

# Tense and Aspect Markers of Cirebon Javanese

Leny Saili Rahmah  
 English Education Department  
 Universitas Islam Nusantara  
 Bandung, Indonesia  
 lenysailiR@gmail.com

Eri Kurniawan  
 English Education Department  
 Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia  
 Bandung, Indonesia  
 eri\_kurniawan@upi.edu

**Abstract**—This paper examines tense and aspects markers in the Javanese dialect of Cirebon. This language is included Western Malayo-Polynesian, Austronesian, spoken in West Java, Indonesia. Varieties of Javanese display a wide range of variation not only in lexicon and pronunciation but also in various aspects markers. This paper identifies three aspect markers in Cirebon Javanese: *wis*, *lagi*, and *arep*. Aspect marker *wis* expresses Perfect Aspect and comes before Verb. *Wis* comes before Adjective. Besides, *Wis* cannot be a past tense or a perfective aspect marker. *Lagi* expresses Progressive and Past-Progressive. It cannot be a progressive aspect marker. *Arep* expresses Future, with differences between *arep* expressing will or be going to, and *arep* that expresses wish. Cirebon Javanese has a different vocabulary from other Javanese dialects. However, for aspect markers, Cirebon Javanese’s aspect markers are similar to standard Javanese’s aspect markers.

**Keywords:** *aspect markers, Cirebon Javanese, typology*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Javanese is region language in Indonesia. Over 90 million people speaks Javanese. A well-known property of Javanese is its speech levels: *ngoko* ‘Low Javanese’, *madya* ‘Mid Javanese’, and *krama* ‘High Javanese’ (for example, Errington 1985, 1988). There are standard Javanese and non-standard Javanese. Standard Javanese is from Yogyakarta (Yogya) and Surakarta (Solo) (e.g Suharno, 1982). Varieties of Javanese display a wide range of variation not only in lexicon and pronunciation, but also various aspects markers. The present study examines aspect markers in the variety of Javanese spoken in the region of Cirebon, covering roughly the city and *kabupaten* (county) of the same name. Cirebon is situated on the north coast of the province of West Java, and forms a linguistic border with the Sundanese speaking area to the west. While sometimes popularly characterized as a mixed language, Cirebon Javanese is a variety of Javanese. However, it is one that exhibits some influences from Sundanese and Malay, some archaisms no longer used in many other varieties of Javanese, as well as its innovations. These characteristics make it quite distinct from the variety associated with the court cities of Yogyakarta and Surakarta, which are often taken to be the standard form of the language (Ewing, 2014). In addition, the same as other languages, Javanese has tenses. However, different from English tenses, Javanese tenses can be marked by aspect marker.

Aspect marker related to the internal situation. According to (Comrie, 1976, p.265), “Aspect is not concerned with

relating the time of the situation to any other time-point, but rather with the internal temporal constituency of the one situation”.

Javanese verbs are not marked for person or number and there is only little morphosyntactic marking for TAM-categories. TAM-categories in Javanese are marked by auxiliary words, occurring in pre-verbal position (Robson, 1992, p.64). In Cirebon Javanese sentence, verbs in Javanese are unmarked for either tense or agreement, the aspect markers may be manifested in the system of temporal auxiliaries. Aspect markers may occur before the Verb Phrase (VP). These aspects are sometimes referred to as tenses in English descriptions of Javanese. There are three aspect markers in Cirebon Javanese. They are: *wis* ‘Perfective’, *lagi* ‘Durative’, *arep* ‘Future’. Vander Klok (2008), argues that while Javanese auxiliaries share some properties with verbs, they should be considered a separate category on the basis of their different morphosyntactic behavior. Javanese also has a number of markers with aspectual meanings that help disambiguate the temporal reference of predicates, such as *tau* ‘EXP.PRF’ or *lagi* ‘PROG’ (Standard Javanese; Robson, 2002) /*(la)gek* ‘PROG, just’ (Paciran Javanese; Vander Klok 2012).

