# A DESCRIPTIVE AND DOCUMENTARY STUDY OF THE GRAMMAR OF THE PARTICLE OJO IN THE JAVANESE LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT: The goal of this paper is to provide a descriptive account of the grammar of the particle ojo in Javanese, which is known to be the tenth largest language in the world with over 70 million speakers in Indonesia, but vulnerable to endangerment. Hence, this study is an attempt to contribute in documenting the grammar of Javanese. The data underlying the study come immediately from elicitations to Javanese-speaking correspondents. We argue that ojo is used in Javanese as an auxiliary verb that has the function of expressing prohibition. It has been found that ojo precedes or follows the finite verb it accompanies, which is prefixed with a nasal affix. The subject of the clauses containing the item under examination is required to show up only if it is not a second person. In different kinds of predicates ojo can be used, including single-root verbs, reduplicated verbs, adjectives, prepositional phrases, and nouns. Ojo does not co-occur with the majority of the auxiliaries, especially those with temporal reference and those expressing necessity of doing actions.

Keywords: Javanese, Auxiliary Verb, Imperative Mood, Prohibitive Mood

## INTRODUCTION

Even though the Javanese language has over 70 million speakers in Indonesia, ranking the 10<sup>th</sup> largest language in the world, it is understudied and underdocumented. This explains the recent calls to run language documentation for Javanese [1, 2]. The goal of this paper is to provide a descriptive account of the grammar of the particle *ojo* that is pervasively used in certain constructions in Javanese in order to get the addresses not to do a certain action.

The data used in the study here come immediately from elicitations to Javanese speakers. In Javanese, there are two speech levels: *Krama*, the higher language variety, and *Ngoko*, the lower one.<sup>2</sup> All of the data here are in the latter one.

This paper is structured as follows: in Section 1, we will start with a brief survey of the morpho-syntactic features of Javanese that are of pertinence to the present study. We will lay the descriptive grammar of the particle *ojo* in Section 2. Finally, in Section 3, some concluding remarks about the clauses containing *ojo* will be drawn.

## 1. ON THE MORPHO-SYNTAX OF JAVANESE

In reviewing the literature on Javanese, we focus on three issues relevant to the study of the particle *ojo*: clause structure, the negative prefix, and auxiliary verbs. As for the first issue, Javanese has a free word order. As illustrated in

- (1) below, all possible word orders are evident. In addition, inflectional morphology in Javanese is not active, so a predicate is not marked for tense, aspect, number, or agreement [3].
- (1) a. Supari tuku gedhang.
  - Supari buy banana
  - 'Supari buys bananas.'
  - b. ?Supari gedhang tuku.
  - c. Gedhang Supari tuku.
  - d. Gedhang tuku Supari.
  - e. Tuku Supari Gedhang.
  - f. Tuku gedhang Supari. [3:63]

To change a sentence into negative, the word *ora* is inserted, as exemplified in (2) [5].

(2) a. aku ngelak.

I thirsty

'I am thirsty.'

b. aku ora ngelak.

I NEG thirsty

'I am not thirsty.'

## [5:111]

Yes/No questions can be made either through changing intonation or through inserting the word *apa* at the beginning of a sentence (3b) or before the item to be questioned in particular (3c) [5].

(3) a. kowe ngelih.

you hungry

'You are hungry.'

b. apa kowe ngelih. INTERROG you hungry

'Are you hungry?'

c. kowe apa ngelih. you INTERROG hungry

'Are you hungry?'

#### [5:112]

A wh-question is formed in Javanese by fronting the whword, as exemplified in (4a). If the auxiliary verb *oleh* 'may'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For more on the history of Javanese, Javanese varieties, and the relationship between Javanese and the other languages spoken in Indonesia, see Conners and Klok, (2016) and Robson (1992).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The differences between *Krama* and *ngoko* in Javanese lie in vocabulary, and the choice of either speech level is highly dependent on the interlocutors and the context of speech. Basically, *Krama* is used in formal contexts and when a speaker is required to show high respect to the one they are addressing, as when speaking to a superior person or an older one. *Ngoko*, on the other hand, appears in informal situations and when someone speaks to one of a lower or equal social status, like when friends speak to each other or superiors speak to inferiors [3, 4].

moves to a position after the wh-word, like what happens in English, ungrammaticality ensues, as evident in (4b) [6].

