



P-ISSN 2355-2794
E-ISSN 2461-0275

Dysphemism in Eating Expressions in Javanese: A Study of Cognitive Semantics

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Abstract

The word 'eating' can produce positive meaning as it is closely tied to human needs. This term is also intricately linked to eating habits. In Javanese society, this term serves to satisfy basic human needs and plays a pivotal role in defining social etiquette. Eating expressions have a broader meaning when examined from a dysphemistic perspective within cognitive semantics. This study employed a descriptive qualitative methodology, with data collection covering interviews, active listening, observation, and note-taking. The data were then analyzed using image schemas and conceptual meaning. The study found that the eating expressions underwent dysphemism in Javanese such as 'lambene ngemrus wae ket mau! (your mouth keeps eating!), 'wes, ngrokoti koyo tikus!' (you eat like a rat!), 'Gimin esuk-esuk wis nguntal' (Gimin ate too early this morning), 'wah, yahene wis nyekek ping pindhho' (you have eaten twice by this time), 'nyo, badhogen kabeh, aku rasah dingengehi' (eat all the food and don't bother to spare for me), 'panganan kok di gaglak' (how come

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Citation in APA style: Hermandra, Citraresmana, E., Sarudin, A., & Hassan, H. (2024). Dysphemism in eating expressions in Javanese: A study of cognitive semantics. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 11(2), 1171-1192.

Received January 5, 2024; Revised April 3, 2024; Accepted April 20, 2024; Published Online May 31, 2024

<https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v11i2.36643>

you gulping the food?'), and 'menungso kok gragas?!' (how on earth could you only eat?!). Moreover, the study identified conceptual metaphors, comprising six structural metaphors and two orientational metaphors. Structural metaphors arise from systematic relationships observed in daily experiences, whereas orientational metaphors impart spatial direction, including the recognition of top-down image schemes, part-whole image schemes, existence image schemes, and merging image schemes.

Keywords: Eating, cognitive semantics, dysphemism, Javanese society.

1. INTRODUCTION

Consuming food is a fundamental human requirement, essential for the body to generate the energy needed for daily activities. Eating involves placing food into the mouth, chewing it with teeth, and swallowing it through the throat (Cichero, 2018). While eating is a personal activity, it extends beyond individual concerns, holding significant importance for a nation as it directly impacts the well-being and survival of its citizens (Adhikari et al., 2021). Therefore, ensuring proper eating habits is not solely an individual responsibility but also a shared duty of the government and other agencies to foster a healthy and prosperous society.

“O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy”. (The Qur'an, 2004, Surah Al Baqarah, verse 168)

In light of the aforementioned surah, the consumption of food is limited to that which is both *halal* (permissible) and healthy. The phrase “O mankind” signifies that this verse extends its message not solely to Muslims but to all humanity. This conveys the notion that Allah’s blessings transcend any hindrance, be it disbelief or injustice, owing to His boundless grace and unparalleled mercy. Recognizing food as a fundamental necessity, every individual possesses the inherent right to access it, irrespective of their attitude, identity, or conduct. Essentially, the necessity of eating remains predominant for the sustenance of human life, regardless of one’s actions or character (Kaplan et al., 2000; Rozin, 2005).

Various synonyms exist for the word *makan* ‘eat’. These alternative expressions are presented in Figure 1. The first set of synonymous terms for ‘eating’ includes *bersiar-siar*, *bersuka-suka*, *bertamasya*, *cemo-cemo*, and *dahar*. Within this set, the causes and effects contributes to the understanding of the term ‘eat’. Notably, for activities characterized by *bersiar-siar*, *bersuka-suka*, and *bertamasya*, the appropriate term is *cemo-cemo*, denoting the act of eating plentifully in a courteous and joyous context. Terkourafi (2015) explains that politeness in eating involves accommodating the host’s behavior, regardless of whether it aligns with typical eating customs. As a guest, one can gracefully adjust to the host’s behavior (Gao et al., 2022).

