



***Jancuk* as an Expressive Speech Act: a Sociolinguistic Study in Non-Javanese Speakers**

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Abstract

The word “jancuk” is a form of speech often used in daily conversation, especially in the Arekan dialect spoken in some regions of East Java, such as Surabaya, Malang, and Lumajang. However, in the development of language, this speech is also adapted by non-Javanese speakers with various communication functions, such as in West Java, to be the origin of the Sundanese people, as well as outside the island of Java. This study aims to analyze “jancuk” as an expressive speech act, particularly in the sociolinguistic context of non-Javanese speaking communities. Using a sociopragmatic qualitative approach, this study examines the use of “jancuk” speech in social interactions and how it functions as an expression of emotions, solidarity, and group identity by identifying the instances of “jancuk” use. The results of the study showed that the expression “jancuk” experienced a shift in meaning when used by non-Javanese speakers, with a more flexible application in various communication situations.

Keywords: *Jancuk*; speech acts; expressive; sociolinguistics; social communication.

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INTRODUCTION

In everyday communication, language serves not only as a tool to convey information, but also as a means to express emotions and build social relationships. So, each language has its own characteristics, which are caused by the arbitrary nature of language or which are preferred, namely, the language is used at the will of the speaker (Rivaldi Saputra & Agnan Masykuri, 2023).

Therefore, humans cannot live

without language because language is an integral part of human life. Many languages are spoken by humans today, and each language has numerous dialects. Additionally, in one country, several regions have many regional languages, which contribute to the country's cultural and linguistic diversity. The more diverse languages in the country, the more cultural acculturation occurs, including the meeting or mixing of two or more languages to form a new language or vocabulary, which

becomes popular among the people.

In Indonesia, there are many popular words, both positive and negative. Many factors contribute to their popularity, but the most common is the increasing use of social media, especially among the younger generation. One such popular word is the word “jancuk”. The word “jancuk” can have either a positive or a negative meaning, but the negative meaning is more dominant than the positive one. Because this vocabulary is an impolite vocabulary if said by a younger person to an older person, and can mean close friendship between people of the same age, or even when angry (Sriyanto & Fauzie, 2017).

Indonesia has many regional languages, namely 718 according to the Ministry of Education and Culture. This contributes to Indonesia's rich cultural diversity, including the diversity of regional language characteristics. However, several regional languages are pretty popular in Indonesia, such as Javanese, Sundanese, Malay, and Minangkabau.

The greater the number of speakers of a language, the more diversity of dialects and vocabulary there will be in that language (Nugroho & Ribawati, 2023). This certainly happens in Javanese because, as we know, Javanese is the regional language with the most speakers in Indonesia. Based on the results of the 2020 Population Census Long Form (LF SP2020) released by the Central Statistics Agency (*Badan Pusat Statistik*), Javanese reaches the top position as the regional language with the highest number of speakers in Indonesia, which is 42.12%.

Javanese is a language that originated

on the island of Java. on the island of Java, this language is spoken by the Javanese people who live in the provinces of Central Java, the Special Region of Yogyakarta, East Java, West Java, and Banten. In addition to being spoken on the island of Java, this language also has a distribution in several other regions of Indonesia, such as Lampung, Aceh, Riau, Riau Islands (Riau Islands), Bengkulu, Jambi, Bali, NTB, East Kalimantan, North Sumatra, South Kalimantan, and Southeast Sulawesi. In fact, Javanese is also spoken outside Indonesia (Hanggraito, 2021).

The Javanese language spoken in the province of East Java consists of 4 dialects, namely (1) East Java dialect, (2) Osing dialect, (3) Tengger dialect, and (4) Solo-Yogya dialect. The East Java dialect is spoken around Surabaya, extending east to Jember, south to Malang Regency, and west to Bojonegoro. In contrast, the Osing dialect is spoken in Banyuwangi Regency, particularly in Banyuwangi, Srono, and Kalipuro Districts. The Tengger dialect is spoken by the people in Tengger, especially in Sukapura District, Probolinggo Regency. The Solo-Yogya dialect is spoken by people in Madiun and its surroundings to the west (to Central Java). Based on the results of dialectometric calculations, the difference between the four dialects ranges from 52% to 64% (Rivaldi Saputra & Agnan Masykuri, 2023).

