



Taboo word “jancuk” analysis on youtube video “kata jancuk berasal dari ... - jawa jawa jawa eps. 8” by comedy sunday

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Abstract: This sociolinguistic study examines the taboo word “jancuk” (also spelled “jancok” or “dancok”) as represented in the YouTube video KATA JANCUK BERASAL DARI ... - JAWA JAWA JAWA EPS. 8, a segment from a series dedicated to exploring Javanese language and culture. Drawing on Wardhaugh’s (2006) classification of taboo expression epithets, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity, and Battistella’s (2005) analysis of linguistic form in relation to societal norms and power structures, the research classifies “jancuk” primarily as obscenity and vulgarity due to its etymological roots in sexual connotations (derived from “di-encuk,” meaning intercourse in Javanese). Despite its inherently taboo nature, the word shows pragmatic versatility in East Javanese contexts, particularly among the “Arek” community in Surabaya, where it functions as a language for expressing frustration or anger, a marker of regional identity, and even a term of solidarity in informal, in-group interactions. The video’s educational approach highlights sociolinguistic dynamics, including code-switching between the rude (ngoko kasar) and polite dialects, regional variation across Java, and the word’s shift from purely negative to multifunctional in simultaneous use. Findings show that the role of taboo words in supporting cultural identity amid globalization and digital propaganda, while also addressing misuse and politeness violations across diverse social contexts. This analysis contributes to broader understandings of taboo language in multilingual Bahasa Indonesia, offering insight for language education, media representation, and intercultural communication.

Keyword: Sociolinguistic, taboo, jancuk

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INTRODUCTION

The use of “taboo” language can affect our communication, especially with others from different social backgrounds. One popular “taboo” word is “jancuk,” which is from the Javanese language and can be found in daily conversations as well as on the internet. The word “jancuk” is often misused, even though in Javanese it has its own functions and levels. One way to understand the function of the word “jancuk” is to analyze the utterance by watching YouTube videos.

In sociolinguistics, these expressions reveal how communities negotiate identity, power, and emotion through speech (Allan & Burridge, 2006; Mahayana, 2024). “Jancuk” illustrates taboo language in Indonesian-Javanese contexts, where it functions as both a swear word and a mark of social intimacy. It is established in vulgar references to sexual intercourse, deriving from “diancuk” or a combination like “jalok diencuk”, it involves the rudest tier of Javanese’s hierarchical speech levels, replaced for informal or aggressive interactions. Yet in Surabaya’s street culture, it transcends vulgarity, fostering solidarity among colleagues while symbolizing regional strength, as seen in its historical use during anti-colonial struggles.

Taboo words are classified to reveal their forms, functions, and cultural restrictions. Wardhaugh (2006) categorizes them as epithets (derogatory slurs tied to social attributes like ethnicity or gender), Profanity (blasphemous references to the sacred), vulgarity, and obscenity (explicit sexual terms). Battistella (2005), in *Bad Language: Are Some Words Better Than Others?*, extends this by examining linguistic propriety, highlighting how offensive terms reflect societal values, power dynamics, and norms. The Javanese term “jancuk”, rooted in sexual vulgarity, fits obscenity and vulgarity, serving in informal contexts to express frustration, solidarity, or emphasis. The research on analyzing the YouTube video KATA JANCUK BERASAL DARI ... - JAWA JAWA JAWA EPS. 8 by Comedy Sunday investigates the etymology and usage, explaining sociolinguistic dynamics in modern Javanese settings.

Research on the use of the taboo word “jancuk” is interesting because of the diverse contexts of the word across regions and dialects. For most Javanese, especially those who speak polite Javanese or “Krama,” the word “jancuk” carries a purely negative connotation, used to express anger and frustration or to cuss someone. In contrast, people in Surabaya, especially those who call themselves “arek suroboyo,” use the word “jancuk” more often to show solidarity within the

community, especially among close friends. This diverse usage of the word “jancuk” gives us insight on cultural impact of the language used in a certain society.

