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Exploring Madurese Language Maintenance Strategies at Pondok Pesantren Al-Hikam Burneh Bangkalan: A Sociolinguistic Study

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ABSTRACT

The increasing influence of globalization and modernization has intensified language shift, placing many regional and minority languages at risk of reduced use and weakened intergenerational transmission. In multilingual contexts such as Indonesia, maintaining local languages has become increasingly important for preserving cultural identity and linguistic diversity. This study aims to explore the sociolinguistic factors and language maintenance strategies supporting Madurese language maintenance at *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam Burneh, Bangkalan. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 12 participants, consisting of 10 *santri* (students), 1 *ustadz* (Islamic teachers), and 1 Head of Student Board selected through purposive sampling. The findings reveal that key sociolinguistic factors identified by Fishman (1991) namely family, education, religion, community, and language attitudes strengthen the use and transmission of the Madurese language. Language maintenance strategies based on Holmes (2013) include intergenerational transmission, institutional support through programs such as *Perbahasaan* (a structured Madurese language practice activity), community involvement through cultural performances such as *Sandur* (traditional ritual dance-theater) and *Manten* (traditional wedding and ceremonial practices), and government support through the local content curriculum. Media and technology play a relatively limited role, as official communication platforms and written announcements within the *Pesantren (*Islamic boarding schools) predominantly employ Indonesian to ensure broader accessibility for students and parents from diverse linguistic backgrounds. The findings indicate that *Pesantren* creates a dynamic multilingual environment in which Madurese remains actively used in daily, educational, and cultural domains, highlighting its significant role in sustaining regional language and cultural identity amid modernizing pressures.

Keywords: *Intergenerational Transmission, Institutional Support, Language Attitudes, Language Maintenance*

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era, globalization and rapid modernization have fundamentally transformed linguistic landscapes across the world, triggering unprecedented language shift phenomena that threaten the vitality of minority and regional languages. The intensification of cross-border communication, digital connectivity, and economic integration has accelerated the dominance of major global and national languages, particularly English and standardized national languages, which function as lingua francas in educational, governmental, and commercial domains (Melnyk & Kyselova,

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2024). This linguistic dominance places great pressure on local and regional languages, pushing them into increasingly limited areas of use and reducing their transmission from parents to children. As a result, thousands of minority languages across the globe face various levels of endangerment, with UNESCO estimating that about 40% of the world's languages are at risk of extinction (Simons & Lewis, 2013). The urgency of this global situation requires comprehensive investigation how local communities protect their languages and keep language diversity alive under strong global influence.

In response to these linguistic challenges, sociolinguistics provides an important perspective for understanding how language functions within society and how social factors influence language use (Arifianti, 2023). Sociolinguistics examines the relationship between language and social contexts, including factors such as family, education, religion, community interaction, and language attitudes that shape speakers' linguistic behavior. In multilingual communities, these social dimensions often determine whether a language continues to be actively used or gradually shifts toward more dominant languages. Sociolinguistics can provide us with insights and guidance in choosing and using language styles and varieties when communicating with certain people and in specific situations (Muhlis, 2021). Another important aspect is language attitudes, which refer to people's opinions and feelings about different languages. These attitudes play a crucial role in determining whether a language is maintained or abandoned in a community (Garrett, 2010).

The preservation of linguistic diversity in multilingual societies therefore requires deliberate and sustained efforts, collectively known in sociolinguistic scholarship as language maintenance. Language maintenance refers to the continued use and vitality of a language in a community that is experiencing pressure to shift to another language (Fishman, 1991; Holmes, 2013). It involves several key aspects such as speakers' positive attitudes toward their language, supportive family and community practices, and institutional efforts through education, religion, and media (Pauwels, 2016). According to Fishman (1991), language maintenance is influenced by five key social domains that determine how a minority language survives across generations: (1) family, (2) education, (3) religion, (4) community or environment, and (5) attitude. These domains shape the frequency, context, and emotional attachment through which speakers continue to use their language in everyday life.

Indonesia presents a particularly compelling case for examining language maintenance dynamics, as it is one of the world's most linguistically diverse nations, home to over 700 living languages spoken across its vast archipelago (Sewell, 2022; Aji et al.,2022). This extraordinary linguistic diversity reflects the country's complex ethnic, cultural, and geographical variety, with regional languages serving as crucial markers of ethnic identity and cultural heritage for hundreds of distinct ethnolinguistic communities. However, this linguistic richness exists in tension with national language policy that has promoted Bahasa Indonesia as the sole official language and primary medium of instruction since independence in 1945. While this policy has successfully unified the nation, it has also caused a gradual decline in local language use, especially among younger generations (Lauder, 2008).

Among Indonesia's regional languages, Madurese is the fourth most widely spoken local language in Indonesia, Madurese is the mother tongue of approximately 7-8 million speakers (Ananta et al., 2015), Madurese serves as a vital marker of ethnic identity and cultural heritage, carrying a rich tradition of oral literature, proverbs, and religious expressions. Despite its importance, the language faces increasing challenges due to the growing dominance of Indonesian and other global languages, which often reduces the domains in which Madurese is actively used. To maintain a language under such pressures, institutions play an essential role in supporting its continued use and transmission (Fishman, 1991). In the Madurese context, Islamic boarding schools, known as *Pesantren*, serve as key institutional spaces where Madurese is not only used in daily interactions but also taught and reinforced, helping to sustain the language across generations while integrating it with religious and

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moral education.

Pesantren are traditional Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia that provide religious education, moral guidance, and cultural transmission within Muslim communities (Burga & Damopolii, 2022). They have existed for centuries and continue to play a central role in shaping the social and cultural life of Muslim society. Across Madura, there are 1,428 *Pesantren* (East Java Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion, 2024), These institutions constitute distinctive multilingual environments, where Madurese, Indonesian, and Arabic coexist in different domains of daily life and education. This study focuses on *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam in Burneh, one of the largest *Pesantren* in Bangkalan, Madura, which offers an interesting site for investigating language maintenance. The *Pesantren* serves predominantly Madurese students but also enrolls santri (Students) from various regions, including Java, totaling approximately 1,700 students (Ramadhan, 2025). This diverse linguistic environment, where Madurese, Indonesian, and Arabic coexist, provides a dynamic setting to examine how a *Pesantren* can support the continued use and transmission of a regional language while accommodating religious instruction and national education requirements.