The subsequent set of equivalent words are *mamah*, *melahap*, *melapangkan pikiran*, *menyasau*, and *merakus*. Within this set, there is an emphasis that gives rise to varied expressions of ‘eat’. When experiencing a state of mental expansiveness, the suitable terms are *merakus*, *menyasau*, *mamah*, and *melahap*, connoting the act of

consuming a substantial amount without restraint to ease the pressure, thus carrying an unfavorable connotation. This second set of equivalent words aligns in meaning with the terms *caplok* and *kunyah*. The final set, including *memakan*, *bersantap*, and *menelan*, maintains a neutral meaning, where individuals generally partake in their meals satisfactorily and enjoyably. Eating without chewing is considered either excessive or indicative of greed (Walton et al., 2022). Nevertheless, its acceptability can vary in specific social contexts and depends on cultural customs or traditions (Yoshimura et al., 2022).

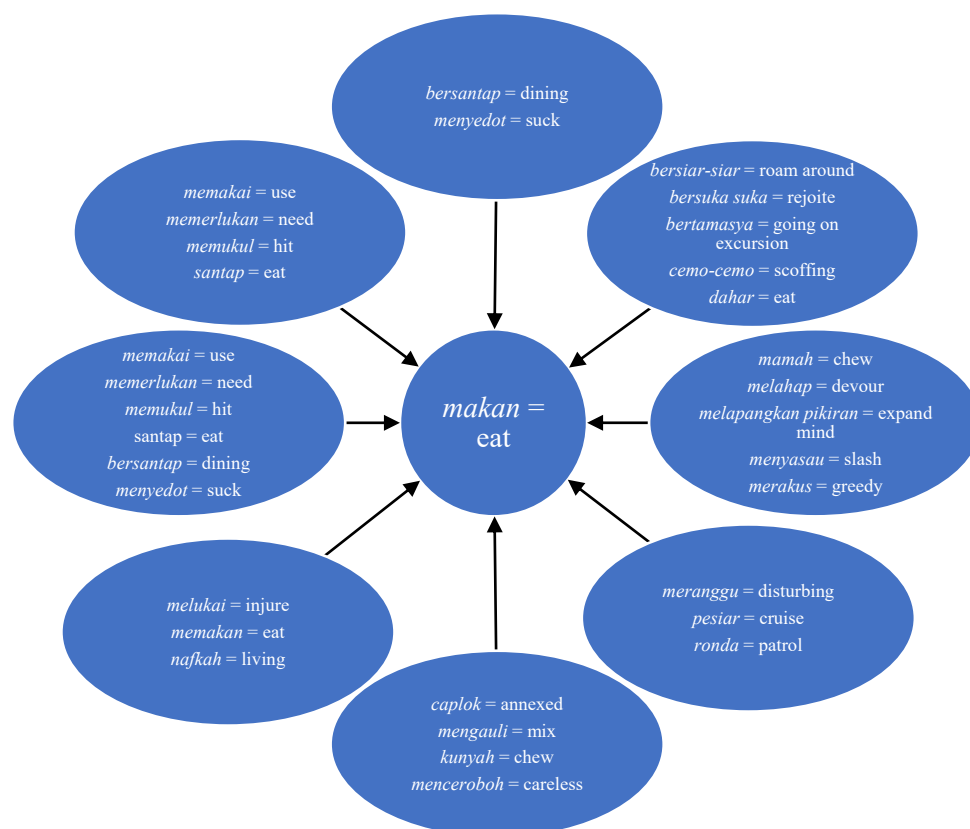


Figure 1. Synonyms for the word ‘eat’ in Javanese.