- (4) a. Nek endi cak Dani oleh nginep?
  - at where Mr. Dani may stay.overnight 'Where is Dani allowed to stay overnight?'
  - b. \*Nek endi oleh cak Dani nginep? at where may Mr. Dani stay.overnight 'Where may Dani stay overnight?'

[6:30]

To change a sentence into passive, as exemplified by the active sentence (5) and its passive counterpart (6), you begin with the theme of the action, then the verb is prefixed with -di and suffixed with -ke or -i, and the end is with the agent of the action [3].

(5) aku nyanek sak-lagu.

I sang song

'I sang a song.'

(6) sak-lagu di-nyanek-ke aku. song PASS-sung-PASS me

'A song was sung by me.'

Of the auxiliaries in Javanese are *wis* 'PAST', *padha* 'PERFECT', *durung* 'not yet', *padha* 'still', *arep* 'about to', *kudu* 'must', and others. One of the distinguishing characteristics of auxiliary verbs in Javanese, and crosslinguistically, is that they cannot take a DP argument, as shown in (7) below [5, 7].

(7) a. cah kuwi wis [VP mangan].

child the PAST eat

'The child has eaten.'

b. \* konco-ku wis [DP gelang] friend-my PAST bracelet

'My friend had a bracelet.'

[7:2

In Javanese finite clauses, main verbs are usually prefixed with a nasal affix, as in (8).<sup>3</sup> It is worth mentioning that verbs in positive imperative clauses, as in (9), are devoid of this affix, and only the root of the verb is used [3].

(8) kowe ny-etir mobil-m alan-alan.

you NAS-drive car-your slowly

'You drive your car slowly.'

(9) setir mobil-mu alan-alan!

drive car-your slowly

'Drive your car slowly!'

After giving this brief background to the grammar of Javanese, it is time to move and advance a description of a lexical item (i.e. *ojo*) that is frequently used in Javanese to ask someone not to do something. It is interesting to examine how this item interacts with the clause structure in Javanese.

# 2. THE GRAMMAR OF OJO

The word *ojo* is used in Javanese in order to ask somebody not to do some action. For example, in (10), the speaker is giving a command to the one they are talking not to drive the car fast. Comparing the negative imperative in this sentence with the positive imperative in (9) shows clearly that the

nasal prefix that is maintained to precede finite verbs in Javanese, as in (8), attaches to negative imperatives, but not to positive imperatives.

(10) ojo ny-etir mobi-mu ngebut-ngebut!

PROH NAS-drive car-your fast

'Do not drive your car fast!'

In order to mitigate such commands and make them softer, the verb *tulung* (literally means 'help') is inserted at the beginning or at the end of the clause, and *yo* 'yes' comes clause-finally. With regard to the position that *ojo* can occupy in the clause, it appears either before the verb, as in (10), or immediately after the main verb, as in (11). It cannot appear elsewhere, as exemplified in (12), where it follows the object of the verb.

(11) ny-etir ojo mobi-mu ngebut-ngebut!

NAS-drive PROH car-your fast

(12)\*ny-etir mobi-mu ngebut-ngebut ojo!

NAS-drive car-your fast PROH

The subject of positive imperatives is usually dropped, as exhibited in (9) above, even though an addressee, like *Aminah*, may appear for emphasis at the beginning or at the end of the clause. Likewise, in negative imperatives, the same may be replicated, but here the subject obligatorily surfaces only if it is a first person plural pronoun, as witnessed in (13). Hence, we may hypothesize that in the negative imperatives, with *ojo*, the subject is dropped when the addressee is a second person, but when it is a first or third person, it arises.

(13) awake-dhewe ojo pisan-pisan telat maneh! we PROH ever come-late again

'We are not allowed to come late again.'