Previous studies have highlighted various strategies for maintaining local languages in Indonesia. Azis (2020) examined Bugis language preservation in Lombok, emphasizing family and community involvement, cultural activities, and governmental support. A'ini (2023) investigated Madurese language maintenance in *Pesantren* Syekh Abdul Qadir Jailani, Situbondo, identifying strategies such as competitions, daily communication, and traditional *Pesantren* practices. Likewise, Hariyanto et al. (2023) highlighted family, community, and educational efforts in maintaining Bangka Malay, while Terupun and Lampoliu (2023) emphasized the importance of language attitudes and institutional support for Sundanese in transmigrant communities. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that language maintenance is shaped by social, cultural, and institutional dimensions.

However, previous studies primarily focused on describing language maintenance practices and strategies within specific communities. Limited attention has been given to examining how sociolinguistic domains influencing language maintenance interact with the implementation of maintenance strategies within multilingual *Pesantren* settings. In particular, although A'ini (2023) investigated Madurese language maintenance in a *Pesantren* context, the study mainly emphasized practical preservation efforts without systematically integrating Fishman's (1991) sociolinguistic domains and Holmes' (2013) language maintenance strategies as a combined analytical framework. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by investigating both the sociolinguistic factors and language maintenance strategies supporting Madurese at *Pondok Pesantren Al-Hikam Burneh*, *Bangkalan*. Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature by providing a more comprehensive analysis of how family, educational, religious, and community domains interact with institutional language practices within a multilingual environment where Madurese, Indonesian, and Arabic coexist. This perspective offers a broader understanding of how *pesantren* function as agents of regional language preservation in a modernizing context.

2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to investigate Madurese language maintenance strategies at *Pondok Pesantren Al-Hikam Burneh, Bangkalan*. This approach was selected because it enabled an in-depth understanding of language maintenance practices and the sociolinguistic contexts within the *Pesantren* environment (Creswell, 2014). The participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their active involvement in language use and language maintenance practices within the *Pesantren*. A total of 12 participants were involved in this study, consisting of 10 *santri* (students), 1 *ustadz* (Islamic teachers), and 1 head of the student board. The student participants consisted of 5 male and 5 female *santri* from junior high school (SMP) and senior high school (SMA) levels. To obtain more varied perspectives, the students were selected from different dormitory blocks

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within the *Pesantren* environment. Most participants came from Madurese-speaking backgrounds, while several participants originated from non-Madurese regions. This variation was intended to provide broader insights into language use and maintenance practices within the multilingual setting of the *Pesantren*.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews using an interview guide containing open-ended questions related to language use patterns, attitudes toward the Madurese language, factors influencing language maintenance, and strategies used to preserve the language within the *Pesantren*. Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to gain deeper information regarding participants' experiences and perspectives while maintaining flexibility during the interview process (Ritchie et al., 2013). Interviews were conducted using Indonesian and Madurese according to participants' language

preferences and communicative comfort. Each interview was audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim. To maintain participant confidentiality while ensuring data traceability, each participant was assigned an identification code during data analysis. The coding system consisted of SH (Student Head), US (*Ustadz*), MS1–MS5 (Male Students 1-5), and FS1–FS5 (Female Students 1-5). These identifiers were used when presenting interview excerpts to distinguish participants while protecting their identities.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2016), consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analysis process began by assigning codes to significant statements in the interview transcripts. Similar codes were then grouped into categories and broader themes related to sociolinguistic factors and language maintenance strategies based on Fishman's (1991) and Holmes' (2013) theoretical frameworks. To ensure data validity, triangulation was conducted by comparing responses obtained from different participant groups, including students, teachers, and the student head board. This process was intended to verify data consistency and minimize subjective interpretation.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study based on interviews with *ustadz* (Islamic teachers) from *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam Burneh, Bangkalan. The analysis is organized into two main parts: (1) factors influencing language maintenance based on Fishman (1991) and (2) language maintenance strategies based on Holmes (2013). The data reveal various deliberate efforts undertaken by the *Pesantren* to maintain the Madurese language among *santri* (students) within a multilingual educational environment.

3.1 Result

3.1.1 *Factors Influencing Language Maintenance (Fishman, 1991)*

Fishman (1991) identifies several sociolinguistic domains that strongly influence the maintenance or decline of a minority language. These include the family, education, religion, community/environment, and language attitude domains. Each domain plays a distinct yet interconnected role in determining how frequently and meaningfully the minority language is used in everyday life. The findings from *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam Burneh show that these domains collectively support the sustainability of the Madurese language within both familial and institutional contexts.

Table 1 shows that the family domain was identified as the most dominant factor influencing Madurese language maintenance, selected by four participants. This finding indicates that the family remains the primary environment for introducing and transmitting Madurese to younger generations. The community/environment domain was the second most frequently mentioned factor, chosen by

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three participants, showing that daily interaction within the *Pesantren* environment strongly supports language use. Meanwhile, education and language attitude were each selected by two participants, while the religious domain was identified by one participant. These findings suggest that language maintenance is supported by multiple interconnected domains, with family and social environments playing the most influential roles.

Table 1. Dominant Sociolinguistic Factors Influencing Madurese Language Maintenance at Pondok Pesantren Al-Hikam Burneh, Bangkalan

ctors Influencing Language Maintenance	Number of Participants (n=12)	Description
Family Domain	4	Participants considered family as the strongest factor because Madurese was introduced and used at home from an early age.
Education Domain	2	Participants highlighted formal Madurese lessons and school activities as supporting language maintenance.
Religions Domain	1	Participants mentioned religious activities using Madurese as contributing to language use and preservation.
Community/Environment Domain	3	Participants emphasized that interaction with senior students and the Pesantren environment encouraged regular use of Madurese.
Language Attitude	2	Participants expressed pride and positive feelings toward Madurese as part of their identity.