Javanese *wis* has also been glossed as a perfective in many theses (Vander Klok, 2012) and defined as a past tense marker (in the second entry in Robson & Wibisono’s dictionary). *Lagi* is mentioned by Uhlenbeck (1975) and Sawardi (2004) by the meaning of ‘in the middle of processes. However, it is more similar to present continuous tense in English. The marker *ape* or *pe* in Paciran Javanese, (or *arep* in Cirebon Javanese) expresses future and can occur with weather predicates (Vander Klok, 2012). These markers are summarized in Table I.

TABLE I. GLOSSES OF ASPECT MARKERS IN CIREBON JAVANESE

No	Aspect Markers	Gloss
1	<i>Wis</i>	Pref ‘already’
2	<i>Lagi</i>	Prog ‘just’
3	<i>Arep</i>	Fut

Javanese has some varieties that display a wide range of variation not only in lexicon and pronunciation but also in various aspects markers. Four Javanese dialects have been analyzed; they are Tangger Javanese, Peranakan Javanese, Tegal Javanese, and standard Javanese. The differences of Javanese aspect markers among Tangger Javanese, Peranakan Javanese, Tegal Javanese, standard Javanese and Cirebon Javanese showed in Table II.

**TABLE II. ASPECT MARKERS LIST ACROSS FOUR DIALECTS IN JAVANESE**

'Standard Javanese' (Horne 1961, Dahl 1985, Robson 1992, R&W 2002, Vander Klok 2012)	Tengger Javanese (Conners 2008)	Peranakan Javanese (Cole, Hara, & Yap 2008)	Tegal Javanese (Suwadji 1981)	Paciran Javanese (Vander Klok 2012)	Cirebon Javanese	Core gloss
<i>Lagi</i>	<i>Gek</i>	<i>Gek</i>	<i>Lage, lagi</i>	<i>Lagek, gek</i>	<i>Lagi</i>	PROG
<i>Wis</i>	<i>Wis</i>	<i>Wis</i>	<i>Wis, ewis</i>	<i>Wis, uwis</i>	<i>Wis</i>	PERF
<i>Arep</i>	<i>Kate</i>	<i>Meh</i>	<i>Ape</i>	<i>Ape</i>	<i>Arep</i>	FUT

It is clear that while some aspect markers are similar across dialects, others have different forms. This similarity is in contrast to the many forms of the future marker across dialects such as *bakal, kate, meh, ape* or *arep*; it is currently not known if these different phonological forms also differ semantically or syntactically from each other.

## II. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Aspect Marker *wis*

**TABLE III. THE MARKER *WIS* ACROSS A NUMBER OF JAVANESE DIALECTS**

Form	Dialect	References
<i>Wis</i>	Cirebon, West Javanese	Ewing (2005)
<i>Wis</i>	Tegal, Central Javanese	Suwadji (1981)
<i>Wis</i>	Semarang, Central Javanese	Goebel (2002, 2005,2010)
<i>Wés, wis</i>	Yogyakarta, Central Javanese Solo, Central Javanese (Standard Javanese)	Favre (1866); Home (1961); Robson (2002); Robson & Wibisono (2002); Wedhawati et al. (2006)
<i>Wis</i>	Paranakan; Semarang, Central Java	Cole et al. (2008)
<i>Wis</i>	Tengger, East Javanese	Conners (2008)
<i>Wis</i>	Surabaya, East Javanese	Hoogervorst (2010)
<i>Wes, wis</i>	Paciran, East Javanese	Vander Klok (2012)

Adopted from Vander klok (2015)

Aspect marker *wis* for example is consider a marker of tense rather than aspect in Vander Klok (2012). Comrie (1976, p. 272) considers this present relevance of the past situation one of the defining characteristic of perfect aspect. Aspect marker *wis* may occur before the verb phrase (VP). Aspect marker *wis* that has description as perfective has analyzed by researchers in variety Javanese. There are 8 researches that have analyzed it, they are Cirebon Javanese dialect, Tegal Javanese dialect, Semarang Javanese dialect, standard Javanese, Paranakan Javanese dialect, Tengger Javanese dialect, Surabaya Javanese dialect, Paciran Javanese dialect. The Marker *wis* across a number of javanese dialects showed in Table III above.