The preceding explanation underscores that ‘eat’ shares numerous similarities with other words, each carrying a distinct function depending on the context. However, this research focuses on exploring diverse expressions denoting the act of eating in the Javanese language. Within Javanese society, the term for consuming food extends beyond the singular use of ‘eat’. Various terms, such as *mbadog*, *nguntal*, and *nyaplok*, each carry unique meanings. The terms explored in this research lean toward a dysphemistic quality, manifesting a negative or unfavorable connotation. In Javanese cultural contexts, eating behavior can carry negative connotations (Hariyanto et al., 2024). The terminology surrounding eating is significant for Javanese people, as it is intricately linked to the speaker’s expression and can reflect their behavioral patterns and lifestyle (Diana et al., 2022).

In Javanese culture, the act of eating is denoted by the term *madang*, a neutral expression commonly used in everyday discourse. The term *madang* is versatile and applicable across all age groups, including children, teenagers, and the elderly.

However, within the Javanese linguistic structure, different levels of language exist, with the choice of words adapting to specific circumstances, conditions, and the individual being addressed. In casual and relaxed conversations, especially when engaging with someone of the same level or age, the term *madang* is used at the *ngoko* level, a foundational expression fostering an atmosphere of intimacy—akin to the word *mangan*. Diana et al. (2022) explain that this term can be adapted to fit various contexts or circumstances. Thus, *mangan* and *madang* may be used interchangeably within the same social context or among individuals of the same age group. The use of these terms is observed in the behavioral patterns of Javanese society (Sari et al., 2022).

Under formal circumstances, where conversational partners share the same age or social stratum, it is necessary to use language that reflects politeness and mutual respect, such as *maem*. Conversely, when engaging with individuals who are older or unfamiliar, employing language at the *kromo* level—the most refined level, exemplified by terms like *dahar*—is essential to preserve sentiments and mutual respect. Within Javanese society, communication operates within distinct levels or strata (Sibarani & Lubis, 2022). By comprehending these strata, speakers can effectively convey messages, reducing linguistic conflicts and reflecting the ethical norms associated with social stratification (Habermas, 2023).

The rationale behind using varied words with identical meanings is to promote a warm and amiable atmosphere. Using overly formal language in a casual setting can make the conversational partner uneasy and hinder the development of a friendly conversation. Similarly, engaging in dialogue with older or unfamiliar individuals while using casual and harsh language can cast a negative perception, leading to a diminished regard for the speaker. The diversity of language use contributes to the mood of communication. When language aligns with the context, it fosters a positive communication environment or vice versa (Can, 2009; Tai, 2014). This is the significance of understanding language etiquette and communication procedures.

Studies concerning dysphemism are not inherently sarcastic or impolite. Dysphemism has been a focal point in prior studies conducted by various researchers. It refers to linguistic expressions conveying rudeness or impoliteness (Muhammad, 2020; Terry, 2020). Dysphemism involves the use of harsh language capable of eliciting emotional reactions from readers or listeners. Its application extends beyond situations involving the speaker's emotions to actions such as cursing, swearing, scolding, or shouting (Aytan et al., 2021). An example of a relevant study on dysphemism is by Olimat (2020). This research investigated the use of dysphemistic expressions in Trump's discourse on COVID-19. The study identified several conceptual metaphors used by Trump, characterizing COVID-19 as an invisible enemy, a foreign adversary, a dangerous threat, and a global battle. Through data analysis, it was revealed that Trump exhibits a skillful command of language and persuasive techniques in political discourse, influencing the opinions of the American public.

Another significant study in the field of dysphemism is by Chovanec (2019). This research enhances cognitive pragmatic proximization theory by investigating how euphemisms mitigate the potentially adverse effects of specific linguistic representations or broader conceptualizations of reality on recipients. These expressions widen the discourse space between the unpleasant phenomenon and the recipient's deictic center. By focusing on the military euphemism 'blue-on-blue' and its utilization in various media, the paper interprets this expression as a discursive

strategy addressing the unintended consequences of military actions. The data indicate that this distancing involves multiple levels of grammatical and structural transformation, effectively mitigating potential negative impacts by enveloping the straightforward verbalization of an event with increasingly complex and semantically unclear realizations.