The findings, in Table 1, indicate that each domain contributes differently to Madurese language maintenance within the *Pesantren* environment. Although the level of influence varies across domains, all of them collectively support the continued use and transmission of the language. To provide a deeper understanding of how these domains function in maintaining Madurese, each domain is discussed in detail based on participants' responses and Fishman's (1991) sociolinguistic framework.

a. Family Domain

The family domain is the most fundamental and stable factor in maintaining a local language, as it is where intergenerational transmission naturally occurs. According to Fishman (1991), the continued use of a minority language within the home is the strongest predictor of its survival, since language learning and identity formation begin at home.

In the context of *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam, the Madurese language remains actively used by santri and their families, particularly in communication between parents and children. This demonstrates that even before entering the *pesantren* environment, many students have already acquired Madurese as their first language.

> *"Untuk orang tua kepada anaknya, baik itu santri putra dan santri putri, memang kebanyakan masih menggunakan bahasa Madura. Cuma bahasa Madura yang halus itu."* (SH)
> ("For the parents to their children, whether male or female students, most of them still use the Madurese language, but they use the polite or refined form of Madurese.")

This excerpt confirms that the use of Madurese within families especially in its polite register helps

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preserve not only the language but also the social values associated with respect and courtesy. Parents act as the first transmitters of linguistic and cultural norms, ensuring that their children enter educational institutions with an existing foundation of Madurese competence. Moreover, Ustadz observed that some parents from urban areas, although ethnically Madurese, tend to use Indonesian at home. However, when their children attend Al-Hikam, they often rediscover and relearn Madurese through the *pesantren* environment. This demonstrates how family background continues to shape language behavior, even as educational institutions reinforce it. This finding aligns with Fishman's (1991) assertion that the family domain is the core domain of language maintenance, where habitual use and emotional attachment to the language ensure its transmission to younger generations.

The family factor identified in this study confirms the importance of intergenerational language transmission in maintaining minority languages. The findings show that Madurese is commonly introduced by parents before students enter the *Pesantren* environment, allowing students to develop familiarity with the language from an early age. This finding is consistent with Hariyanto et al. (2023), who found that the family serves as the primary pillar for maintaining Bangka Malay because language transmission naturally begins within the household. However, a different pattern can also be observed. Hariyanto et al. (2023) reported that interethnic marriages and the increasing use of Indonesian weakened family-based transmission of Bangka Malay, whereas families in the Al-Hikam context still actively preserve Madurese as part of daily communication.

b. Education Domain

In Fishman's (1991) framework, the education domain serves as a key institutional setting where language is systematically transmitted to younger generations. He emphasizes that when minority languages are recognized and taught within formal education, they gain social legitimacy and continue to be actively used among students. At *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam Burneh, the education domain contributes significantly to the maintenance of the Madurese language. The *pesantren* integrates Madurese as a formal subject in its curriculum, ensuring that students receive structured instruction and exposure to the language alongside religious and Arabic studies.

> *"Untuk penggunaan bahasa Madura di formal pendidikan itu memang ada. Bahkan di sini juga ada pelajarannya. Jadi formal itu ada tambahan pelajaran, seperti bahasa Arab, kemudian agama, kemudian bahasa Madura. Jadi setiap santri yang SMP, SMA, SMK itu pasti mendapatkan pendidikan berupa bahasa Madura di sekolah formal."* (SH)
> ("The use of the Madurese language in formal education does exist. In fact, it is included as a subject. So, in addition to Arabic and religious lessons, there is also Madurese language instruction. Every student at the junior and senior high school levels receives formal education in Madurese.")

This excerpt clearly demonstrates that the *Pesantren*, as an educational institution, plays a dual role in both religious formation and language preservation. By positioning Madurese as part of formal education, the *Pesantren* not only teaches linguistic competence but also reinforces local cultural identity among its students. The formal inclusion of Madurese aligns with Fishman's (1991) argument that education serves as a stabilizing domain of language maintenance, providing intergenerational continuity and legitimacy to minority languages. In this sense, *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam functions as both an academic and cultural space that sustains the vitality of Madurese within the broader educational framework.

The educational factor found in this study also supports A'ini's (2022) research on Madurese

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language maintenance in an Islamic boarding school context. A'ini found that educational activities and daily language practices contributed to maintaining Madurese among students. Similarly, the present study shows that Madurese is formally included in the educational system through language instruction in the *Pesantren* curriculum. However, while A'ini mainly focused on practical maintenance activities such as competitions and habitual use, this study further explains how education functions as a sociolinguistic domain that systematically supports language maintenance.

c. Religious Domain

The religious domain serves as a vital factor in maintaining minority languages, especially in traditional Islamic institutions such as *Pesantren*. Fishman (1991) emphasizes that religion provides one of the most stable and respected social spaces for the continued use of local languages, as it allows them to function within meaningful spiritual and communal contexts. At *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam Burneh, the Madurese language plays a significant role in religious activities such as *pengajian* and *ceramah*. During these sessions, religious leaders and teachers often combine Madurese and Indonesian to ensure comprehension among students from both Madura and other regions, while still preserving the cultural identity of the local language.

> *"Untuk kegiatannya semacam pengajian memang kebanyakan bahasa Indonesia dengan bahasa Madura. Kenapa kok diselingkan dengan bahasa Indonesia, karena Pak Kiai sendiri juga melihat bahwasanya santri-santri Al-Hikam ini juga banyak yang berasal dari luar Madura. Cuma bukan berarti kami menghilangkan budaya bahasa Madura yang ada di Pesantren. Jadi setiap pengajian sama Pak Kiai itu diselingkan. Ada bahasa Indonesia-nya, kemudian ada bahasa Madura-nya, seperti itu."* (SH)
> ("For religious activities such as *pengajian*, the language used is mostly a mix of Indonesian and Madurese. The Kiai includes some Indonesian because many students come from outside Madura. However, this does not mean that we abandon the Madurese language and culture in the *Pesantren*. So, in every *pengajian*, the Kiai alternates between Indonesian and Madurese.")