One form of speech that is interesting to study is the use of the word “jancuk”, which is considered a rude word in the East Javanese dialect but serves various functions in social interaction. In addition,

the word “jancuk” has spread widely among non-Javanese, including spoken in the West Java region where the majority of the population is Sundanese. The researcher is currently based in West Java, specifically in Bandung, which is a unique circumstance. Why the word “jancuk” has spread among the Javanese tribe and is widely spoken by the younger generation (Retnosari & Hakim, 2025).

The phenomenon of the use of “*jancuk*” outside the Javanese-speaking community shows the existence of cultural and linguistic adaptations that reflect the dynamics of communication between community groups. Therefore, it is essential to examine how this speech functions in expressive contexts and how non-Javanese speakers comprehend and utilize it in everyday conversations (Saputra & Hariyanto, 2024).

METHOD

The research method used in this study is a qualitative research method of literature study, where many references are used in the form of texts, scientific papers, and books (Subhaktiyasa, 2024). This is because the researcher does not live in the area of origin of the word “jancuk”, specifically in the East Java region, where the Javanese dialect is generally spoken, such as in the Surabaya area and its surroundings (Hanggraito, 2021). This research emerged from the experience of researchers who visited East Java, specifically the city of Surabaya. The researchers also paid attention to the environment around their domicile, where they often heard the words

“jancuk” or “cuk” in daily life.

The types of scientific articles and books that are used as research sources for researchers are scientific articles and books related to the word “jancuk”, be it the history of the word's appearance, the place of its pronunciation, and how popular the word “jancuk” is spoken by the public. Additionally, books and scientific articles related to sociolinguistics are also utilized, as the science forms the core theory of this research.

The data collection method employed in this study is the documentation method, a commonly used approach in qualitative research, particularly in conjunction with a literature review. In this research, data are obtained from various written sources, including scientific journal articles, books, and other relevant texts, which discuss the word “*jancuk*” from linguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives. This method is appropriate because the researcher does not conduct fieldwork or interviews; instead, they focus on analyzing existing documents to understand the meaning, history, and sociolinguistic function of the word.

The process of data collection began with identifying and selecting literature that discusses the origin, use, and social context of the word “*jancuk*.” The researcher searched for both printed and online sources, including academic journals, linguistic studies, and books related to the topic. After identifying the sources, the researcher carefully read and analyzed the contents, then applied a reading and note-taking technique to record important information and relevant quotations.

The data analysis technique used in this study is a qualitative descriptive analysis, which aims to interpret and describe the meaning of linguistic phenomena based on written data. Since the study employs a literature-based approach, the analysis focuses on understanding and interpreting textual information rather than quantifying data. The researcher analyzed the selected texts to uncover the meanings, functions, and social implications of the word *"jancuk"* as used within Javanese society, particularly in the East Java region (Turner et al., 2023).

The analysis process began after the data were collected and organized according to thematic categories. Each piece of information obtained from books, journal articles, and other documents was examined critically to identify patterns related to the sociolinguistic aspects of the word *"jancuk."* These aspects include its use as an expression of emotion, solidarity, humor, or even insult, depending on the context and relationship between speakers (Subhaktiyasa, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Speech Act Theory

According to John Searle, speech can be categorized into several types, such as expressive, directive, and commissive speech. Expressive speech is used to express the speaker's emotions, feelings, or attitudes towards a situation. In the context of this study, the expression *"jancuk"* often appears in the form of expressive speech, used to convey surprise, anger, familiarity, or even humor (Akhmad, 2019; Chen et al., 2023).

Sociolinguistic Theory and Language Identity

In sociolinguistic studies, language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a symbol of social identity. The use of the word *"jancuk"* by non-Javanese speakers indicates the existence of linguistic adaptation and the acceptance of certain cultural elements in cross-regional communication. This study will discuss how this speech functions as part of group identity in everyday conversations (Hamid, 2024).

