instance, with ***jukukna sandal*** (fetch the slippers), IU-S2 asked what ***jukukna*** meant, and I replied ***ambilkan*** (fetch it).
>
> — IP-SL1, Interview 2026

The absorption of L2 lexemes, such as the phrase *jukukna* (fetch it), occurs not through mechanical vocabulary memorization, but through meaning negotiation during communication breakdowns. The presence of local students acting as natural tutors serves as a primary trigger for lowering the affective filter (Krashen, 2009). The second language acquisition process of IU.S2 is significantly driven by long-term social bonding with the supporting informant, specifically IP.SL1. The close relationship established since Grade 7, extending into Grade 9 as classmates, created an informal interaction space rich in natural Javanese language input. Although they do not share the same desk in Grade 9, the high frequency of communication outside structured lessons provided effective natural scaffolding that accelerated IP.SL1's linguistic adaptation.

Corrective feedback provided humorously and affectionately by peers prevents face-threatening acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987), which could otherwise compromise students' self-esteem or confidence. As expressed by the primary informant:

> When I mispronounced a Javanese word, my friends immediately corrected me and were understanding, so I didn't feel offended."
> — IU-S2, Questionnaire & Interview 2026

This finding aligns with Chaer (2004) and Tarigan (2015), confirming that a welcoming and inclusive social climate accelerates subconscious internalization of L2 rules (acquisition) rather than formal learning. However, the *madrasah* ecosystem also exhibits a dual-faceted dynamic in the form of peer conformity pressure. Data indicate that informant IU-S4 (from Batam) initially received negative feedback from certain local peers for consistently using Indonesian outside classroom instruction. As observed by IP-GBIG:

> In my view, he could follow classroom learning well... but tended to rely heavily on Indonesian. However, he often argued... I mean with several other kids because perhaps his constant use of Indonesian was considered strange by his peers... He once got into an argument with a friend, but it stemmed from teasing."
> — IP-GBIG, Interview 2026

Furthermore, classroom non-participant observation during an English lesson revealed the following interaction:

IP-GBIG	: "Okay everyone, who knows about this food? Please raise your hand. How would you describe this food? Come on, who wants to try answering?"
IU-S4	: "Me, Ma'am, I want to try answering. Is it okay if I use Indonesian, Ma'am?"
IP-GBIG	: "In English, please!"
Other Students	: "Me, me! (mimicking IU-S4 with slight mockery)"
Context	: The English teacher provides a prompt for students to respond upon displaying a picture of fried rice on the screen (IU-S4 & IP.GBIG, Classroom Observation, 2026).

This teasing is analyzed as an informal peer push encouraging migrant students to integrate by using the local dialect. Here, the teacher plays a strategic role as a mediator. Teachers do not merely intervene physically in disputes, but also cultivate cross-cultural understanding between both parties, guiding local students to show greater tolerance toward their migrant peers' L2 adaptation process, while reassuring migrant students that they are not being rejected, but rather encouraged to gradually blend in. Teacher intervention during disputes functions as affective support that prevents an surge in migrant students' affective anxiety.

In addition to peer interaction and teacher affective support, teachers play a strategic role in introducing language contexts through pedagogical code-mixing in class (Maszein et al., 2019; Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers insert Javanese vocabulary amidst Indonesian instructions to bridge comprehension. The account of the science teacher (IP-GBIA) illustrates pedagogical code-mixing when reprimanding a migrant student:

> Mixed [instructional language]. For example, when reprimanding a migrant student from Kalimantan: ***Rizki... ojo ngantuk ae...*** (Rizki... don't keep being sleepy...), he replied: Iya bu... ***nguantuk aku*** (Yes Ma'am... I'm so sleepy). His Javanese is still rough."
> — IP-GBIA, WhatsApp Interview 2026

When reprimanding a sleepy student, the teacher avoids rigid formal punishment in Indonesian, instead inserting the simple Javanese phrase *ojo ngantuk ae.* This reprimand

provides oral contextual guidance. The phrase is readily processed by the migrant student because it is uttered in a real communicative situation. This oral guidance enables the student to process the meaning of *ngantuk* conveyed by the teacher and immediately attempt a response (*nguantuk aku*) to confirm understanding.