This excerpt illustrates that religious practices at *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam serve as an important medium for maintaining the Madurese language. The Kiai's (Islamic boarding school leader) deliberate use of both languages demonstrates a balanced approach ensuring inclusivity for non-Madurese students while preserving the *Pesantren's* linguistic and cultural identity. The use of Madurese in *pengajian* embeds the language within sacred discourse, linking it to spiritual learning and moral values. This association strengthens the language's prestige and emotional significance among students, fostering a sense of pride and continuity. This finding supports Fishman's (1991) argument that the religious domain functions as a stronghold of language maintenance, as faith-based institutions provide consistent and respected spaces for minority languages to thrive across generations. Through regular religious activities conducted in Madurese, *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam helps sustain the language's vitality within both spiritual and social life.

The religious factor identified in this study complements the findings of Hariyanto et al. (2023). Their study reported that the use of Bangka Malay in religious lectures increased emotional closeness and encouraged language preservation. Similarly, religious activities at *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam employ Madurese alongside Indonesian in pengajian and religious instruction. However, unlike the Bangka Malay context where the use of local language in religious activities was relatively limited, Madurese at Al-Hikam remains consistently integrated into everyday religious practices.

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d. Community/Environment Domain

The community or environment domain is one of the most influential factors in language maintenance because it reflects how a language is used in everyday social interactions. Fishman (1991) emphasizes that when a local language continues to be spoken in community life through friendships, peer communication, and local customs it remains functionally alive and socially meaningful. At *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam Burneh, the community environment plays a significant role in preserving the Madurese language. The *Pesantren* community encourages the consistent use

of Madurese in daily interactions among students, teachers, and staff. Senior students communicate with juniors in Madurese, creating a linguistic environment that naturally promotes immersion and imitation among newcomers.

> *"Untuk di sini memang kebanyakan ada dorongan juga dari para santri yang sudah lama di Pesantren. Memang kebanyakan memang menggunakan bahasa Madura. Bahkan interaksi kepada adik kelasnya juga menggunakan bahasa Madura. Jadi yang santri-santri baru itu mengikuti kebiasaan yang sudah ada di Pesantren."* (US)
> ("Here, there is indeed a lot of encouragement from students who have been at the *Pesantren* for a long time. Most of them use Madurese. Even their interactions with junior students use Madurese. So, the new students follow the existing habits in the *Pesantren*.")

This excerpt shows that language maintenance at Al-Hikam is sustained through peer transmission a process in which senior students function as linguistic role models. The *Pesantren's* communal environment fosters a self-reinforcing cycle, where the everyday use of Madurese becomes both a norm and a social expectation. The habitual use of Madurese in non-formal interactions during leisure time, cleaning activities, or dormitory conversations creates an immersive linguistic atmosphere. Through this process, even students from outside Madura adapt to the local linguistic culture, contributing to the ongoing vitality of the language. This finding aligns with Fishman's (1991) concept that language maintenance depends on continuous use across multiple social domains, particularly informal settings like friendships and community interactions. By making Madurese the dominant medium of daily communication, *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam demonstrates that a strong linguistic environment can effectively sustain a regional language beyond formal education.

The community factor found in this study is also consistent with Terupun and Lompoliu (2023), who emphasized that frequent use of Sundanese within family and social environments contributes to language maintenance. Similarly, students at Al-Hikam continuously use Madurese in daily interactions, creating a supportive linguistic environment. Nevertheless, a distinctive characteristic appears in the *Pesantren* setting because language transmission is reinforced not only through social interaction but also through institutional structures and peer relationships among students.

e. Language Attitude

The language attitude domain refers to speakers' emotional attachment, sense of identity, and level of pride toward their language. Fishman (1991) argues that positive language attitudes are crucial in preventing language shift, as speakers who value their mother tongue tend to maintain its usage across generations. In the context of *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam Burneh, most *santri* express strong pride in using the Madurese language, indicating that emotional involvement plays a significant role in sustaining language vitality. Many *santri* stated that they feel proud to speak Madurese because it represents cultural identity and distinguishes their linguistic background. Several students highlighted the uniqueness of the Madurese accent and pronunciation, suggesting that not everyone can master

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its phonological features easily.

> *"Bangga si kak, karena dari awal saya memang fasih bahasa madura, dan logat madura itu beda, kaya contoh lidah orang madura gampang belajar bahasa jawa tapi lidah orang jawa belum tentu bisa logat madura." (MS3)*
> (I am proud because I have been fluent in Madurese since the beginning, and the accent is different. For example, Madurese speakers find it easier to learn Javanese, but Javanese speakers cannot easily imitate the Madurese accent.)

This statement demonstrates how pride in linguistic uniqueness becomes a motivational factor in language maintenance. Students also show pride even when they initially did not master the language but gradually acquired it through *Pesantren* interactions. One *santri* explained that learning Madurese at the *Pesantren* made them proud because the language is considered rare and not widely understood outside Madura, increasing its perceived cultural value.

In addition, several male students expressed pride by associating the Madurese language with positive social traits. They believe that speaking Madurese can represent religious character, politeness, and hospitality elements commonly linked to Madurese cultural identity. By showing good behavior while speaking Madurese, these students attempt to reshape negative stereotypes about the Madurese community, turning language into a tool for identity rebranding.

> *"Kalau saya sendiri bangga karena dilihat dari orang-orangnya juga, karena orang madura kan banyak dikenal jeleknya, tapi ada juga sisi baiknya kaya contoh orang madura lebih kental agamanya… Jadi saya ingin nunjukin itu dari bahasanya kalau orang madura itu baik-baik, sopan, dan menghargai tamu."* (FM2)
> ("I am proud because Madurese people are often judged negatively, but we also have good sides, such as strong religiosity. So, I want to show through our language that Madurese people are polite, respectful, and appreciative of guests.")