Additionally, there is another theory that discusses the improvement of language within a society. William Labov said that Sociolinguistics is the study of language variation in relation to the social structure of society (Labov, 1975).

Semantic theory

The word "semantics" comes from the Greek word "semantika" or "semantic cost," meaning to show. Terminologically, "semantics" means the theory of meaning, so with semantics, we can understand the meaning of a word or sentence spoken by a person (Ade Nandang & Abdul Kosim, 2018). For example, when we hear the word "corn," we immediately envision what corn looks like. Similarly, if we hear someone say the word "jancuk," we will understand its meaning, either positively or negatively, depending on the listener's perspective (Mushyrovaska et al., 2022).

Code switching and code mixing theory

Code switching and code mixing often overlap because they occur when two languages meet or when someone speaks more than one language. Code switching

usually occurs when speakers can speak or speak more than one language and change from one language to another. At the same time, code mixing occurs when a speaker of one language accidentally or intentionally uses vocabulary from another language that they do not normally use, outside of their native language. This phenomenon is observed in society, particularly among the younger generation, who often use the word “jancuk” despite not being Javanese (Hofweber et al., 2023).

History of the word “jancuk”

The history of the word “jancuk” is long, and there are differences of opinion among linguists and historians of the Javanese language and culture. The word “jancuk” has been spoken by the Javanese people for a long time, especially in East Java, so not all Javanese dialects use the word “jancuk” in daily conversation, because there are some Javanese dialects that do not use this word in their daily conversation, and they have their own swear words. The word “jancuk” originates from the Javanese dialect of Arekan, also known as the term “arek-arek Suroboyo,” meaning “Surabaya children.”

The Javanese language spoken in the Surabaya area is known as the Javanese language or *Suroboyoan*, which has its own characteristics, both phonologically and in vocabulary, such as the word “jancuk.” There are several opinions about the emergence of the word “*jancuk*” in the East Java region, such as that it originated due to Dutch colonialism. This is because the Dutch vocabulary contains the word “*yantye ook*”,

which translates to “you also” and is similar to the Javanese pronunciation of “jancuk”, as the Javanese language has a different pronunciation. In addition, some argue that the word “jancuk” originated from a Dutch steel tank named Jancoks, which over time evolved into “jancuk” due to pronunciation differences and the influence of the Javanese accent, which has difficulty pronouncing Dutch vocabulary in the same way as the Dutch. In addition, some say that the word “jancuk” appeared during the Japanese colonial period, precisely during the period of forced labor called *romusha* (Hanggraito, 2021).

Suppose we adhere to the theory that the word “jancuk” comes from the Dutch. In that case, the word “jancuk” has a change in meaning from a positive meaning to a negative meaning, because at this time the word “jancuk” is used as a swear word or what is called amelioration. However, what is certain is that the word “jancuk” originates from the area around Surabaya or among the East Javanese people who speak the Javanese dialect of Arekan. These Javanese speakers are more inclined to use egalitarian and rude language, and often speak in a loud voice.

The Use of *Jancuk* Word

As already explained, the word “jancuk” is a rude term, so it is not suitable to use when speaking to older people. Even people our age have to be cautious when using this word, as it is considered a swear word.

Even so, the word “jancuk” is a popular word among young people today and is even spoken by non-Javanese people. This is a unique thing because this swear word

from East Java is the most popular when compared to other swear words. The use of the word “jancuk” is not only used in daily conversations directly, but also in social media when netizens comment angrily on content.

The results of the study showed that the speech “jancuk” was used in a variety of situations, including:

1. Expression of Surprise or Shock

“*Jancuk! Kok iso?*”

Meaning: “*Jancuk!* How can it be?”

2. Expression of Solidarity or Familiarity

“*Mau kemana, Cuk?*”

Meaning: “Where are you going, *Cuk?*”

3. Expression of Anger or Frustration

“*Jancuk, gagal meneh!*”

Meaning: “*Jancuk,* it has failed again!”