Previous studies have extensively examined taboo language in Indonesian and regional contexts from various perspectives. Research on digital discourse, for instance, has shown that taboo words are increasingly normalized and creatively recontextualized on social media platforms. Ma'shumah et al. (2025) demonstrate how Indonesian taboo expressions are translated and adapted into English on YouTube, reflecting the impact of globalization and transnational profanity practices. Similarly, Sudarwati (2021) reveals that taboo words on TikTok are frequently employed by young users as stylistic and expressive resources, often involving code-mixing between Javanese and English to construct modern identities.

At the regional and community level, several studies highlight the role of taboo language in cultural maintenance and identity construction. Purba et al. (undated) argue that taboo words in the Simalungun language function as cultural markers that support language maintenance amid sociolinguistic change, while Kumala (2022) reports that Javanese speakers in Madiun perceive taboo expressions as indicators of authenticity despite their social stigma. These findings suggest that taboo language is not merely offensive but socially meaningful within specific cultural ecologies.

Other strands of research approach taboo language through sociolinguistic and educational lenses. Irigiliati (2012) examines taboo words in film dialogues, linking their use to sociolinguistic variables such as gender and power relations. Muhid et al. (undated) investigate swearing practices among multicultural students, emphasizing code-switching and impoliteness strategies that align with Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness framework, which treats taboo expressions as face-threatening acts. Studies by Bram and Andang (2018), Kristiano and Ardi (2018), Sukanto and Nicolau (2014), and Khusna et al. (2021) further explore the semantic, pedagogical, gendered, and attitudinal dimensions of swearing in Indonesian contexts, collectively reinforcing the multifunctionality of taboo language.

Despite these contributions, existing research remains largely descriptive and sociolinguistic in orientation, often focusing on lexical categorization, semantic reference, or speaker attitudes. While some studies acknowledge the positive and affiliative functions of taboo expressions, few explicitly examine how taboo meanings are interactionally negotiated in situated discourse. Moreover, digital studies tend to privilege verbal content, overlooking the role of multimodal cues—such as intonation, gesture, facial expression, laughter, and sequential positioning—in shaping pragmatic interpretation.

Recent sociopragmatic work by Mahayana et al. (2025) advances the field by demonstrating that taboo language is culturally recontextualized rather than inherently impolite, particularly through a comparison between urban and traditional communities in Bali. However, their analysis is grounded in offline community interactions and does not extend to digital or multimodal discourse. As a result, the interactional mechanisms through which taboo expressions shift from face-threatening acts to markers of solidarity and identity in digital environments remain underexplored.

Accordingly, there is a clear research gap concerning the sociopragmatic and multimodal analysis of taboo language in digital contexts, particularly within a single ethnolinguistic tradition. No study to date has systematically examined how a culturally salient taboo word, such as *jancuk*, is pragmatically reinterpreted through multimodal resources in online video narratives, nor how such reinterpretations reflect broader negotiations between local cultural ideology and global digital discourse. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the sociopragmatic functions of *jancuk* in digital video content, focusing on how meaning, (im)politeness, and identity are co-constructed through interactional and multimodal practices

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) as the primary methodology to investigate the sociolinguistic functions and representations of the taboo word “jancuk” in the YouTube video KATA JANCUK BERASAL DARI ... - JAWA JAWA JAWA EPS. 8 by Comedy Sunday. MDA, rooted in systemic functional linguistics and social semiotics, enables a comprehensive examination of how meaning is constructed through the interplay of multiple semiotic modes, including verbal (e.g., spoken utterances and variations of “jancuk”), visual (e.g., facial expressions, gestures, and on-screen elements), auditory (e.g., tone, stress, and laughter), and textual elements within digital media contexts. This framework is particularly suited for analyzing YouTube content, as it accounts for the global, interactive nature of multimodal texts in online platforms, where linguistic features like taboo expressions are rooted within broader indirect practices to express cultural, emotional, and social meanings.

