

Communication Pause as A Reflection of User Culture (Anthropological Study of Communication in East Javanese Society)

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates the role of communication pauses, silent pauses, and filled pauses, as sociocultural symbols and cognitive mechanism in the spontaneous communication of four subcultures in East Java: Arek, Madura, Pandalungan, and Mataraman. Using a qualitative-ethnographic approach modeled after Spradley, supported by the Social Construction Theory framework, this study aims to compare how local hierarchical and ethical norms influence pauses. Data were obtained through observation and in-depth interviews with key informants from each subculture. The findings indicate that pauses function as a strategic compromise between cognitive needs and social demands. Functionally, pauses act as turn-taking guards, reflecting active control over the reciprocal aspects of interaction. Normatively, pause patterns are strictly regulated by the General Javanese Hierarchical Norm. *Self-control patterns* are twofold: Arek, Madura, and Pandalungan subjects use pauses to filter messages, while Mataraman subjects are required to minimize pauses because long pauses are considered "impolite" by respected people. In contrast, pauses in Mataraman also function as normative filters to weigh the appropriateness of words before they are spoken. Social sanctions are also polarized, with Madurese and Mataraman subjects imposing harsh sanctions against interrupting, while Arek and Pandalungan are more tolerant. This study concludes that pausing is a sensitive sociocultural navigation tool.

KEYWORDS: Communication Break, Communication Anthropology, Oral Communication.

INTRODUCTION

Oral communication is at the heart of human social interaction, enabling the spontaneous exchange of information and ideas. However, in spoken conversation, elements such as pauses *often* accompany speech. Pauses have a central dual role: as cognitive aids supporting the *encoding process*, functioning as strategic downtime (cognitive *planning time*) for searching the lexicon or planning sentence structure, and as sociocultural cues. In a sociocultural context, pauses are vital to the listener's *decoding process*, where silence or filler words are interpreted as pragmatic signals, such as signaling that a turn is not yet over (turn- *holding*), or as signals that a sensitive message is about to be delivered. Therefore, pauses are positioned as dynamic elements of metacommunication that not only aid individual thought processes but also guide the interpretation of social meaning in the context of communication. Metacommunication comes from the Greek prefix "meta," which literally means "about" or "beyond," thus meaning communication about communication. In every interaction, there are verbal (spoken messages) and nonverbal aspects. This nonverbal aspect is crucial because it adds meaning to verbal messages, thus improving the overall quality of oral communication. Thus, metacommunication serves to enrich and enhance understanding of the message being conveyed (Area, 2024).

Within the theoretical framework, pauses can be classified into two main types: silent pauses *and* filled pauses (*or* hesitation *markers* such as 'um', 'eee', 'anu'). Silent pauses are unaccompanied by sounds or vowels and typically last for several seconds, creating tension or indicating an ongoing thought process (Fajri, 2023). These pauses are more associated with cognitive functions, indicating intensive *retrieval* (lexical search) or syntactic *planning*. Meanwhile, filled pauses in spoken conversation are characterized by the use of certain filler words such as "ee" or "um". Filled pauses typically occur when the speaker is having difficulty putting words together, finding the right word, or when they want to pause before continuing the conversation. (Cossavella & Cevasco, 2021). According to (Firiady & Mahendra, 2019) in their study entitled "A STUDY OF FILLERS UTTERED IN ENGLISH PUBLIC SPEAKING," *filler words* have an important function that goes beyond their lexical meaning. These elements play a role in making spoken communication sound more natural and personalized, while also helping build a connection between the speaker and the listener.

Although there have been several studies on speech pauses, most have been limited to a single dialect or community without examining in-depth comparisons across regions.

Previous studies examining silence pauses, such as those by (Müller et al., 2024) and (Cossavella & Cevasco, 2021), provide

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fundamental insights into their cognitive and interactional functions, but are generally based on Western languages and contexts that are not always relevant to the sociocultural complexities of Indonesia.