Pedagogical code-switching was also observed during mathematics instruction by IP-GM when assigning practice exercises:

> IP-GM : "Alright children, please complete the practice exercises in your book. ***Sing ga mudeng takoko yo rek ojo meneng ae!*** (Whoever doesn't understand, ask okay guys, don't just stay silent!)"
> IU-S5 : "***Nggih, Bu. Semua nopo?*** (Yes, Ma'am. All of them?)"
> IP-GM : "**Nggih. (**Yes.)"
> Context: The teacher delivers instructions to complete textbook exercises (IP-GM & IU-S5, Non-Participant Observation, 2026).

The teacher uses Indonesian as the primary medium of instruction before code-mixing to insert the informal Javanese clause *Sing ga mudeng takoko yo rek ojo meneng ae*!. This Javanese clause serves as an affective and conceptual bridge (Maszein et al., 2019). Rather than employing stiff formal language, the teacher uses warm informal Javanese speech to foster safety and comfort. Consequently, IU-S5, operating within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), intuitively grasps the teacher's intent and responds in Javanese *(Nggih, Bu. Semua nopo?).* Teacher reprimands and instructions provide pedagogical scaffolding for migrant students in their ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). Independently (actual development level), migrant students face comprehension bottlenecks when exposed strictly to full L2. However, through pedagogical code-mixing, teachers present affective and sociolinguistic bridges enabling students to reach their potential development level comprehending intent, intuitively absorbing L2 lexical items, and responding with growing confidence.

L2 exposure is further reinforced through religious learning in classical text studies (*maknani*). During lessons on the book *Risalatul Mahidh,* the instructor inserts Indonesian bridging explanations within traditional Javanese textual translation:

> As for the blood emerging from a woman's vulva, it is divided into three types. ***Wayakhruju lan metu*** (and it emerges***) minal farjil mar'ati saking farjine wong wadon*** (from a woman's vulva) ***opo tsalatsatu dimain telu piro-piro getih*** (three types of blood). Three types of blood emerging from a woman's vulva. What are these three types of blood? The first ***iku damul haidi getih haid*** (is menstrual blood). ***Wan-nifasi lan getih nifas*** (and lochia blood). ***Wal-istihadati lan getih istihadah*** (and non-menstrual bleeding)."
> — IP-GKK, Non-Participant Observation in Madrasah Musala 2026

Students' level of comprehension in classical text studies supported by Indonesian bridging confirms that instructor code-switching acts as a crucial sociolinguistic bridge for novice L2 learners.

Peer interactions and religious activities within the *madrasah* provenly provide meaningful language input without formal pressure. This environmental condition operationalizes the view of Bayu et al., (2025) that effective L2 acquisition occurs when the process is embedded within students' social interaction space, rather than confined to classroom grammar instruction.

Internal and External Factors in Second Language Acquisition

Migrant students' L2 adaptation is influenced by internal psychological factors and external social conditions. Internally, migrant students experience affective anxiety upon arrival in Grade VII/VIII. The primary obstacles felt include feelings of alienation, awkwardness, and fear of mispronouncing words that might violate politeness norms (*unggah-ungguh*). This was explicitly illustrated when informant IU-S1 (from Selangor) first arrived in Jombang:

> I was shocked; it felt so different compared to Malaysia before... The peer environment was totally different. In Java, friends seem to be closer and without distance."
> — IU-S1, Interview 2026

IU-S1's statement reflects the psychological transition experienced by migrant students upon entering the *madrasah*. Although initially experiencing culture shock in a new environment, awkwardness subsided as local peers welcomed them warmly. The expression *without distance* highlights that social interaction at MTsN 6 Jombang is open and inclusive, regardless of regional background. This comfort encourages migrant students to listen attentively, converse actively, and acquire Javanese naturally in daily routines (Chaer, 2004; Tarigan, 2015).