The findings from *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam Burneh contribute to the global literature on minority language maintenance in religious education institutions by showing that language preservation is not only supported by formal rules or teaching, but also strongly influenced by students' emotional attachment, pride, and identity. In this study, the use of Madurese among *santri* demonstrates how positive language attitudes can help maintain a minority language, as students feel proud of their language and see it as an important part of their cultural identity. More importantly, the *Pesantren* context also shows that language can be used to challenge negative stereotypes and rebuild the image of a community, where speaking Madurese becomes a way to show politeness, religiosity, and respect. This means that religious boarding schools can play a unique role in sustaining minority languages because they combine daily interaction, moral values, and identity formation in one environment. Overall, this study supports and extends Fishman's (1991) idea that positive language attitudes help prevent language shift, and it also shows that in religious educational settings, minority languages can be maintained not only as a means of communication but also as a symbol of dignity, identity, and cultural resistance.

The language attitude factor identified in this study is in line with Azis (2020), who found that language attitudes strongly influence language maintenance. Azis reported that negative attitudes toward Bugis, such as perceiving it as old-fashioned and less useful, weakened language preservation efforts. In contrast, students at *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam demonstrate strong positive attitudes toward Madurese and consider it a marker of identity, politeness, and cultural values. This positive perception strengthens students' willingness to continue using Madurese in their daily interactions and

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supports the sustainability of the language.

3.1.2 *Language Maintenance Strategies (Holmes, 2013)*

Holmes (2013) identifies four primary strategies for maintaining minority languages: intergenerational transmission, institutional support, community involvement and cultural activities, and government and policy support. The findings from *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam demonstrate how these strategies are implemented within the *Pesantren* context to preserve Madurese language vitality.

Table 2. Dominant Language Maintenance Strategies for Madurese at Pondok Pesantren Al-Hikam Burneh, Bangkalan

Language Maintenance Strategies	Number of Participants (n=12)	Description
Intergenerational Transmission	4	Participants emphasized language transmission from parents and senior students to younger generations as an important strategy in maintaining Madurese.
Institutional Support	3	Participants highlighted institutional programs and encouragement from teachers and administrators in supporting Madurese use.
Community Involvement and Cultural Activities	3	Participants mentioned cultural performances and communal activities as opportunities for using Madurese.
Government and Policy Support	1	Participants identified the inclusion of Madurese in the formal curriculum as supporting language maintenance.
Media and Technology	1	Participants recognized media use as contributing to language maintenance, although its role remained limited.

Table 2 shows that intergenerational transmission was identified as the most dominant strategy for maintaining the Madurese language, selected by four participants. Participants emphasized that the transmission of Madurese from parents to children and from senior students to junior students played an important role in sustaining language use across generations. Institutional support and community involvement and cultural activities were each selected by three participants, indicating that educational programs and cultural participation also contribute significantly to language maintenance. Meanwhile, government and policy support and media and technology were each selected by one participant. These findings suggest that language maintenance at *Pondok Pesantren Al-Hikam* is primarily supported through language transmission processes, reinforced by institutional and community practices.

The findings indicate that the identified strategies contribute in different ways to supporting Madurese language maintenance within the *Pesantren* environment. Although each strategy serves a distinct function, they collectively strengthen the continued use and transmission of the language across educational, social, and cultural contexts. To provide a deeper understanding of how these strategies operate in maintaining Madurese, each strategy is discussed in detail based on participants' responses and Holmes' (2013) language maintenance framework.

a. Intergenerational Transmission

Intergenerational transmission refers to the process of passing down a language from one generation to the next, ensuring that the language remains alive within a community. Holmes (2013)

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emphasizes that successful language maintenance requires "the conscious and deliberate transmission of the minority language from one generation to the next" (p. 62). In the context of *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam Burneh, this process occurs both within families and within the *Pesantren* community, where language use and social hierarchy reinforce the continued transmission of Madurese across generations.

1. Family Transmission

   "Untuk orang tua kepada anaknya, baik itu santri putra dan santri putri, memang kebanyakan masih menggunakan bahasa Madura. Cuma bahasa Madura yang halus itu." (SH)

   (For the parents to their children, whether male or female students, most of them still use the Madurese language, but they use the polite or refined form of Madurese.")

This excerpt highlights that the family remains a fundamental domain for language transmission. Parents play a crucial role in ensuring that Madurese continues to be spoken at home, particularly the refined variety, which reflects the Madurese community's deep respect for politeness and social hierarchy. Such familial use forms the initial foundation of linguistic continuity before students enter the *pesantren* environment.

2. Institutional Peer Transmission

   "Untuk teman-teman yang senior biasanya menggunakan bahasa Madura halus kepada teman-teman santri baru atau yang junior, sehingga membuat mereka mengikuti dan sungkan. Ya meskipun kadang mereka karena ketidaktahuan terhadap kosa kata Madura itu sendiri kadang menggunakan bahasa Madura yang kasar." (US)

   (Senior students usually use the refined form of the Madurese language when speaking to new or junior students, which makes the juniors follow and feel respectful. Although sometimes, due to their limited vocabulary, the juniors might still use the rough form of Madurese.)

Within the *Pesantren*, intergenerational transmission continues through peer hierarchy. Senior students model the use of polite Madurese, encouraging juniors to follow established linguistic norms. Although some juniors may still use rough forms due to limited vocabulary, continuous interaction fosters gradual adaptation to *basa halus*, reinforcing respect and discipline. Overall, intergenerational transmission at Al-Hikam operates at both the familial level and the institutional peer level, aligning with Holmes' (2013) assertion that minority languages survive through intentional reinforcement across generations and community structures.