The meaning and function of communication pauses can vary greatly across cultures. In societies with strong politeness, hierarchy, and collective values, pauses are not merely cognitive markers but reflections of the culture itself. Pauses become manifestations of cultural identity, subconsciously used to convey respect or maintain social harmony. Therefore, pauses can serve a dual role: as a reflection of culture and a hidden sociocultural signal. This means that what is considered normal in one community may have a very different meaning or perception in another. The gap between this study and previous research demonstrates the urgency of understanding how internalized regional ethical principles manifest themselves in nonverbal micro-behaviors such as pauses. According to Meidyastuti et al. (2020), nonverbal communication has a regulatory function, namely to control interactions. Nonverbal gestures can signal the regulation of verbal messages. For example, leaning forward indicates wanting to say something or signaling a pause during speech (e.g., by muttering "umm"). Current data cannot precisely explain whether the pauses used by Mataraman subjects are caused by an effort to seek *Kromo Inggil* or by a fear of being judged "impolite" for pausing too long. The scientific novelty of this study lies in the use of Spradley's ethnographic method to map and compare emic interpretations (informants' perspectives) of pauses among the four subcultures. Based on this background and urgency, this research question is: How does pause reflect culture in East Java (Arek, Madura, Pandalungan, Mataraman)? The purpose of this article study is to map and analyze the pause patterns and communication principles that govern the pause behavior of subjects from four East Javanese sub-cultures, as well as to present an in- depth comparison of the functional differences of pauses based on the demands of the social norms of each culture.

RESEARCH METHODS

study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to systematically, factually, and accurately describe the oral communication patterns of the four cultural identities in East Java. This approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the use of communication pauses in the natural context of society, not only presenting a factual picture but also analyzing and comparing information. The goal is to provide solutions to the problems encountered, so that the research results remain relevant and up-to-date (Rengkuan et al., 2023). The philosophical and methodological foundation used is the subjective interpretive paradigm as its philosophical and methodological foundation. This paradigm seeks to understand the meaning behind actions and symbols, which is very relevant because the focus of the study is to explore and interpret the meaning and reflections attached by the East Javanese people to the phenomenon of silent pauses or filled pauses. The interpretive approach also starts from an effort to seek explanations for social or cultural events based on the perspectives and experiences of the people studied (Muslim, 2016), especially through the main theory used in this study, namely the theory of social construction, proposed by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, which explains that social reality is the result of individual creation. In the constructivist paradigm, humans are not victims of existing social facts, but rather creative actors who freely interact and shape their own social worlds. Thus, individuals function as a means to produce and reproduce social reality according to their desires and interactions (Romdani, 2021). This theory is the fundamental reason why the interpretation of pauses has diverse meanings. This theory explains that social reality, including the meaning of pauses, is not something objective but rather a construction created by individuals through interaction. The specific context of this research is the division of East Javanese cultural regions, namely Mataraman Java, Arek Java, Pandalungan Java, and Madura Pulau, where this interpretive framework explores how differences in sociocultural identities are manifested in the use of communication pauses.

The object of this research is the silent pauses and filled pauses in oral communication. The research subjects are individuals from the four dominant cultural regions which, according to Ayu Sutarto, a cultural expert and professor at the Faculty of Letters, University of Jember, in his study entitled "Cultural Approach in the Development of East Java Province" (Sutarto, 2004) , divides the four dominant cultural identities of East Java into Mataraman Javanese, Arek Javanese, Pandalungan Javanese, and Madurese Island, selected based on representative characteristics. Primary data were obtained through observation and interviews, while secondary data were obtained through relevant literature. The data collection technique used a combination of two methods to gain in-depth understanding: first, non-participant observation to observe natural and spontaneous verbal pauses in the environment of each sub-region; second, in-depth interviews to explore the meaning, perception, and subjective interpretation of the subjects regarding the pauses they use. This combination aims to connect the observed communication patterns with cultural values.

The data analysis technique used the Spradley model (ethnography). Sugiyono (2014) as quoted in the journal (Wijaya, 2015) *The Spradley Model of Research Method* states that in the Spradley model's qualitative approach, the research process consists of a series of systematic stages that begin with broad thinking, narrow down to a focus, and then expand again. This process begins with identifying key informants, followed by interviews with descriptive questions. The results are analyzed through domain analysis (general description), followed by taxonomic analysis (categorizing detailed data). Then, contrasting questions are asked to conduct componential analysis (identifying the characteristics of each cultural element), which ultimately leads to the discovery of cultural themes. Data validity is tested using Data Triangulation (source triangulation), namely by combining observation, in-

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depth interviews, and documentation to collect data about a phenomenon.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main findings and in-depth discussion obtained from the ethnographic analysis of Spradley's model of communication pause patterns of subjects from four East Javanese sub- cultures: Arek, Madura, Pandalungan, and Mataraman as answers to the research questions. This analysis reveals how local norms influence the cognitive, interactional, and hierarchical interpretation functions of verbal pauses, confirming that pause patterns represent a strategic compromise between the individual's internal needs and social demands.