Data for this analysis were sourced from the specified YouTube video, uploaded on February 10, 2021, featuring stand-up comedians Dono Pradana and Virza Valaza discussing the etymology, variations, and contextual usages of “jancuk” in Javanese discourse. The link to the media is <https://youtu.be/+MqoTYrXaA?si=zxxpyjX8EiMpQDWp>. The analysis integrates sociolinguistic theories, such as Wardhaugh's (2006) classification of taboo types (epithets, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity) and Battistella's (2005) exploration of linguistic propriety, to interpret how “jancuk” operates across modes—e.g., as an expressive tool in shocked tones or a solidarity marker in humorous exchanges. A scene-by-scene breakdown was conducted, focusing on multimodal systems including verbal content, audio suggestion (e.g., stressed intonation), gestures (e.g., reactions of disbelief), and visual representations, to reveal impoliteness strategies, cultural norms, and pragmatic versatility in East Javanese contexts.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The YouTube video is about Dono Pradana who is a Standup Comedian based in Surabaya and Virza Valaza who is also a standup comedian based in Surabaya discussing The popular Javanese word “jancuk” with its different levels of

usage in daily conversation based on diverse culture among Javanese who speak ngoko Javanese and polite Javanese. They both explain the different variations of “jancuk” with their own impact used in society. The variations from the least harsh to the rudest one are “jancik”/ “jancik,” “juancik,” “ancuk with soft tone,” “jancuk,” “juancuk,” and “mbok ne ancuk.” They also discussed the origin of the word “jancuk” where some said it was from a written text in a tank in Netherland colonialism era in Indonesia.



Picture 1

Dono (person with hat) said with a shocked tone “cuk, tikus”

In the minute 1:21, the scene was Dono looking at a mouse (electronic device) and he jokingly was shocked by its presence and said “cuk, tikus.” It happened when the other person Virza was asking about the content that will be discussed in the intro of the video then Dono start joking to break the ice. The usage of the variation of “jancuk” here is for an expressive tone which shown by the speaker is that he was shocked. It indicates that the usage of “jancuk” is not for a profanity or vulgarity but, used as an utterance to express the feeling. This usage of “jancuk” can not be considered as slur word because the person who said it (Dono) not saying it towards another person. And the other person who heard it (Virza) was not offended at all but, enjoy the joke.

The utterance in this scene aligns with Battistella theory where the word “jancuk” as an offensive term reflect societal value, power dynamic and norms. It is a common thing for human to express their shock expression by doing something or saying something. In this case, Dono said the variation of “jancuk,” “cuk” which is a derived word from the word “jancuk.” The utterance “cuk” is also a common utterance used in daily conversation as it is easier to say “cuk” rather than full version of “jancuk.” This scene showed the uniqueness of the people of Surabaya who not only use the word “jancuk” as swear word but also used it to express their feeling based on context that happened at the time.



Picture 2

Virza (person on the left) said “ancuk, gak mulai – mulai gateli”

In this scene, in the minute of 1:41 Dono (the person wearing a hat) was still joking, continuation from the joke in previous discussion in **Picture 1** and because they did not start the discussion immediately and Dono can not stop joking, Virza (the person on the left) said the utterance “ancuk, gak mulai – mulai gateli” which include the variation of “jancuk.” The word “ancuk” is a derived word from “jancuk” which is also a common utterance to use among the people from Surabaya. The usage of the variation of “jancuk” here is somewhat classified as profanity or swear word, because the speaker (Virza) said toward another person (Dono) with an intention that the speaker was frustrated because of the non-stop joke from Dono. He said the word “jancuk” with stressed tone showing his frustration to start the discussion.