The intergenerational transmission strategy identified in this study supports the findings of Terupun and Lompoliu (2023), who emphasized that continuity of language transmission from parents to children plays a significant role in maintaining Sundanese in a transmigration community. Similarly, the present study found that Madurese is transmitted from parents to children before students enter the *Pesantren* environment. However, a distinctive pattern emerges in the Al-Hikam context because language transmission does not only occur within families but is also reinforced through institutional peer relationships. Senior students act as language transmitters by encouraging junior students to adopt polite forms of Madurese. This suggests that intergenerational transmission in *Pesantren* extends beyond biological family structures into institutional social systems.

b. Institutional Support

Institutional support in language maintenance refers to the active role of educational and religious

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institutions in promoting the use of a local language through structured programs and daily guidance. Holmes (2013) argues that *"institutional support is crucial for language maintenance, particularly through education systems that legitimize and transmit the minority language to younger generations"* (p. 67). At *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam Burneh, institutional support for the Madurese language can be seen through two major initiatives: (1) the *Perbhasaan* program, and (2) the institutional encouragement for using Madurese in daily communication. Both serve as mechanisms for reinforcing the language's presence within the *Pesantren's* social and educational environment.

1. The *Perbhasaan* Program

   "Program perbhasaan ini memang diambil oleh pengurus. Inisiatif pengurus. Karena untuk memperdalam para santri agar lebih mengetahui bahasa alus dari Madura tersebut. … Bahkan di perbhasaan itu kami pengurus menyediakan buku-buku perbhasaan untuk dibagikan kepada para santri." (SH)

   ("The *Perbhasaan* program was initiated by the student council to help students better understand the refined form of the Madurese language. In this program, the committee provides Madurese vocabulary books for distribution to all students.")

This *Perbhasaan* program demonstrates the *Pesantren's* commitment to formalizing language maintenance within its internal structure. Conducted regularly, the activity involves collective recitation (*lalaran*) of Madurese vocabulary to improve linguistic proficiency and politeness levels (*basa halus*). Through this initiative, the institution not only transmits linguistic knowledge but also preserves the cultural values embedded in the language.

2. Institutional Encouragement for Daily Language Use

   "Kebanyakan kalau disini memang ada dorongan dari para guru-guru. Maksudnya di samping itu kita para pengurus itu biasanya sering mengadakan pengumuman seputar komunikasi yang baik. Walaupun tidak menggunakan bahasa Indo, kita menyampaikan kepada para santri untuk menggunakan bahasa Madura yang halus." (US)

   (Here, there is encouragement from the teachers. In addition, the administrators often make announcements about proper communication. Even if not in Indonesian, we urge the students to use polite Madurese.)

This policy shows that institutional support extends beyond formal programs into daily practice. The *Pesantren* management and teachers continuously promote the use of polite Madurese (*basa alos*) as part of moral discipline and social etiquette within the boarding environment. This routine encouragement strengthens the institutional culture of language maintenance, transforming the *Pesantren* into a living domain where Madurese thrives in both educational and social contexts. Overall, these institutional practices align with Holmes' (2013, p. 67) assertion that language maintenance depends on continuous and legitimized support from educational institutions. By organizing structured programs like *Perbhasaan* and consistently encouraging daily Madurese use, *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam serves as a strong institutional pillar for sustaining the Madurese language among younger generations.

The institutional support strategy found in this study complements the findings of A'ini (2022), who reported that the use of Madurese in *Pesantren* traditions and daily activities contributed to language maintenance. Similarly, institutional practices at Al-Hikam encourage the use of Madurese through formal and informal activities. However, unlike A'ini's study, which focused primarily on habitual

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language use and practical activities, the present study identified a more structured form of institutional support through the *Perbhasaan* program and administrative guidance. This finding indicates that language maintenance can be strengthened when institutions provide systematic and organized mechanisms for language learning.

c. Community Involvement and Cultural Activities

Community involvement and cultural activities are essential strategies in supporting language maintenance, as they create opportunities for speakers to use their language in meaningful and collective contexts. These activities strengthen cultural identity and pride, encouraging speakers to continue using their local language in public and social life. Holmes (2013) explains that *"the use of a minority language in community events and cultural expressions reinforces group solidarity and helps to maintain linguistic vitality within the community"* (p. 70). At *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam Burneh, community participation and cultural events serve as powerful instruments for preserving the Madurese language. The *Pesantren* routinely organizes weekly gatherings and cultural performances in which students' express creativity through traditional Madurese art forms such as *sandur* and *manteng*. These programs are designed to both entertain and educate students while promoting the use of Madurese as a medium of expression.

> *"Untuk pelestarian di tempat Pesantren juga ada semacam kegiatan, di mana kegiatan ini ada di kegiatan pokok Pesantren setiap satu minggu sekali. Di mana ini bergantian perkamar. Jadi perkamar ini ditugaskan untuk membuat semacam acara. … Jadi teman-teman ini ada yang membuat acara pelestarian budaya, yang berasal dari Sandur, kemudian Manten. Cuma Manten itu digunakan bahasanya, menggunakan bahasa Madura*." (SH)
> ("For cultural preservation, the *Pesantren* also holds weekly programs where each dormitory takes turns organizing an event. Some of the events include traditional cultural performances such as *Sandur* and *Manteng*, which are presented using the Madurese language.")

This excerpt illustrates how the *Pesantren* functions as a cultural community that continuously engages its members in activities using the Madurese language. Through these performances, students are encouraged to apply the language in creative and ceremonial settings, reinforcing their linguistic and cultural identity. The use of Madurese as the primary language during such events normalizes its role in communal expression and helps sustain its prestige among young speakers.

Moreover, the *Pesantren* also provides opportunities for language use in public competitions and communal events such as speech contests (*lomba pidato*), where participants are allowed to use Madurese alongside Indonesian or English. This flexibility allows students to practice code-switching while still valuing their mother tongue.