➤ Analysis of Informant Arek's Pause Pattern

Interviews with Arek informants revealed a dynamic and efficiency-oriented pattern of pause usage, consistent with the Arek cultural character. Javanese Arek culture is rooted in historical traces in the Brantas River delta region (Surabaya) dating back to the Ancient Mataram era. This region, according to Faber's explanation in Abdillah (2007), initially served as a place of exile for prisoners during the glory days of Ancient Mataram. This historical experience fostered values of togetherness and equality, making the community open to change. Furthermore, the harsh, swampy topography has shaped the Arek community's character, making them resilient and hardworking, focused on survival. Overall, Abdillah (nd) also concluded that the basic character of the Arek community includes a tough nature, experience in dealing with everyday problems, and a high regard for a sense of togetherness and diversity (Safira & Wibowo, 2024).

Informant Arek uses silent pauses (JH) and filled pauses (JT) such as ' **emm** ' and ' **kayak** ', especially in situations where he feels stuck or *confused*.

"Yes, *what happened in my mind was like going blank 1.45 seconds*), like what, it was really nervous, like nervous like that."

"Yes, it could be like that, but you also have to think about what words you want to say."

Pauses have a dual function: internal and external. Internally, silent pauses (e.g., 1.45 seconds) serve as cognitive mechanisms for memory retrieval and message planning (*encoding*), occurring when the informant *blanks* or searches for words. Externally, filled pauses (e.g., "**um**" and "**kayak**") serve as *Turn-Holding*. The use of *Turn-Holding* reflects the Circular Communication Theory, which views communication not as a one-way process (linear, sender- to-receiver), but as a continuous and simultaneous reciprocal process. The circular communication pattern emphasizes that communication is a two-way process involving feedback. In this pattern, the message delivered by the communicator will receive a response from the communicant, and this response can then influence the communicator's next message (Puteri et al., nd). Informants recognize that pauses trigger responses from the interlocutor and use filler words as an active strategy to manage potential feedback, emphasizing that communication is based on simultaneous reciprocity.

Arek informants, although they come from a culture accustomed to speed, acknowledge that pauses have important value, but only as a symbol of the thinking process.

"Yes, it's important, because it keeps you from looking like you don't know anything. It's like thinking that way."

This statement reflects an adaptation of Arek culture: pauses are permitted and important as long as they serve as symbols of thought processes. If a pause does not demonstrate this function, it is perceived as hesitation or lack of assertiveness, which goes against Arek norms of directness. Although Arek cultural identity is known for *being outspoken*, Arek informants indicate that pauses are also used as markers of hierarchy (Norms of Politeness), differentiating speech patterns when dealing with respected individuals (lecturers or superiors).

"Um, when I'm face to face, I first digest what I'm being asked to do. Then, when I can answer, I'll answer."

"Yes, so that why? So that you can answer it correctly, without making a mistake."

The long pause is a symbol of deliberate self-control, ensuring a "correct, not wrong" answer to avoid *pakewuh* (discomfort) in Javanese culture. This proves that general Javanese politeness norms are still strong alongside the Arek norm of directness in determining pauses. Although Arek informants are straightforward, they are smart to adapt by holding back their *blunt style* in front of respected people, choosing to "digest first." On the other hand, Arek informants demonstrate an egalitarian and open character, not labeling others' straightforward speech style with sanctions, but rather considering it as "individual differences in habits." This norm of tolerance reflects the informants' balance in carrying out normative obedience.

The Arek informant's statement (" Yes, it's important, because it doesn't look like someone who doesn't know anything. As if they're thinking that way. ") is key to understanding the process of Objectification of pauses in Arek culture. Pauses here are not only tolerated, but institutionalized as symbols that must be displayed. If cognitive pauses are absent, they risk being interpreted as hesitation or lack of assertiveness, which contradicts the Arek norm of directness (*ceplas-ceplos*). The use of filled pauses (JTs such as "**um**" and "**kaya**") as *Turn- Holding* also represents this form of objectification, emphasizing that Arek communication is a simultaneous, reciprocal process. Informants actively manage potential feedback, using *JTs* as metacommunication regulators to assert their right to speak amidst the pace of speech that characterizes their culture.

