

# PRAGMATIC INTRICACY OF JAVANESE FIGURATIVE SPEECH: Too Hard to Understand?

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The paper discusses how to get the real intention of Javanese speakers who use figurative speech in their daily language exploitation. To be harmonious with and to honor others in their interaction, Javanese people use their language in several strategies in which one of them is that of being indirect. If a speaker thinks that to state something clearly and 'to the point' is thought to be potentially face-threatening to his interlocutor, then, he in such a culture will go through 'a farther way' to achieve the goal of his speech act. This strategy is performed by using several types of figurative speech.

Javanese language, different from others, has its own classification of figurative speech that are exploited by the users of such a language not only for poetic and aesthetic purposes such as in traditional poems or songs or archaic speeches used in ceremonial events, but they are also used in everyday conversation between/ among speakers who know well Javanese cultural knowledge. This means that to understand the real intention of an utterance delivered by someone who uses a Javanese figurative speech, an interlocutor should share the same cultural background knowledge with him; otherwise, the meaning of such an utterance will not be obtained, and a potential misunderstanding between the interactants will take place. For example, to understand an expression of '*Ojo sok seneng ngrokok cendhak*' (literally means Don't often smoke a short cigarette) used by a Javanese speaker, the interlocutor should have cultural resources to *translate* the real intention of such a speaker in using the expression through the following procedures:

- He should know that the name of a short cigarette in Javanese is *tegesan*.
- He should know that Javanese has an expression of *neges-neges* meaning trying to reveal secret matter possessed by someone (this act in certain situation is considered impolite in Javanese society).
- He then should skillfully relate the rhyming syllable of the word *tegesan* and the word *neges-neges* to conclude that if a speaker forwards him with an imperative '*Ojo sok seneng ngrokok cendhak*', it means that the speaker (usually older than him) prohibits him indirectly for his trial in revealing a hidden matter from such a speaker.

Javanese language facilitates as well as accommodates this pragmatic intricacy with the several types of figurative speech it has such as *sanepa*, *parikan*, *wangsalan* dan *sasmita*. Data as well as examples collected from any usage of the figurative speech will be discussed to show how cultural understanding helps much in designing strategies and procedures in understanding the intricacy.

**Keywords:** *pragmatic intricacy, figurative speech, interactants, interlocutor, poetic, aesthetic purpose*