The utterance used in this scene is a taboo word classified as profanity or swear word but, it is not considered offensive because the person who spoken toward to was not offended at all, rather laugh in response to Virza’s reaction. The utterance in this scene also aligns with Battistella theory where the word “jancuk” as an offensive term reflect societal value, power dynamic and norms. In this case, Virza said the variation of “jancuk,” “ancuk” which is a derived word from the word “jancuk.” The utterance “ancuk” is also a common utterance used in daily conversation to express frustration said with stressed tone. This scene showed the uniqueness of the people of Surabaya who not only use the word “jancuk” as swear word but also used it to express their feeling based on context that happened at the time.

In another scene, the derived word from “jancuk” which is “ancuk,” was used again in the minute of 3:05. In the video, during the discussion, Dono (the person with a hat) started to make a joke again. Virza (the person on the left) reacted with a laughter at first but he wanted to continue the discussion again so it would not be a waste of time. That is when he said “ancuk, ki lo balik ke topik cuk” express his frustration again because Dono kept making a joke during a discussion. The usage of the variation of “jancuk” here could be categorized as profanity or swear word, because the speaker (Virza) said toward another person (Dono) with some intention that the speaker was frustrated because of Dono kept

making a joke during a discussion. He said the word “jancuk” with stressed tone reflecting his frustration to rather continue the discussion.

The utterance used in this scene is a taboo word classified as profanity or swear word but, it could not be called offensive because the person who spoken toward to was not offended at the utterance. The utterance in this scene also aligns with Battistella theory where the word “jancuk” as an offensive term reflect societal value, power dynamic and norms. In this case, Virza said the derived word of “jancuk,” “ancuk.” The utterance “ancuk” is also a common utterance used in daily conversation to express frustration said with stressed tone. This scene showed the uniqueness of the people of Surabaya who not only use the word “jancuk” as swear word but also used it to express their feeling based on context that happened at the time.



Picture 3

Virza (person on the left) and Dono (the person wearing a hat) explaining about the variation of “jancuk”

Starting from minute of 4:26, Virza (the person on the left) and Dono (the person wearing a hat) started the discussion about the variation of the word “jancuk” from the least harsh to the rudest one which are “jancik”/ “jancik,” “juancik,” “ancuk with soft tone,” “jancuk,” “juancuk,” and “mbok ne ancuk.” They explain that the word “jancik” is the least harsh of the “jancuk” variation. It is usually used by someone who is known to be religious but want to swear or by other people that want to swear but do not want it to sound rude. The word “juancik” as the next variation of “jancuk” is a low level swear word but have a higher harsh level than “jancik.” They gave an example in the video by doing a scenario where Dono wanted to swear but his father suddenly come in so the script would be Dono, “Juuaann... (his father suddenly come in) cik.” He said the part “Juuaann...” by taking a heavy breath as if he wanted to say it with a high stressed tone but, suddenly he lowered the tone as low as possible when he said the part “...cik.” “ancuk” said with a soft tone also have a low level of swearing, because the tone of the way the variation of “jancuk” is said give a different impact to the harsh level of this taboo word. “jancuk” is the commonly used one in daily communication in Surabaya and usually spoken in a flat/normal tone. The next derived word is “juancuk” which is a higher level of swearing word than “jancuk.” In the video Dono gave example for this version as “juuaan...cuk,” with a high stressed tone when he said the part “juuaan...” and continue with high tone in the part “cuk.” The highest level of rudeness of this taboo word is “mbok ne ancuk” which is said in a high stressed tone. It is considered as the rudest word because it blasphemously said a “mother” within the taboo word that indicates a sexual intercourse and it can be considered as equivalent as “motherfucker” in English.

In this part of video, we learn more about the variation of “jancuk” and how its rudeness level impact the communication between Javanese or even others that have different culture. By learning that there are many derived words from “jancuk,” we can see how people of Surabaya are so creative in inventing a utterance and creating a different impact of the usage of taboo word or offensive terms. It was built by the solidarity and culture among the people of Surabaya. Not only that the rudeness level was indicated by the form of derived word from “jancuk,” but when we say it with different tone and stressed, it can give a different impact on how the taboo word “jancuk” is spoken in communication.