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➤ Analysis of Madura Informant's Pause Pattern

Madurese informants use silent pauses (JH) and filled pauses (JT) such as ' **Eee** ', especially in situations where they have to process information or vocabulary.

*"(2.10), Eee, Eee, usually when I'm **thinking about vocabulary**."*

*"Because if you just say '**Eee**' and stay quiet like that, it's like '**Eee**', the person is waiting like that... if we use '**Eee**' like that, we're also waiting, but there's no '**Eee**', like it's awkward."*

Pauses have a dual function: internal and external. Internally, silent pauses (JH, e.g., 2.10 seconds) serve as a Cognitive Mechanism to find equivalent Indonesian (L2) vocabulary, overcome linguistic barriers, and ensure message accuracy. Externally, filled pauses (JT such as "Eee") serve as Verbal Control (Anti-Awkwardness) and *Turn-Holding*. Informants chose JT because pure silent pauses were perceived as "really awkward," reducing interactive emptiness and maintaining the right to speak. This use of *Turn-Holding* reflects Circular Communication Theory, asserting that communication is based on reciprocity, where informants actively manage potential feedback to avoid awkwardness.

Madurese informants clearly differentiate their speech patterns based on the status of the interlocutor, indicating that pauses are a strict marker of hierarchy and politeness.

*"(2.21), Yes, if the situation is like a traditional figure, it definitely won't be, I think like this: if **Eee** answers straight away, I'm afraid that **Eee** will be like spontaneously what we say, that answer (1.48) **Eee** is impolite. So, fill the silence by thinking first about what you want to say."*

*"So, if someone asks me a question or needs an answer, and it comes from someone like **Eee**, a traditional leader, I definitely have to think about my answer. Whether it's offensive or not."*

The long pauses of silence here are not cognitive barriers, but rather the fulfillment of sociocultural obligations to hierarchy. These pauses are a form of deliberate *self-control*, aimed at ensuring that the informant's answers are not "impolite" or "offensive" (avoiding *pakewuh*). This proves that hierarchical norms and caution are far stronger than verbal efficiency factors in determining formal pause patterns, supported by an awareness of language levels (*Engghi Enten, Engghi Puntun*). As in the study by (Moh. Faridi, 2021) entitled "*ETHNOLINGUISTICS OF THE MADURA COMMUNITY'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE*," the language hierarchy is used in accordance with the Madurese people's hierarchy of respect for the *bappa'*, *bhabbu'*, *ghuru*, and *ratho philosophy of life* that they believe in. This concept is a form of respect that Madurese people have for their parents, teachers, and the government. The greatest respect and obedience are given to both parents, especially the father, who in Madurese is called *bappa'*, as the policy maker in the family. Next, there's respect for mothers (*bhabbu'*) and women. Further respect for teachers/*kyai* as those who impart knowledge, while village/government offices are manifestations of the concept of *ratho*. The higher the level of respect between individuals in Madurese society, the higher the hierarchy of language used and the more influential that person's outlook on life.

Madurese informants have strict standards in face-to-face interactions, but show adaptation in interpreting the straightforward speaking style of others.

*"Especially what is that? **Eee** cut it like that, huh? I definitely thought, wow, this person doesn't seem very polite, you know."*

*"In the past, yes, I thought, wow, this person is really rude... But now that I've left Madura... I understand. It turns out **there** are people who talk like this, but their intentions aren't rude. So I'm just more open, I guess."*

This response demonstrates a disconnect between interactive etiquette and speaking style. Interrupting is seen as a violation of universal social norms. However, the informant demonstrated a growing tolerance for direct or rapid speaking. Rather than permanently labeling direct *speakers* as "rude," the informant reconstituted their meaning after exposure to cultural diversity. They now accept directness as a difference in individual habits, which does not necessarily reflect rude intentions, indicating that the informant's tolerance norms have adapted.

➤ Pandalungan Informant Pause Pattern

The results of interviews with informants from Pandalungan culture show a pattern of using pauses that is functional and oriented towards preparedness, reflecting the adaptation between the straightforwardness of Arek and the caution of Madura.

Informant Pandalungan uses silent pauses (JH) and filled pauses (JT) such as ' **Anu** ', ' **Eee** ', and ' **Emm** ', especially in situations where he feels confused or has to compose a message.