Examining the use of *ojo* in (13) points to its semantics. It seems to have the function of expressing prohibition. The induction that *ojo* has this function can be reinforced by the observation that there is a synonymy between a sentence containing *ojo*, (14), and one with *ora diijinke* 'not allowed to', (15).

(14) kowe, ojo ng-anggo telepon! you PROH NAS-use telephone

'You are not allowed to use the phone!'

(15) kowe ora di-ijin-ke ng-anggo telepon.

you NEG PASS-allowed-PASS NAS-use telephone

'You are not allowed to use the phone.'

We are led by examples like (15) to consider the use ojo in passive constructions. As exhibited in (16), the passive morphology, di- and -i, cannot join ojo. They affix only to the verb that follows ojo.

(16) a. ojo di-apus-i karo peniampilan! PROH PASS-lied-PASS by appearance

'Do not by misled by appearance!'

b.\*di-ojo-i apus karo peniampilan!

PASS-PROH-PASS lied by appearance

c.\*di-ojo-i di-apus-i karo PASS-PROH-PASS PASS-lied-PASS by peniampilan!

appearance

To have a more comprehensive picture of the structure of the clauses encompassing ojo, it is essential to examine the different kinds of predicates with which ojo is used. We

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> There is allophonic variation in the realization of this nasal affix. For more on the details of this variation, see Conners (2008) and Pater (2001).

documented the use of ojo with single-root verbs; in addition, ojo joins reduplicated verbs, like mongan mangan 'eat a lot' in (17), adjectives, like degdegan 'nervous' in (18), and prepositional phrases, like nang ngarepe bapak-mu in (19).

(17) ojo monganmangan!

> PROH eat-a-lot 'Do not eat a lot!'

(18) ojo degdegan! **PROH** nervous

'Do not be nervous!'

(19) ojo nangngarepe bapak-mu! PROH in-front-of father-your 'Do not be in front of your father!

Interestingly, when ojo is used with a nominal predicate, the word dadi has to be inserted after ojo, as exhibited in (20). When such a nominal predicate appears in declarative clauses, the use of *dadi* is not legitimate, as found in (21).

(20) ojo \*(dadi) tukang ngabusi! PROH person that-lies be

'Do not be a liar!

(21) John (\*dadi) ngabusi. tukang that-lies John be person 'John is a liar.'

The obligatory use of dadi with other similar nominal predicates after auxiliary verbs like arep 'will', as exemplified in (22), might say something about dadi. It seems to be needed only with auxiliary verbs before noun phrases. Accordingly, we can say that dadi is more like a copular verb, but the difference between English and Javanese in this respect is that in Javanese this copular is used only after auxiliary verbs and before noun phrases.

(22) A- arep dadi lawyer! **FUT** lawyer 'Be a lawyer!' B-\*arep lawyer! **FUT** lawyer

It is also necessary to examine the occurrence of ojo with other auxiliary verbs. It was found that ojo does not co-occur with the majority of the auxiliaries, especially the ones that introduce a temporal reference, like wis 'before now', lagi 'now', arep 'in the future', tau 'ever', during 'not yet', and isih 'still', as exemplified in (23). I think the impossibility of using ojo with such auxiliaries is because it (i.e. ojo) is used to express prohibitions for future actions, so it has its own temporal reference; consequently, it may not refer to any time else and there is no need for any temporal specification.

(23) A-\*oio sepisanpisan telat! wis PROH PAST ever-try-to come-late ('You are not allowed to have ever tried to come late!')

B-\*wis ojo sepisanpisan telat! **PROH** come-late PAST ever-try-to

In the same vein, ojo may not be used with the auxiliaries expressing necessity of doing actions, like kudu 'must', as in (24). Again, I think the reason is that there is a semantic clash in the functions of the two auxiliaries here.

(24) A-\*oio kudu kampang moco buku harry PROH must finish read book Harry potter.

Potter

B-\*kudu buku ojo kampang moco harry

> PROH finish book must read

Harry potter. Potter

The only auxiliaries that may accompany ojo are those expressing allowance and permission, like oleh, mesthine, kudune, and entok, as illustrated in (25). I suppose that ojo can accompany these auxiliaries as it is reasonable to prohibit the act of allowing. Here, ojo acts more like a negative particle.