#### 1) *Wis Expresses Perfect Aspect and come before Verb*

Aspect marker *wis* has description perfective in English Tenses. Dahl (1985) reports that, based on his questionnaire, the marker *wis* expresses perfect aspect because it occurs in all of

his prototypical example for the perfect. Dahl does not report which dialect of Javanese is researched for the questionnaire. Dahl (1985, p.39) also notes that the questionnaire was only completed by one consultant for most languages, which likely includes Javanese. Here are the examples of *wis* expresses perfect marker:

#### CIREBON JAVANESE

- (1) Nanang *wis* tuku sega kuning mau  
Nanang PRF AV-buy rice yellow just now  
'Nanang has bought yellow rice just now.'
- (2) *Wis* adus durung sira?  
PRF AV-take a shower not yet you  
'Have you taken a shower?'
- (3) Bapae *wis* teka sing Bogor  
Father-DET PRF AV-come from Bogor  
'Her father has arrived from Bogor'.

In (1) *wis* indicates perfect tense (recent past), 'tuku' done not long before the speech, beside that in this sentence there is the adverb of time 'mau' to make clear the time. While (2) *wis* indicates perfect tense (question word and result), it shows the result of 'adus'. There is question here because to know the result from 'adus' as a verb. 'adus durung sira' as verb phrase. Then in (3) *wis* come before verb phrase 'teka'. 'teka sing Bogor' is verb phrase after *wis*. It indicates perfect tense (recent past).

#### 2) *Wis Come before Adjective*

Aspect marker *wis* can occur come before adjective. It can be seen from the example in (4). no differentiation the position of *wis*. *Wis* comes before verb phrase or before adjective phrase.

#### CIREBON JAVANESE

- (4) Sira *wis* sue ora mene-mene  
You PRF long time didn't come here  
'You have been long time didn't come here.'

3) *Wis can not be a past tense or a perfective aspect marker*  
In some situation *wis* can not be a past tense or perfective aspect marker

#### CIREBON JAVANESE

- (5) Mang Jojo *wis* waras  
Uncle Jojo PROG well  
'Uncle Jojo is well.'

The position of *Wis* in (5) is as a progressive. It can be translated uncle Jojo is well. The auxiliary *wis* in Javanese cannot be a perfective marker, as glossed in Connors (2008), Hoogervorst (2010), and Vander Klok (2012). Languages that have perfective aspect also have a contrasting imperfective. However, some languages only overtly mark one of these aspects; across languages, there is no “marked/ unmarked” distinction between the perfective/imperfective aspect (for example, Dahl, 1985; Dahl & Velupillai, 2013).

### B. Aspect marker *lagi*

Vander Klok (2012) argued that the aspectual marker *lagek* or *gek* can express progressive aspect or inceptive aspect (focusing on the beginning of the event). Two examples are given in (37)-(38):

#### PACIRAN JAVANESE

- (37) cak Khuluq *lagek* ngulang  
Mr. Khuluq PROG AV.teach  
'Cak Khuluq is teaching.' (15Feb11.087)
- (38) naliko pak Suwanan wes mangan, bu Zum *lagek*  
budal  
when Mr. Suwanan PERF AV.eat Mrs. Zumaroh  
PROG leave  
'When Pak Suwanan had eaten, Bu Zum just left.'  
(20may11.053)

I discuss the nature of these two different aspectual meanings of *lagek* with respect to a possible difference in grammatical category in Chapter 2: I suggest *lagek* as a progressive marker is an auxiliary while *lagek* as an incentive marker may be an adverb.

#### 1) *Lagi Expresses Progressive and Past Progressive*

Aspect marker *lagi* has description progressive in English Tenses. Progressive aspect can (optionally) be expressed with the auxiliary *lagi* in Indonesian Javanese (Hengeveld, 2017). Aspect marker *lagi* may occur before the verb phrase (VP). It can be seen in (6). while in (7) aspect marker *lagi* before question word for question sentence.

- (6) Mboke kita *lagi* mbasuh gombal kotor  
Mother-ART DET-my PROG AV-wash clothes dirty  
'My mother is washing dirty clothes.'
- (7) Sira *lagi* apa?  
You PROG what  
'What are you doing?'
- (8) *Lagi* pada mbaso ning Bu'e  
PROG meatball in Bu'e  
'(They) are eating meatball in Bu'e'.