> *"Untuk di sini semacam lomba ini juga ada. Kadang-kadang kita mengadakan lomba pidato. … Untuk bahasanya itu bebas. Jadi kriterianya itu hanyalah pidato. … Entah itu menggunakan bahasa Indonesia ataupun menggunakan bahasa Madura. Bahkan ada yang menggunakan bahasa Inggris."* (SH)
> ("Here, there are also competitions such as speech contests. The language used is flexible; participants may deliver their speeches in Indonesian, Madurese, or even English.")

Such inclusivity promotes an environment of linguistic appreciation, where Madurese is not seen as inferior but rather as an equally valid medium for expression. These community-based and cultural

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practices demonstrate that language maintenance at Al-Hikam is not limited to classrooms but extends to social and artistic life, fostering pride and habitual use among the students. This finding reinforces Holmes' (2013, p. 70) argument that active community participation in cultural activities helps strengthen solidarity and maintain linguistic vitality. By embedding the Madurese language into communal performances and creative expression, *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam sustains not only the linguistic but also the cultural identity of its community members.

The community involvement and cultural activity strategy identified in this study is also consistent with Hariyanto et al. (2023), who found that cultural festivals and community activities strengthened Bangka Malay language maintenance. Similarly, cultural activities at Al-Hikam, such as Sandur and Manteng performances, create opportunities for students to actively use Madurese within communal contexts. However, the present study extends these findings by showing that cultural activities within *Pesantren* not only preserve language use but also integrate linguistic practice with religious and educational values.

d. Government and Policy Support

Government and policy support represent a macro-level effort in language maintenance, providing legal and institutional frameworks that recognize minority languages as part of national and regional identity. Such policies ensure that local languages are legitimized within education and cultural systems. Holmes (2013) states that *"language maintenance is more likely to succeed when government policies provide institutional recognition and educational space for minority languages"* (p. 72). In the Indonesian context, the government has introduced local content curriculum (muatan lokal) policies that allow regional languages such as Madurese to be taught formally in schools. *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam Burneh implements this policy by integrating the Madurese language as part of its formal educational program, showing the *Pesantren's* compliance with and contribution to government-led efforts to preserve linguistic diversity.

> *"Untuk penggunaan bahasa Madura di formal pendidikan itu memang ada. Bahkan di sini juga ada pelajarannya. Jadi formal itu ada tambahan pelajaran, seperti bahasa Arab, kemudian agama, kemudian bahasa Madura. Jadi setiap santri yang SMP, SMA, SMK itu pasti mendapatkan pendidikan berupa bahasa Madura di sekolah formal."* (US)
> ("The use of the Madurese language in formal education does exist. In fact, it is included as a subject. So, in addition to Arabic and religious lessons, there is also Madurese language instruction. Every student at the junior and senior high school levels receives formal education in Madurese.)

This excerpt indicates that the inclusion of the Madurese language in formal education at *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam reflects the implementation of the government's local content curriculum policy. Through this initiative, the government indirectly strengthens the institutionalization of regional languages within formal schooling systems. The *Pesantren* acts as a channel for executing these policies at the grassroots level, ensuring that students continue to learn and value their regional language in an academic setting. This finding supports Holmes' (2013, p. 72) assertion that government involvement plays a decisive role in maintaining minority languages by legitimizing them within the educational structure. In this case, *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam's integration of the Madurese language into its curriculum demonstrates how national education policies and local institutions can work hand in hand to sustain linguistic heritage.

The government and policy support strategy found in this study supports Azis (2020), who

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emphasized the importance of educational support and institutional intervention in preserving minority languages. Similarly, Madurese at Al-Hikam is formally integrated into educational practices through local language instruction. However, while Azis mainly discussed the need for government involvement as a recommended strategy, the present study demonstrates its practical implementation within a *Pesantren* setting through curriculum inclusion and educational practice.

e. Media and Technology

The role of media and technology in language maintenance is increasingly significant, as written and digital forms of communication serve both as a tool for language dissemination and a domain where language vitality can either be strengthened or weakened. Holmes (2013) emphasizes that "media and technology can either support or undermine the use of minority languages, depending on whether they are employed as channels for minority language communication or dominated by majority languages" (p. 75). In the context of *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam Burneh, media and technological platforms, such as bulletin boards, newsletters, and announcement sheets, are predominantly presented in Indonesian rather than Madurese.

> *"Untuk disini kebanyakan untuk lembar pengumuman yang ada di majalah ataupun di tempat pengumuman itu biasanya menggunakan bahasa Indonesia. Jadi kami tidak menggunakan bahasa Madura karena melihat pengumuman tersebut ini... Ditujukan untuk banyak orang, kadang-kadang wali santri juga ada yang membaca. Jadi biar tidak kesulitan untuk para wali santri."* (SH)
> ("Here, most announcement sheets, whether in magazines or on bulletin boards, are usually in Indonesian. We do not use Madurese because the announcements are intended for a wide audience, including parents of the students, so that they do not experience difficulties in understanding.")

This observation shows that the role of media and technology in language maintenance at *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam is somewhat limited. Unlike daily interactions where Madurese is actively used, official media such as bulletin boards, magazines, and announcement sheets predominantly employ Indonesian. The *Pesantren* management chooses Indonesian for these media to ensure that the information is accessible to a wider audience, including parents who may not understand Madurese. However, in this pesantren context, the role of digital technology is very minimal because students are not permitted to use mobile phones, which limits the presence of Madurese in digital media. As a result, Madurese is mainly maintained in spoken daily interaction rather than in written or technological domains.

The media and technology strategy identified in this study presents findings that partially differ from previous studies. Hariyanto et al. (2023) reported that social media and mass media could strengthen language maintenance by increasing public exposure to local languages. However, the present study found that official media within the *Pesantren* predominantly use Indonesian rather than Madurese due to accessibility considerations for broader audiences. This finding suggests that although media may support language maintenance, institutional communication practices may prioritize inclusiveness over local language use in certain contexts.