*"What happened was that I, **Anu**, **Eee** were thinking about what to say or how to answer, confused."*

"It's important. Because maybe he was silent because he was thinking, so if I answered straight away but didn't understand what I was trying to convey, I'd still be confused. So, yes, both are important."

Pauses have a dual function (internal/external). Internally, pauses serve as a cognitive mechanism for addressing *distractions* and planning messages (*encoding*), prioritizing accuracy over speed. Externally, filled pauses are *turn-holding*. This use of *turn-holding* reflects Circular Communication Theory, where informants consciously manage the reciprocal aspects of interaction by

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anticipating potential feedback. Pandalungan informants differentiate their speech patterns based on the status of the interlocutor, suggesting that pauses are markers for achieving safety in formal communication contexts.

"Erm, maybe it's safer because I'm more prepared with what I want to say."

Here, the deliberate pause is not simply a matter of searching for words, but rather a fulfillment of a sociocultural obligation to respect a superior. This pause is a deliberate exercise of *self-control to achieve preparedness*. This pause serves as a safety strategy to ensure that the utterances are filtered and do not cause problems, a form of caution demanded by Javanese hierarchical norms. This demonstrates that hierarchical norms are far more powerful than verbal efficiency in determining pause patterns in formal contexts.

Pandalungan informants have a very tolerant and egalitarian attitude towards variations in other people's speaking styles.

"In my opinion, yes, it probably depends on how the older person responds... I'll just listen."

(Straightforward/ To the Point): *"Erm, yes, it's probably just a difference in habits and background, in my opinion."*

This response demonstrates a separation between ethics and speaking style. Regarding fast or interruptive speaking behavior, the informant demonstrates passive tolerance, leaving the assessment of sanctions to elders and choosing to *"just listen."* Regarding straightforward speaking styles (*to the point*), the informant directly constructs the meaning as a difference in individual habits or backgrounds, not as a violation of ethics. Rather than labeling negatively, he shows an open attitude towards variations in speaking styles. This is in line with the study of Ftriah L (2025) entitled *"The Tradition of Grave Visitation as a Local Tradition of the Tapal Kuda Community (Sumberanyar Village, Nguling District, Pasuruan Regency)"*. The Tapal Kuda community adheres to the cultural value of tolerance which is an attitude of mutual respect and appreciation for differences that exist between individuals or groups. Tolerance also means not imposing one's will, criticizing, or demeaning others. (Sumberanyar et al., 2025)

➤ Mataraman Informant Pause Pattern

The results of interviews with Mataraman cultural informants from Tulungagung show a pattern of very careful and normative use of pauses, driven by a concern for word accuracy and hierarchical politeness, which is in line with Javanese cultural values.

Mataraman informants use filled pauses ('**Eee**') and silent pauses (JH) which repeatedly appear due to internal cognitive processes and as interaction strategies.

"Sometimes Eee likes it, sometimes for example I want to say A, but I have to think about it first, so I don't have to say it like that, sis."

"I sometimes think about what words I shouldn't say, whether they are appropriate or not."

Pauses in Mataraman informants serve a dual function: internal and external. Internally, filled pauses ('**Eee**') are a Cognitive Mechanism for weighing the appropriateness of words before they are spoken. This conscious effort ensures the accuracy and conformity of words to social norms. Externally, JT acts as verbal control and Turn -*Holding*. Although pauses are considered less significant, their use reflects Circular Communication Theory, where informants process potential feedback (avoiding offense) and adjust messages based on reciprocal aspects.

Mataraman informants showed very distinct differences in speech patterns based on the status of the interlocutor, making pauses a strict marker of politeness and caution.

"If I do as much as possible when talking to older people or community leaders... that means I can reduce the pause in thinking as much as possible. So I speak more directly."

"Sometimes that's impolite to them..."