Anxiety surrounding politeness norms was also reported by IU-S2 (from South Sumatra):

> "I am afraid of making mistakes when speaking refined Javanese because I fear altering the meaning or using the wrong politeness level. Therefore, I prefer using Indonesian when speaking to teachers."
> — IU-S2, Questionnaire 2026

IU-S2's account confirms that reluctance to switch to Javanese stems not from cognitive barriers, but from caution in maintaining politeness norms. However, persistently using Indonesian can draw negative peer reactions, which increases the student's affective filter (Krashen, 1985). Here, the teacher's role is critical in providing affective support.

Beyond anxiety, motivational orientations determine L2 acquisition success (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Informant IU-S1 displayed predominantly instrumental motivation, learning L2 to comprehend lessons and complete school assignments. Conversely,

informants IU-S2, IU-S3, IU-S4, and IU-S5 were driven primarily by integrative motivation an emotional desire to blend in and gain acceptance within their peer community.

Regarding external factors, the residential environment facilitates L2 acquisition through daily interactional intensity. Informant IU-S2 (from South Sumatra), living with a grandmother who is a native Javanese speaker, received regular L2 exposure at home. This daily exposure facilitated the absorption of informal vocabulary and daily expressions (such as *mangan, turu, and tuku*). Similarly, IU-S4 (from Batam), residing in an *pesantren* populated predominantly by Javanese-speaking students, was conditioned to listen and respond to L2 speech daily. Empirical findings on residential and dormitory environments reinforce previous research on madrasah and pesantren sociolinguistics (Fatahillah F., 2024; Husein et al., 2025).

At school, local peers act as natural peer tutors who spontaneously translate difficult words (such as explaining *mboten* and *nggih* to IU-S1) and correct pronunciation errors without provoking self-consciousness (Tarigan, 2015). The communicative fluency achieved by IU.S2 in Grade 9 is evident not only in interactions with IP.SL1, but is also reflected in the natural interaction dynamics between IU.S2 and other classmates. Transcribed daily conversation data demonstrate the spontaneous and uninhibited use of the local Jombang East Javanese dialect within the classroom context, as illustrated in the following dialogue excerpt:

IU.S2 **:** *"IP.SL2 tugasmu wis mari ta?"* (*Have you finished your assignment, IP.SL2?*)
IP.SL2 **:** *"Uwis."* (*Yes, I have.*)
IU.S2 **:** *"Iki digambar ta gak?"* (*Are we supposed to draw this or not?*)
IP.SL2 **:** *"Lek aku tak gambar, lek amu sakarep kok gambar gak?"* (*I'm going to draw mine, but it's up to you whether you want to draw it or not.*)
IU.S2 **:** *"Sik endi?"* (*Wait, where is it?*)
IP.SL2 **:** *"Sik, iki lho. Iki."* (*Hold on, it's this one here. This one.*)
Context: IU.S2 and IP.SL2 are seatmates working on an assignment together during a free study period. *(IU.S2 & IP.SL2, Non-participant observation, 2026)*

Based on these interactions, it can be understood that the process of Javanese second language acquisition among migrant students demonstrates significant progression over time. In the initial phase upon entering the madrasah (Grade 7), migrant students experienced local vocabulary constraints, such as a lack of understanding of the word *jukukna* (fetch/get it for me). However, through continuous exposure to daily communication and interaction with peers and their residential environment up to Grade 9, migrant students achieved natural fluency enhancement. This finding confirms that authentic social interaction with peers functions as an effective scaffolding mechanism, gradually facilitating and consolidating second language mastery within the *madrasah* environment.