4. Expression of Humor and Sarcasm

“*Di sini, Cuk!*”

Meaning: There, *Cuk!*”

Expressive Speech Analysis

Within the framework of Searle's speech act theory, the word “jancuk” used by non-Javanese speakers demonstrates a strong expressive function. Based on the results of observations of the researcher's social environment and literature review, there are several forms of the use of “jancuk” in daily interactions:

a. Expressions of Surprise or Surprise

Example: “*Jancuk! Kok iso?*” It is used as a spontaneous response to unexpected situations. The meaning is more like an interjection.

b. Expressions of Solidarity and Familiarity

Example: “*Mau kemana cuk?*” In this context, “jancuk” is not a swear word, but rather a marker of friendship that erases social distance.

c. Expressions of Anger or Frustration

Example: “*Jancuk, gagal meneh!*” Here, the word “jancuk” is used directly as an expression of anger, typical of the expressive illocutionary function.

d. Humor or Sarcasm Expression

In social media content, the word “jancuk” or “*cuk*” often appears as part of a meme or joking status. This function indicates the expansion of meaning into the territory of humor.

The use of the word “jancuk” varies depending on the individual speaker, allowing for a wide range of meanings. The above explanations are general expressions used by many people. Furthermore, the intensity of use of the word “jancuk” varies by region.

Apart from that, the use of the word jancuk has spread among Javanese society in general, even to areas with refined Javanese dialects such as the Solo-Yogyakarta dialect, where this dialect is usually spoken in a more refined manner and places more emphasis on language etiquette, which is called politeness in Javanese (Wahyuni & Suryadi, 2021).

Adaptation by Non-Javanese Speakers

Interestingly, non-Javanese speakers who adopt this speech often use it in a more relaxed and flexible context, adjusting the meaning to fit their own social norms. So that the word “jancuk” can sound more friendly, even

though the word “jancuk” should not be said to older people. This relates to observing or understanding the language and customs of Javanese society, which demonstrate the community's social norms and language etiquette.

The same is true in West Java, where the Sundanese language also has *undha-usuk*, which means Sundanese manners. However, the emergence of the word “jancuk” indicates the moral degradation that occurs in the younger generation, as they are increasingly rude in their speech to anyone.

This is not only the case with the Sundanese but also with other ethnic groups. In the area where the researcher lives, many migrants from outside Java also use the word “jancuk” in their daily conversations, especially those who are not very proficient in their respective regional languages, as they are accustomed to using Indonesian.

Basically, there are many expressions shown by people who use the word “jancuk” to express their feelings, as discussed in the previous paragraph. These are common expressions shown by people who use the word “jancuk”.

The word “jancuk” has become so popular among non-Javanese that it has become a daily phrase, becoming a part of everyday conversation, especially among the younger generation, and even children are increasingly using it. This unique phenomenon is a cause for concern, as the word “jancuk” is more often interpreted negatively than positively (Wahyuni & Suryadi, 2021).

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the word *jancuk*, which was initially a typical speech of the East Javanese dialect of *arekan*, has undergone an evolution of meaning as it spreads outside its home community. As an expressive speech act, this word is no longer only used as a swear word with a negative connotation, but also serves as a tool of emotional expression, a marker of familiarity, and even a symbol of group identity.

Through a sociopragmatic approach and sociolinguistic analysis, it becomes evident that when the word “jancuk” is used by non-Javanese speakers, its meaning becomes more flexible and shifts. Non-Javanese speakers adapt the use of this word to their local language and cultural norms, allowing it to carry a lighter, witty, or friendly meaning. Nonetheless, linguistic values and norms remain important references to ensure that the use of these words does not deviate or cause misunderstandings.

This phenomenon shows the dynamics of language in a multicultural society and shows how forms of language that were previously considered taboo can undergo a shift in meaning, a shrinking emotional power, and even become a symbol of lifestyle or popular expression, especially among the younger generation (Putra & Widyastuti, 2025).

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