Here, the silent pause has a dual status. While *self-control* (thinking first) is important, prolonging the pause in front of elders is considered impolite. Therefore, the pause used is a very short one. The subjects are aware that in this context, time efficiency is part of politeness. The main goal is to ensure the answer is correct, but delivered quickly, to avoid the impression of hesitation or unpreparedness. While cognitive pauses are important for weighing the appropriateness of words, a closer analysis of the pauses of Mataraman informants reveals that in the presence of hierarchy, Time Efficiency is the strictest normative demand. Long pauses in the presence of elders or respected figures are considered a violation of *etiquette*. This is a turning point that distinguishes Mataraman from other subjects: their *self-control* is directed at reducing the duration of the pause (a very short Hierarchical Pause) in order to be able to speak immediately. This proves that Mataraman have constructed and internalized time efficiency as an inherent part of politeness. In other words, in Mataraman, politeness is not only measured by *what* is said (the choice of *Kromo language*), but also *when* and *how* quickly it is said. This demand reflects a strong connection to the culture of the Mataraman Kingdom, which values refinement and precision, although its intonation is not as refined as that of Yogyakarta and Surakarta. The objectification of pauses as "impolite" behavior if they are done too long indicates the intensity of the Mataraman Hierarchical Norms. The Mataraman region is an area that still has a strong connection to the culture of the Mataraman Kingdom. The customs of the Mataraman cultural community have similarities with those of the Yogyakarta and Surakarta regions. Among these linguistic customs, the most striking characteristic is the use of Javanese kromo with a refined intonation, although not as refined as when compared to the people of Yogyakarta and Surakarta (Lisailiyah, 2023).

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The reactions of Mataraman informants to violations of speech patterns were very strict in terms of interaction ethics, but showed a functional interpretation of speech style.

" *There will definitely be someone saying, 'Why do you like to interrupt people's conversations, you're not polite', that's for sure... If for example in a family environment, parents would definitely say, 'You're not polite, you should listen to what people are saying first'*"

" *If he's straightforward, he's a person who is confident in what he says. It's true that on average, people like Eee think that they're not confident in what they say.* "

This response demonstrates a separation between the ethics and psychology of speech. Interrupting is seen as a violation of universal social norms and will result in labeling or sanctions (sarcasm at hangouts or reprimands from parents). However, regarding the direct or pause-like style of speech, the informant interpreted it through a psychological lens. He constructed the meaning of pauses as a sign of lack of self-confidence (PD), while directness as a sign of complete self-confidence. Rather than labeling direct speech as impolite (as do Arek or Madurese), the Mataraman informant constructed it as a reflection of individual character, making it acceptable.

Pause as a Cultural Reflection

The following table directly compares the main functions and norms governing the speech patterns of the four subjects.

Comparative Features	S-AREK (Straightforward)	S-MADURA (Hierarchical)	S- PANDALUNGAN (Adaptive)	S- MATARAMANA (Normative)
Top Priority	Message Accuracy	Clarity/Precision (through Language)	Accuracy	Subtlety/Politeness & Accuracy of Words
JT Function/Filter Word	Turn-Holding & Cognitive	Anti- Awkwardness	Turn-Holding & Planning	Consideration of Suitability (<i>Is it suitable or not</i>)
Hierarchical Pause Strategy	Filtering Silence Pause	Filtering Silence Pause	Silent Pause for Readiness/Safety	Reduce Pauses (because long Pauses are impolite)
Another Straightforward Interpretation	Difference in Habits	Adaptation (Separating style from intent)	Differences in Habits/Background	Psychological Characteristics (Confident/Lack of Confidence)
Interactive Sanctions	No sanction label	Harsh Sanctions (Cutting= Impolite)	Passive Attitude (<i>Just listening</i>)	Harsh Sanctions (Cutting= Impolite)

The pattern of pauses in reactions with respected figures provides a key area of contrast that underscores the strength of the General Javanese Hierarchical Norm, although all subjects use pauses as a strategic *self-control mechanism*. This manifestation of *self-control* is culturally divided: Arek and Madurese informants use silent pauses for Message Filtering purposes, ensuring their responses are not incorrect or offensive, a pattern also followed by Pandalungan informants through seeking "safety" and preparedness. In contrast, Mataraman informants have the strictest normative demands, where Time Efficiency is central to politeness; long pauses in the presence of hierarchy are considered "impolite," so Mataraman *self-control* is manifested by reducing the duration of pauses and speaking immediately after finishing thinking. Reactions to interactive etiquette and varying speech styles further demonstrate polarization in Social Construction and Interactive Sanctions. Arek and Pandalungan informants demonstrate High Tolerance for Straightforward Speech Styles, interpreting *to the point* as simply "differences in habits" or "background," and refraining from assigning negative labels. However, Madurese and Mataraman informants, who were the most normative subjects, were very strict in applying the Harsh Sanctions on Etiquette, explicitly labeling the behavior of interrupting as "impolite," indicating that for a culture dominated by manners, regularity in speaking turns is a mandatory norm. In summary, the pausing pattern in East Java is the result of a strategic compromise, where all subjects use pauses to ensure message clarity, but the function and duration of pauses are adaptively modified to comply with the prevailing hierarchical rules, which cover the spectrum from message filtering to time efficiency of delivery.