Linguistic Barriers and Adaptive Communication Strategies

Linguistic barriers faced by migrant students at MTsN 6 Jombang fall into two main domains: oral communication challenges and written literacy difficulties. In oral communication, the primary hurdle lies in the hesitation to choose between *ngoko* and *krama* registers when interacting with teachers or elders, fearing that their speech might be perceived as impolite or convey incorrect meanings. This barrier is corroborated by IU-S2's questionnaire response, IU-S1's admission of limited mastery over refined language (50-50), and teacher observations noting that active oral speech among migrant students remains stiff and blunt. Additionally, migrant students struggle to differentiate refined vocabulary with similar functions, such as *mboten semerep* versus *mboten ngertos*. In written tasks, primary informants (IU-S1 to IU-S4) confirmed that Javanese script *(hanacaraka*) presents the steepest hurdle due to the requirement of memorizing unfamiliar diacritics (*sandhanga*n) and subscript characters (*pasangan*).

To overcome these obstacles, migrant students employ three self-directed adaptive communication strategies. First, Code-Mixing and Speech-Level Mixing, wherein migrant students insert L2 lexical items into Indonesian sentences to maintain speech fluency. This is evident in the interaction between IU.S5 (from South Kalimantan) and a school discipline teacher outside the classroom:

IU-S5: "Why Ma'am? Look, I'm wearing shoes."

IP-GPD: "Where are you going?"
IU-S5: "Lesu (hungry), Ma'am. I want to go to the cafeteria."
Context: IU-S5 is outside the classroom during instructional hours and encounters the discipline enforcement teacher (IU-S5, Non-Participant Observation, 2026).

The lexeme 'lesu' is adopted from the local Jombang Javanese dialect to denote a state of hunger. The utterance by IU.S5 above demonstrates the insertion of an L2 lexical item into the syntactic structure of the Indonesian language. Migrant students actively utilize their newly acquired L2 vocabulary store to bridge pragmatic communication, maintain speech fluency, and mitigate tension when interacting with authority figures in the madrasah.

In addition to lexical code-mixing, migrant students employ speech-level mixing as a transitional politeness strategy when addressing teachers:

IU-S2 : "***Ibu, niki kulo mboten ngerti***. (Ma'am, I don't understand this.)"
IP-GM : "***Sing endi, Mbak?*** (Which one, dear?)"
Context : IU-S1 interacts with mathematics teacher IP-GM during class (IU-S1 & IP-GM, Non-Participant Observation, 2026).

IU-S1s utterance reflects an awareness of showing respect to teachers through *unggah-ungguh* politeness norms. The student actively selects Krama vocabulary (*niki, kulo, mboten*). However, because mastery of *krama inggil* verbs remains incomplete, the student inserts the Ngoko verb (*ngerti*) at the sentence end. This phenomenon marks an interlanguage stage where students utilize available *Krama* vocabulary to express respect while compensating for lexical gaps so that their question remains clear.

Second, Clarification Requests serve as a compensation strategy (Oxford, 1990) when encountering unfamiliar words, as described by IU-S1:

> "Because I didn't know that the refined Javanese for 'no' is ***mboten***, I asked... ***'What is mboten?*** What does ***mboten*** mean?'. Then they explained that mboten means no, and nggih means yes. They also explained that when talking to elders, you must use refined words like ***mboten*** and ***nggih."***
> — IU-S1, Interview 2026

IU-S1's account demonstrates that clarification requests *Mboten itu apa sih*? not only trigger meaning negotiation but also create space for peers to offer spontaneous guidance on politeness norms. Students do not merely absorb literal definitions of *mboten* (no) and *nggih* (yes), but also grasp the pragmatic context of addressing elders.

Similarly, cafeteria non-participant observation involving IU-S4 captured the following exchange:

IU-S4 : "Bulek, nasi pecel satu. (Aunty, one portion of pecel rice.)"
IP-PK : "Nggih, Mbak. Pedes opo sedengan? (Yes, dear. Spicy or medium?)"
IU-S4 : "Sedengan itu sedang, Bulek? (Does sedengan mean medium, Aunty?)"
IP-PK : "Iya Mbak, sedengan itu sambele ga terlalu pedas, sedang ngono lho dikasih sedikit. (Yes dear, sedengan means the chili sauce isn't too spicy, medium like that, just a little.)"
IU-S4 : "Iya Bulek, yang sedengan aja. (Yes Aunty, I'll take medium then.)"
Context: IU-S4 interacts with cafeteria vendor IP-PK (IU-S4 & IP-PK, Cafeteria Non-Participant Observation, 2026).