All of these utterances said in this scene is definitely a taboo word categorized as profanity or swear word but, it could not be considered as offensive because the utterances said in this section of video are examples of how the Javanese would say a different variation of the taboo word “jancuk”. The utterance in this scene also aligns with Battistella theory where the word “jancuk” as an offensive term highlights societal value, power dynamic and norms. In this section, Dono and Virza gave some examples of the variation of “jancuk” spoken in Javanese. This scene showed the uniqueness of the people of Surabaya who not only use the word “jancuk” as swear word that have a different level of rudeness, how different tone spoken could impact the way people receive the meaning of the taboo word, and how to used it to express their feeling based on context that happened at the time.



Picture 4

Virza (person on the left) in disappointment said “Ya Allah cuk”

In this section of video, in the minute of 5:24, Dono (the person wearing a hat) was again getting out of topic and made joke. But the joke brought an unexpected turn which made Virza (the person on the left) left in disbelief. Virza then proceed to give an in-disappointment reaction and said “Ya Allah cuk,” which contain a derived word of “jancuk.” In the video, Virza said the utterance “cuk” like he was not trying to use his energy at all to say it which make his tone is as if he was in disbelief of how Dono tried to get out of topic.

The utterance in this scene aligns with Battistella theory where the word “jancuk” as an offensive term reflect societal value, power dynamic and norms. It is a common thing for someone to express their disappointment by doing something or saying something. The utterance of the taboo word appeared when Virza said the variation of “jancuk,” “cuk” which is a derived word from the word “jancuk.” The utterance “cuk” is also a common utterance used in daily conversation as it is easier for them to say “cuk” rather than the original version of “jancuk.” This scene showed the uniqueness of the people of Surabaya who not only use the word “jancuk” as swear word but also used it to express their feeling based on context that happened at the time.

In another scene, in the minute of 5:32, it is Dono’s turn to say something in disbelief as Virza responded the previous section where Virza was disappointed by Dono’s way of getting out of topic by telling a joke during the scene. Dono responded Virza by saying “malah ngelawak cuk cuk.” He said it without any intention to offense Virza and showed his disbelief of Virza’s jokes. From these two circumstances occurred in the video, we can see that the offensive term “jancuk” could also express someone disappointment which could not be considered as offensive nor profanity.



Picture 5

Dono (person wearing a hat) express his amazement and said “wih, apik cuk cuk”

In the minute of 7:28, Dono (the person wearing a hat) showed a different function of the taboo word “jancuk.” He explained that “jancuk” can also be used to express someone amazement and gave an example by saying “wih, apik cuk cuk” as if he saw something so beautiful. He said the derived word of “jancuk” which is “cuk” twice to give more impact in his meaning of saying “cuk.” He said it with a soft and calm tone indicates the taboo word was not for an offensive use or saying it with some intention toward someone. Continuation for this section, in the minute of 7:32, Dono gave another example of using the word “jancuk” to express someone amazement. In this scene, Dono explained as if he was eating some food that was so good he tried to express his feeling. Then, he said “uenak cuk cuk,” as if he was eating something from heaven. He also said the derived word of “jancuk” which is “cuk” twice to give more impact in his meaning of saying “cuk.”

The utterance in this scene aligns with Battistella theory where the word “jancuk” as an offensive term reflect societal value, power dynamic and norms. We can also see that for some people, they can express their amazement by saying the taboo word “jancuk”. The utterance of the taboo word appeared when Dono said the variation of “jancuk,” “cuk” which is a derived word from the word “jancuk” and he even said it twice to give more stressed on its meaning. The utterance “cuk” is also a common utterance used in daily conversation as it is easier for them to say “cuk” rather than the original version of “jancuk.” This scene showed the uniqueness of the people of Surabaya who not only use the word “jancuk” as swear word but also used it to express their feeling based on context that happened at the time.