- (9) *Lagi* wingi kita meng Bandung karo bapae kita  
PAST-PROG yesterday 1SG go to Bandung with  
father-ART DET-my  
'I was going to Bandung with my father yesterday'

Aspect marker *lagi* in (8) indicates progressive. Aspect marker *lagi* in (8) shows that *lagi* come before verb phrase and *lagi* as progressive. In Cirebon Javanese aspect marker can be in front of the sentence, so we can tell it a sentence although subject is not in the first sentence. If (8) translated to English, we have to add subject in front of the sentence. *Lagi* in (9) indicates past progressive. In Cirebon Javanese, there is the different marker to indicate progressive and past progressive in English. Progressive is indicated by *is, am, are* See (10). While past progressive is indicated by *was or were* see in (11). Different form Cirebon Javanese that not different marker for progressive and past progressive.

#### ENGLISH

- (10) She is painting the scanary  
She PROG V-ING ART scanary  
(11) I was buying beautiful dress.  
I PROG V-ING ADJ dress

#### 2) *Lagi cannot be a progressive aspect marker*

I suggest *lagek* as a progressive marker is an auxiliary while *lagek* as an inceptive marker may be an adverb (Vander Klok: 2012). *Lagek* is Paciran Javanese, as *lagi* in Cirebon Javanese. Aspect marker *lagi* can not be a progressive aspect marker in some sentences, examples as in (12) and (13) below :

- (12) *Lagi* kaen kita meng umae wa Ahmad  
ADV that 1SG to house-ART Uncle Ahmad  
'I went to Uncle Ahmad's house that time.'
- (13) *Lagi* bengen mah durung ana mall ning kene kuh  
ADV past time PART there was not yet mall in here  
PART  
'There was not mall yet here past time.'

For some cases, *lagi* cannot be a progressive marker. In (12) *lagi* indicates adverb of time. Tenses for this sentence is past tense although there is aspect marker *lagi* in front of the sentence. In Cirebon Javanese adverb of time is in the first sentence. It is different from English. In (13) adverb of time is in front of the sentence. Tenses of this sentence is past tense. There are particle in this sentence. Particle is useful for sense of meaning the word or sentence.

### C. Aspect Marker *Arep*

The marker *arep* is used in Indonesian Javanese to mark future tense. The marker *arep*, mostly considered a volitional and future tense marker in Indonesian Javanese, ... (Hengeveld: 2017). In English to mark future tense using *will*. The first construction to be found in Foundations is labeled as the future non-progressive. It is described as the modal verbs *will/shall*

followed by the plain infinitive and it covers especially neutral predictions without attitudinal implications.

### 1) *Arep Expresses Future*

The marker *arep* (14) expresses future and can occur with verb phrase predicates (e.g. mene 'come here'). In Cirebon Javanese there is not difference aspect marker *arep* as future tense between verb phrase predicate (14) and adjective phrase predicate (15) (e.g. happy). It is different from English that aspect marker *will* for verb phrase predicate and aspect marker *will be* for adjective phrase predicate.

#### CIREBON JAVANESE

(14) Friza *arep* teka mene jehsukiki  
Friza FUT come here PAR tomorrow  
'Friza will come here tomorrow'.

(15) Nok Lia *arep* seneng ora sida gara-gara omongane  
bature  
Nok Lia FUT happy not done because of talking-  
ART friend-ART  
'Nok Lia will be happy but it will not be done because of her friend talking'.

### 2) *The distinguish arep with will and be going to*

#### ENGLISH

(16) I have been ready, I *am going to go* to Jakarta

(17) I *will go* to Jakarta tomorrow

#### CIREBON JAVANESE

(18) Ayu temen sira kuh, *arep* miang mendi sih?  
Beautiful very you PART going to go where  
PART  
'You are very beautiful, where are (you) going to go?'

(19) Mamange kita *arep* pindah meng Bandung  
Uncle-ART ART will move to Bandung  
'My uncle will move to Bandung.'