(25) ojo oleh mangan sik! allowed-to eat first

'You are not allowed to eat first!'

One may ask if ojo may be used in a wh-question. It was pointed out that ojo may never appear in such a kind of questions, as illustrated in (26). I guess that this is due to the function of ojo. As shown above, ojo is used to give a direct prohibition from the speaker, so it is not expected to direct a question to the source of the authority about a prohibition. If we want to ask to have more details about the prohibition, another auxiliary verb *entuk* is used in this case, as in (27).

(26)\*ruangan endi sing aku mlebu? oio room which REL PROH Ι enter 'Which room am I not allowed to enter?

(27) ruangan endi sing ora entuk aku mlebu?

**NEG** room which **REL** can enter 'Which room can I not enter?'

Before closing this descriptive account of ojo, I will refer to the possibility of using it with two verbal predicates conjoined by a suitable coordinator, as shown in (28). It is noteworthy that ojo in the second part is optional. If it exists in the second coordinate, then the coordination is at the level of sentence, whereas if it is dropped, the coordination is for the verbal predicates.

(28) ojo mangan legilegi sing lan (ojo) PROH eat REL much-sweet and **PROH** 

turutelat! sleep-late

'You are not allowed to eat much sweet and sleep late!' In brief, ojo is used in Javanese in order to express a prohibition to the addressee not to do an action. In documenting the use of ojo, it was shown that it immediately precedes or follows the verb to which a nasal prefix is attached; the subject has to be overt only if it is not a second person; ojo may appear in passive constructions and with predicates of different categories, including verbs, adjectives, prepositional phrases, and nouns; only the auxiliary verbs expressing permission may accompany ojo; wh-questions may not host ojo; and two verbal predicates conjoined by a coordinator may have ojo in either the first or both predicates.

# CONCLUDING REMARKS

Based on the description presented above for ojo and other relevant issues, we can conclude that ojo is an auxiliary verb. The main verbs, adjectives, prepositional phrases, and nouns ojo accompanies provide the main semantic content of the

action or the state, and *ojo* has the function of expressing the prohibition of doing the action or having the state in the predicate. It does not carry the morpho-syntax of the main verb. For example, it does not bear the passive affixes, and it may not stand alone in the sentence. When *ojo* appears with nominal predicates, a particle *dadi* is resorted to intervene between *ojo* and the noun. The same holds when other auxiliaries, like *arep* 'will', arise in nominal predicates. The semantics of *ojo* is comparable to that of the construction comprising a negative particle and the verb *ijin* 'allow' in the passive voice.

Since the clauses containing ojo have the function of getting the addressee not to do an action, we are led to hypothesize that *ojo* marks the clauses for the (negative) imperative mood. However, there are differences found between the clauses in the positive imperative and those with ojo, of which are the issue of prenasalization and the possibility of giving an imperative to first and third persons, in addition to second persons as in positive imperatives. Consequently, we propose that ojo marks a mood, but not that of the positive imperative. It is reasonable to think of the prohibitive mood, which can also issue imperatives, but with some differences from the imperative mood; for example, the negative imperatives in the prohibitive mood can be given to first and third persons as well as to second persons, whereas the non- prohibitive imperatives are only given to second persons. On this grounding, we can say that ojo marks the prohibitive mood in Javanese, whereas the verb in its stem forms marks the imperative mood. That is, positive imperatives and negative imperatives, with ojo, are marked for two separate moods: imperative mood and prohibitive mood. This conclusion shows clearly that Javanese, on a par with Spanish, Italian, Latin, Greek, Swahili, and other languages, forms affirmative and negative imperatives differently in terms of morphology and syntax, but unlike such languages as English, German, and Hungarian, which form affirmative and negative imperatives in the same manner; for example, they use the same morphological endings in both forms of the imperatives [9].

## APPENDIX 1

## **Transliteration Symbols**

DP: Determiner Phrase

FUT: Future INTERROG: Interrogative PASS: Passive PAST: Past PROH: Prohibitive NAS: Nasal Negative NEG: REL: Relative VP: Verb Phrase

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