Pause Patterns as a Form of Social Construction

Berger and Luckman stated that there is a dialectic between individuals creating society and society creating individuals. This dialectic process has three stages: externalization, objectification, and internalization, which Berger and Luckman call moments (Ii et al., 1950). The process of forming social construction in the context of communication pauses in the East Javanese subcultures of Arek, Mataraman, Pandalungan, and Madura proceeds through three steps: externalization (creation of pause practices), objectification (institutionalization of pause rules), and internalization (absorption). By understanding in depth how these norms work, we can recognize and interpret the impact of pause behavior (such as reducing pauses in Mataraman or using long pauses to filter messages in Madura) in a more informed and responsible manner within a specific cultural framework. Speech pauses in East Java are no longer seen as purely linguistic phenomena, but rather as socially constructed products within the

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context of Javanese norms of socialization and hierarchy. The process begins with the externalization of individual actions, such as the use of filled pauses (JT) by Arek informants to overcome blanking and maintain the right to speak (Turn-Holding), which is a cognitive response. These individual actions are then institutionalized and recognized collectively (Objectification). In Arek culture, pauses are institutionalized as a symbol of "seriously processing information" while in Mataraman culture, long pauses are objectified in the opposite way, namely as behavior that violates social norms and is "impolite."

Internalization occurs when these objectified norms are absorbed by individuals and become automatic determinants of behavior or *self-control*. Arek, Pandalungan, and Madurese informants internalize General Javanese Politeness Norms, which are manifested in the deliberate use of long silent pauses as a form of self-control, restraining spontaneous speech, and using pauses to filter messages so as not to be wrong, not to offend, or to avoid *pakewuh*. In contrast, Mataraman informants internalize the very strict norms of Mataraman that demand *time efficiency* as part of the *upload-ungguh*, where their *self-control* is manifested by reducing pauses and immediately speaking after thinking. The discoveries of meaning in each of these cultures are also very relevant to the purpose of Thick Description in ethnography, namely to explore and obtain a comprehensive picture of the meanings, values, and norms that regulate the social and cultural life of a community group (Putra, S. A, 2025).

Social Construction and Interactive Sanctions The social reality of pauses is maintained through Interactive Sanctions, which demonstrate a strong polarization in norm enforcement. Madurese and Mataraman informants explicitly apply harsh sanctions to behavior that violates speech rules, such as interrupting, labeling it "impolite," which reifies the objectification of turn-taking as a mandatory norm. In contrast, Arek and Pandalungan informants reconstruct the meaning of pauses by showing high tolerance for straightforward speech styles, constructing such behaviors as mere "differences in habit" or "background," thus separating verbal style from moral judgment. Overall, the pattern of pauses in East Java is a product of the Bergerian dialectic: cognitive behavior is externalized, filtered, institutionalized through hierarchical norms (Objectification), and absorbed as *self-control obligations* (Internalization) to navigate social risks.

Internalization occurs when individuals absorb these objectified norms, making them automatic determinants of behavior, manifested in different *self-control mechanisms*. Arek, Pandalungan, and Madurese informants indicate that silent pauses are a form of self-control; they refrain from the directness or spontaneity that is normalized in their culture because the General Javanese Politeness Norms have been internalized. These pauses are functionally used to filter messages, ensuring answers "correctly, not incorrectly," and avoiding "offending" or *pakewuh*. In contrast, Mataraman informants internalize very strict Mataraman norms, where their *self-control* is faced with different demands: having to minimize pauses and immediately speak after thinking, proving that time efficiency has been constructed and internalized as an important part of Mataraman *ungguh-ungguh*.

Finally, the social reality of pausing is maintained through Social Construction and Interactive Sanctions. Social sanctions against pausing demonstrate a strong polarization in collective efforts to uphold objectified norms. Madurese and Mataraman informants explicitly impose harsh sanctions on interrupting, labeling it "impolite," an attempt to reify the objectified regularity of turn-taking as an obligatory norm. In contrast, Arek and Pandalungan informants demonstrate a high tolerance for straightforward speech styles with minimal pauses, constructing such behavior simply as "differences in habit" or "background." This tolerant attitude suggests that their interactive reality reconstructs the meaning of pausing, separating verbal style from moral or ethical judgment. Overall, pausing patterns in East Java are the product of a Bergerian dialectic: cognitive behavior (Externalization) is filtered, institutionalized, and maintained through hierarchical norms (Objectification), and ultimately absorbed by individuals as *self-control obligations* (Internalization) to navigate social risks in their environment.