When IP-PK offers a local option *sedengan*, IU-S4 intuitively verifies understanding through a hypothetical question *Sedengan itu sedang, Bulek?* Direct confirmation from the vendor enables IU-S4 to complete the transaction smoothly. Both observations demonstrate that informal madrasah spaces serve as input-rich environments. Through clarification requests, migrant students independently overcome lexical gaps while naturally expanding their vocabulary in local Jombang Javanese (Tarigan, 2015).

Third, Exposure to Javanese Language through Entertainment Media represents self-directed language exposure. This finding aligns with the input processing principles synthesized by (Wahyuni et al., 2025), which assert that authentic language exposure acquired voluntarily effectively engages learners' cognitive noticing mechanisms. Engaging with entertainment media such as music and digital content provides informal auditory input without academic pressure. This is confirmed by IU-S1's routine of listening to Javanese songs during leisure time:

"Yes, just random Javanese songs... I listen to them often."
— IU-S1, Interview 2026

A similar habit was reported by IU-S4 (from Batam), who actively watches Javanese digital content. Popular media exposure helps students familiarize their auditory perception with L2 intonation, rhythm, and suprasegmental sensitivity intuitively. According to SLA theory (Krashen, 2009), media exposure functions as input with a low affective filter. Visual and auditory entertainment provides a relaxed learning environment, allowing migrant students to subconsciously acquire word segmentation and lexical structures without rigid memorization demands. This aligns with Fuadi et al., (2017), who demonstrated that Javanese popular media, such as Javanese dangdut music, significantly enhances vocabulary building while fostering positive affective attitudes and interest toward the target language.

CONCLUSION

Javanese second language (L2) acquisition among migrant students at MTsN 6 Jombang is naturally facilitated by the madrasah ecosystem, which operates as a rich and inclusive language input environment. Vocabulary absorption occurs fluidly through formal classroom interactions and informal peer socialization in classrooms, cafeteria areas, and living quarters. Furthermore, pedagogical code-mixing applied by subject teachers alongside traditional translation (*maknani*) in classical text studies function as pedagogical scaffolding helping migrant students grasp the context of L2 usage.

This linguistic adaptation process is driven by internal psychological factors and external social conditions. Internally, migrant students experience varying levels of affective anxiety, particularly awkwardness and fear of violating politeness norms (*unggah-ungguh)* influenced by regional origins and motivational orientations (both instrumental and integrative). Externally, reinforcement from native Javanese-speaking family members at home and friendly guidance from local peers acting as natural tutors provide a secure environment encouraging migrant students to communicate confidently.

Linguistic barriers faced by migrant students encompass oral communication and written literacy. In oral speech, the main hurdle centers on hesitation to use the refined Javanese register *(krama*) when addressing teachers or elders. In written literacy, difficulties concentrate on mastering Javanese script symbols (*hanacaraka*) due to a lack of prior learning foundation in their home regions. To overcome these barriers, migrant students employ self-directed adaptive communication strategies, including code-mixing,

clarification requests, and self-directed auditory exposure through popular entertainment media such as Javanese music and digital content. These findings indicate linguistic adaptation efforts in daily interactions, though without offering measurable evidence of acquisition speed or anxiety reduction.

DECLARATIONS

Ethical considerations
Not applicable

Use of artificial intelligence (AI)
The authors declare that the generative artificial intelligence (AI) tool Google Gemini was used exclusively for language editing and/or grammatical improvement. The use of AI did not influence the scientific content, study design, data analysis, data interpretation, results, or conclusions of the manuscript. Full responsibility for the content remains with the authors

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