Future aspect marker in English has different aspect markers. Will to appear planing (it can't be sure yet), this planing can be change because of the time distance see (17). While (18) aspect to be going to appears the situation or the activity can be sure done, it can be changed. Different from English, Cirebon Javanese aspect marker *arep* used for all situations, the situation is sure done (19) or situation is not sure done (18).

### 3) *Arep may also expresses wish*

#### CIREBON JAVANESE

(20) Sira diarep *arep* senget wingi, ora teka-teka  
You wish from yesterday didn't come

(I) Wished you come here yesterday, (but) (you) didn't come

*Arep* may also expresses wish when it is repeated. It can be seen in (20) *arep* can be *wish* in past.

Basically, Cirebon Javanese and Javanese in other dialect has the same pattern for tenses. Tenses, aspect marker and modality of Javanese dialect Paciran has been researched by Vander Klok (2012). Pattern of tenses between Cirebon Javanese and Paciran Javanese are same, but Vander Klok (2012) research does not tell about *Arep* or *Ape* (in Paciran Javanese dialect) expresses wish.

### III. CONCLUSION

Actually Cirebon Javanese is not a different pattern from other Javanese dialects. Cirebon Javanese has different vocabulary from other dialects Javanese, but for aspect markers, Cirebon Javanese's aspect markers are the same as standard Javanese's aspect markers.

### REFERENCES

- Cole, P., Hara, Y., & Yap, N. T. H. (2008). Auxiliary fronting in Peranakan Javanese. *Linguistics*, 44 (1), 1-43. doi: 10.1017/s002222670700494x
- Comrie, B. (1976). The syntax of causative construction: cross-language similarities and divergences. In M. Shibatani (ed.), *Syntax and semantics* 6, (pp. 261-312). New York: Academic Press.
- Connors, T. (2008). *Tengger Javanese*. Unpublished, doctoral dissertation, Yale University, New Haven, USA.
- Dahl, Ö. (1985). *Tense and aspect systems*. New York: Blackwell.
- Ewing, M. (2005). *Grammar and inference in conversation: Identifying clause structure in spoken Javanese*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Ewing, M. (2014). *Two pathways to identifiability in Cirebon Javanese*. Santa Barbara: University of California at Santa Barbara.
- Favre, L. (1866). *Grammaire javanaise*. Paris: L'imprimerie Impériale.
- Goebel, Z. (2002). Code choice in interethnic interactions in two urban neighborhoods of Central Java Indonesia. *International Journal of The Sociology of Language*, 2002(158), 69-87. doi: 10.1515/ijsl.2002.052
- Goebel, Z. (2005). An ethnographic study of code choice in two neighborhood of Indonesia. *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, 25(1), 85-107. doi: 10.1080/07268600500113674
- Goebel, Z. (2010). Language, migration and identity in Indonesian: The case of Sudah, Telah, Pernah, Sempat. *Wacana*, 12(2), 243-268. doi: 10.17510/wjhi.v12i2.117
- Hoogervorst, T. G. (2010). *Describing Surabaya's linguistic ecology* (Unpublished master's thesis). Leiden University.
- Horne, E. C. (1961). *Begining Javanese Vol. 3 Yale Linguistic Series*. New Heaven: Yale University Press.
- Robson, S. (1992). *Javanese grammar for students*. Glen Waverley: Monash Papers on Southeast Asia.
- Robson, S. & Wibisono, S. (2002). *Javanese English dictionary*. North Clarendon: Tuttle Publishing.
- Suwadji. (1981). *Struktur dialek bahasa Jawa di Pesisir Utara Jawa Tengah*. Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa.
- Uhlenbeck, E. M. (1975). Sentence segment and word group: Basic concepts of Javanese syntax. In Nusa (ed. J.W.M. Verhaar, 6 - 10 Jakarta: Nusa
- Vander Klok, J. (2012). *Tense, aspect, and modal markers in Paciran Javanese*. Department of Linguistics. Honours B.A., Etudes Françaises, York University.
- Vander Klok, J. (2015). Distinguishing already from perfect aspect: A case study of Javanese wis. *Oceanic Linguistic*, 54(1), 172-205. doi: 10.1353/ol.2015.000