The pattern of using filled pauses as *Turn-Holding* demonstrates the validity of the principles of Circular Communication Theory in East Javanese interactions. This theory views communication as a continuous and simultaneous reciprocal process, in which individuals simultaneously act as senders and receivers. The findings of pauses prove this: the informant (communicator) is aware that his or her pause will trigger a response from the interlocutor (communicatee). Therefore, the use of filled pauses ('Eee', 'kayak') is an active strategy to manage potential *feedback*.

This strategy is crucial for MADURA and AREK informants. MADURA informants specifically use filled pauses because silent pauses are perceived as "very awkward", indicating that pauses serve to maintain the flow and comfort of circular interactions.

Meanwhile, for AREK informants, pauses are a tool to signal that they are not finished, prevent the interlocutor from interrupting and maintain attention. The informants' awareness of maintaining the listener's attention by using filled pauses indicates that their pausing behavior is a dynamically adjusted action based on the interactive context and awareness of the reciprocal aspects of the conversation.

CLOSING

Based on ethnographic analysis of Spradley's model, this study concludes that the pattern of pause use in oral communication across four East Javanese subcultures: Arek, Madura, Pandalungan, and Mataraman represents a strategic compromise governed

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by cultural norms. Pauses serve a dual function: as cognitive aids to overcome *confusion* and filter messages, and as *Turn-Holding*, affirming awareness of the reciprocal aspects of communication. General Javanese Hierarchical Norms prove to be the primary determinant of formal pause patterns, demanding varying degrees of *self-control*: AREK, MADURA, and PANDALUNGAN informants use pauses for message filtering (securing quality and reducing social risk), while MATARAMAN informants demonstrate the opposite demand, namely to reduce pauses because prolonged pauses in the face of hierarchy are considered "impolite." Furthermore, MADURA and MATARAMAN informants strictly enforce harsh sanctions against violations of interactive etiquette (interrupting), while AREK and PANDALUNGAN informants are more tolerant, interpreting the straightforward style as simply "a difference in custom." In short, the pause pattern is a manifestation of the balance that the subject must maintain between local identity and normative obedience.

Based on the findings of this study, it is suggested that the results of the study can be utilized both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it is recommended to conduct further quantitative research, particularly using spectrographic analysis, to precisely measure the duration and frequency of pauses in formal contexts in Mataraman subjects, aiming to verify the hypothesis that time efficiency is a *time threshold demand* quantified in politeness norms. In addition, the integration of Circular Communication Theory and Spradley Analysis can be developed as an effective methodological framework to map how cultural norms (such as *Kromo Inggil*) influence metacommunication behavior in other regions. It is hoped that these results can serve as a basis for future studies to continue to unravel the complexity of oral communication in multicultural societies, particularly in linking sociocultural factors with cognitive decisions manifested in spontaneous speech. Practically, the results of this study are important for the development of an intercultural communication curriculum in East Java. Furthermore, in a practical context, these findings provide a valuable roadmap for the development of Intercultural Communication Competence in East Java, particularly in higher education and corporate environments with diverse cultural workforces. Lecturers, managers, and practitioners need to be aware that prolonged pauses in Madurese/Arek/Pandalungan language in the presence of superiors are not a sign of unpreparedness, but rather a social risk- screening strategy. Conversely, the rapidity of formal Mataraman language does not necessarily indicate directness, but rather an attempt to maintain politeness. This awareness can increase understanding and reduce misinterpretation in hierarchical and multicultural interactions.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature on Communication Anthropology by positioning verbal pauses as a mechanism of Social Construction that reflects and reproduces regional hierarchical norms. Using Spradley's detailed framework, we successfully uncovered minimal distinguishing features of pauses that were undetectable by conventional linguistic analysis. This empirical contribution enriches our understanding of how Javanese etiquette, particularly the norms of *uploading and undoing*, operates at the micro-level of nonverbal behavior. It is hoped that these results can serve as a basis for future studies to further unravel the complexities of oral communication in multicultural societies, particularly in linking sociocultural factors to cognitive decisions manifested in spontaneous speech. 0-140. (2021). 1 (2).

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