Picture 6

Dono (person wearing a hat) imitates that he was greeting someone and said “eh, yo opo kabare cuk?”

In the minute of 8:01, Dono (the person wearing a hat) gave more example of the diverse use of the taboo word “jancuk.” This time, he told us that we can also use “jancuk” to greet someone, but most of the time used to greet someone that has a close relationship to us so the person we speak to would not feel offended or awkward. In this scene, Dono imitated a gesture as if he was meeting with his friend and greet them by saying “eh, yo opo kabare cuk?” He said the derived word of “jancuk” with a calm and friendly tone to show he has a great bond with his friend.

The utterance in this scene aligns with Battistella theory where the word “jancuk” as an offensive term highlight societal value, power dynamic and norms. We can also see that for some people; they can use the taboo word “jancuk” to

greet someone who has a close relationship or has a great bond with us. The utterance of the taboo word appeared when Dono said the variation of “jancuk,” “cuk” which is a derived word from the word “jancuk” to give an example on how to use “jancuk” to greet someone. The utterance “cuk” is also a common utterance used in daily conversation as it is easier for them to say “cuk” rather than the original version of “jancuk.” This scene showed the uniqueness of the people of Surabaya who not only use the word “jancuk” as swear word but also used it to express their feeling based on context that happened at the time.



Picture 7

Dono (person wearing a hat) express his sadness and said “cuk cuk, sepeda ku ilang cuk”

Another use of the taboo word “jancuk” was shown in the minute of 8:21 where in this section, Dono explained the use of “jancuk” in sadness condition. He was saying it as if he was sad “cuk cuk, sepeda ku ilang cuk,” where the derived word of “jancuk” spoken thrice. He showed a deep emotion of sadness because the bike was gone and expressed it with some addition using the taboo word “jancuk.”

The utterance in this scene aligns with Battistella theory where the word “jancuk” as an offensive term highlight societal value, power dynamic and norms. We can also see that for some people; they can use the taboo word “jancuk” to express their sadness. The utterance of the taboo word appeared when Dono said the variation of “jancuk,” “cuk” which is a derived word from the word “jancuk” to give an example on how to use “jancuk” to show sadness. The utterance “cuk” is also a common utterance used in daily conversation as it is easier for them to say “cuk” rather than the original version of “jancuk.” This scene showed the uniqueness of the people of Surabaya who not only use the word “jancuk” as swear word but also used it to express their feeling based on context that happened at the time.

CONCLUSION

This sociolinguistic analysis of the taboo word “jancuk” in the YouTube video KATA JANCUK BERASAL DARI ... - JAWA JAWA EPS. 8 by Comedy Sunday demonstrates its remarkable pragmatic versatility beyond very obscenity or vulgarity, as classified by Wardhaugh (2006). Through multimodal discourse analysis, the video reveals “jancuk” and its derivations (e.g., “cuk,” “ancuk,” “jancik”) functioning in diverse emotional and social contexts—expressing shock, frustration, disappointment, amazement, greetings, and sadness—often with non-offensive intent in informal Surabaya interactions. These usages, change by tone, stress, and gestures, align with Battistella’s (2005) framework, reflecting societal values of solidarity and cultural creativity among the “Arek Suroboyo” community, where the word promotes in-group bonding and regional identity rather than solely negative connotations. The findings highlight how digital media like YouTube normalizes and educates on taboo language, mitigating misuse through contextual explanations while preserving Javanese linguistic hierarchies amid globalization. Ultimately, this study underscores the adaptive role of taboo words in multilingual Indonesia, offering implications for language education to promote cultural sensitivity and intercultural communication, with avenues for future research on comparative taboo expressions in other regional dialects.

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