3.2 Discussion

This study examined the sociolinguistic factors and language maintenance strategies that support the use of Madurese at Pondok Pesantren Al-Hikam Burneh, Bangkalan. Previous studies onlanguage maintenance in Pesantren contexts mainly focused on describing preservation practices and strategies

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within specific communities. However, limited studies have examined the relationship between sociolinguistic factors and language maintenance strategies using Fishman's (1991) and Holmes' (2013) frameworks together. Therefore, this study attempted to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how these factors and strategies interact in maintaining Madurese within a multilingual Pesantren environment.

The findings revealed that the family domain was identified as the most influential factor in maintaining Madurese, selected by four out of twelve participants, while intergenerational transmission emerged as the most dominant maintenance strategy. Educational and community/environment domains played important supporting roles, and participants consistently expressed positive attitudes toward Madurese as a marker of cultural identity. These results indicate that language maintenance at Al-Hikam is sustained primarily through transmission processes occurring both within families and through social interaction among students inside the *Pesantren*.

These findings are consistent with Fishman (1991), who emphasized that language survival largely depends on continued use across generations within family settings, and with Holmes (2013), who argued that intergenerational transmission is among the most critical strategies for sustaining minority languages. The results also align with previous studies by Azis (2020), A'ini (2023), and Hariyanto et al. (2023), which similarly found that family practices, community interaction, and educational support contribute significantly to language maintenance. However, this study extends these earlier findings by showing that the multilingual *Pesantren* environment does more than support everyday language use: it actively reinforces cultural identity through the integration of language with religious values and structured institutional practices, such as the *Perbhasaan* program. This finding offers a more nuanced understanding than previous research, which tended to treat institutional and familial factors separately rather than as mutually reinforcing systems.

Beyond the dominant family domain, the religious domain and language attitudes also contributed to Madurese maintenance. The *Kiai*'s (Islamic boarding school leader) alternation between Madurese and Indonesian during *pengajian* (Islamic religious study sessions) kept the language present in spiritual life, consistent with Fishman's (1991) view that religion provides a stable domain for minority language use, and complementing Hariyanto et al. (2023), who found that local language use in religious settings increased emotional attachment among speakers. Additionally, students' positive attitudes toward Madurese, particularly their use of the language to challenge negative stereotypes, support Fishman's (1991) argument that positive attitudes prevent language shift, contrasting with Azis (2020), who found that negative attitudes toward Bugis weakened preservation efforts.

In terms of strategies, institutional support through the *Perbhasaan* program extended A'ini's (2023) findings by showing that structured programs transmit not only linguistic knowledge but also cultural values, as Holmes (2013) argued. Community involvement through *Sandur* and *Manten* performances aligns with Hariyanto et al. (2023), who found that cultural activities strengthen language maintenance, while government support through the local content curriculum confirms Azis's (2020) emphasis on institutional legitimacy. However, the role of media and technology

remained limited due to mobile phone restrictions, which partially differs from Hariyanto et al. (2023), who noted that social media can support local language exposure.

This study was conducted with a limited number of participants from one *Pesantren* setting therefore, the results may not represent broader contexts of language maintenance. In addition, the data were mainly obtained through participants' experiences and perceptions during interviews. Future studies may involve participants from different *Pesantren* environments or different regional language communities to provide a broader understanding of language maintenance practices.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that family support, intergenerational transmission, and

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supportive institutional environments collectively sustain the use of Madurese at *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam Burneh. By integrating Fishman's (1991) sociolinguistic domains with Holmes' (2013) maintenance strategies, this study highlights *Pesantren* as a distinctive and significant environment for preserving minority languages while simultaneously reinforcing cultural identity and religious values across generations.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that several sociolinguistic factors based on Fishman's (1991) framework play a crucial role in maintaining the Madurese language at *Pondok Pesantren* Al-Hikam Burneh Bangkalan. The family domain remains the strongest foundation, as many students acquire Madurese as their first language and bring this linguistic habit into the *Pesantren.* The education domain reinforces this foundation by formally teaching Madurese as part of the local content curriculum, giving the language legitimacy in academic contexts. In the religious domain, the language is integrated into *pengajian* and *ceramah*, allowing Madurese to function within respected spiritual activities, strengthening its prestige among students. Additionally, the community environment continuously facilitates language use through peer influence, dormitory communication, and daily interaction, shaping a natural immersive setting. These domains are further strengthened by positive language attitudes, as students express pride in speaking Madurese and associate it with cultural uniqueness and moral values. Collectively, these factors create emotional, social, and cultural motivations that sustain the vitality of the language across generations.

Beyond contributing factors, several language maintenance strategies aligned with Holmes' (2013) framework are actively implemented within the *Pesantren* to support the continuous use of Madurese. Intergenerational transmission occurs not only at home but also through senior-junior interactions within the *Pesantren*, while institutional support is evident in programs like *Perbhasaan* (a *Pesantren* activity focusing on structured Madurese language practice) and continuous encouragement of polite Madurese in daily communication. Community involvement and cultural activities, including weekly performances of *Sandur* (traditional ritual dance-theater) and *Manten* (traditional wedding and ceremonial practices) and public competitions, provide practical and meaningful contexts for language use. Government support through the integration of Madurese into the local content curriculum further strengthens its institutional legitimacy, although the role of media and technology remains limited. These strategies collectively ensure that the Madurese language is actively maintained in educational, social, and cultural domains, highlighting the *Pesantren's* pivotal role as a guardian of regional linguistic heritage.

This study contributes to the literature by providing a combined analysis of sociolinguistic factors and language maintenance strategies within a multilingual *Pesantren* environment. Practically, the findings may provide insights for educators and policymakers in developing programs that support local language preservation. However, this study was limited to a single *Pesantren* setting with a relatively small number of participants. Therefore, future studies are recommended to involve broader participant groups and different *Pesantren* or educational contexts to examine whether similar language maintenance patterns occur in other sociocultural settings. Future research may also explore the role of digital media and technological platforms in supporting local language maintenance among younger generations.

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