Accordingly, this current study aims to explain the concept of dysphemism concerning the use of the word 'eat' within Javanese society. It seeks to extend beyond linguistic considerations, investigating into the thoughts and perspectives of the groups using this expression. The primary objective of this study is to identify shared patterns in the utilization of the word 'eat' in Javanese society, using cognitive semantic theory.

Words categorized as dysphemism within this context are characterized by rudeness and sarcasm, serving as functional substitutes for the intended expression. As a form of expression, dysphemism is considered harsh (Oktafiana & Suhardi, 2024). It is crucial to note that this application of dysphemism is intended as satire without causing harm or offense. The exploration of dysphemism through cognitive semantics aims to emphasize that Javanese society holds a rich and evolving vocabulary that adjusts to contemporary shifts. Consequently, words exhibit diverse variations to portray the same concept, eventually presenting an integrated and systematic portrayal of Javanese thought through natural experiences and cultural habits.

Dysphemism serves to instill a word, phrase, clause, or sentence with a specific meaning or intent, introducing an element of rudeness (Kafi & Degaf, 2021; Khotimah et al., 2022; Rahmawati & Ariesta, 2020). The word 'eat' often deviates from its literal meaning in real-life scenarios. For instance, consuming food without regard to stomach capacity is referred to as *nyaplok*, *nguntal*, or *mbadok*, while continuous eating is labeled as *ngganyem* or *ngemrus*. These terms serve as warnings and indirect expressions, informing the addressed individual about the limitations and functions inherent in the word 'eat', emphasizing indulgence and health. Consequently, the use of dysphemism is a common practice in Javanese society, offering a conceptual framework for understanding eating based on their perspectives and viewpoints. This study analyzed the dysphemistic use of the word 'eat' within the Javanese community through cognitive semantics.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Dysphemism

At the opening of the Indonesian Language Congress in 1998, Indonesian President Habibbi remarked that the present usage of the Indonesian language tends to incline towards rudeness or dysphemism (Mohsin, 2018). Dysphemism serves the purpose of imparting satire and affirmation (Auzar & Faizah, 2018; Matondang et al., 2020; Sitanggang et al., 2020). A consequential outcome of employing such harsh language is that the community may become accustomed to using dysphemistic expressions and speaking bluntly, potentially disregarding ethics and politeness (Hassanein, 2019; Taghian, 2021).

Dysphemism, derived from the Greek *dys* or *dus* (indicating something bad, abnormal, or difficult), conveys notions of 'bad' and 'rough'. It stands in direct contrast to euphemism, where individuals intentionally employ words with rough

connotations to convey a specific purpose (Morsalin & Adnan, 2022; Rabiyeve, 2022). Dysphemism is a form of a figure of speech or language style (Morelent & Irawan, 2022; Putri et al., 2021). Furthermore, dysphemism involves the use of words, expressions, or sentences in a rough nature as substitutes for more subtle expressions to avoid offending (Alsulami, 2021; Anita et al., 2020). It serves as a deliberate linguistic choice in communication, aiming for assertiveness by coarsening speech (Qaiwer, 2020; Subandi et al., 2020).

Dysphemism harshens or coarsens the portrayal of a fact expressed in language, covering words, sentences, and utterances to convey a meaning different from its true nature (Allan et al., 2012; Khotimah et al., 2022). In dysphemism, integrating taboo words involves expressions with meanings deemed inappropriate or prohibited (Iswara & Sastaparamitha, 2020; Khan et al., 2023). This indicates that taboo matters extend beyond supernatural entities; they also pertain to ethics, manners, and karma in the social division (Kadylak et al., 2018).

A word, phrase, clause, or sentence can assume the characteristics of a dysphemism or euphemism, depending on the context used by the speaker (Degaf et al., 2023; Kafi & Degaf, 2021). Take the word *mangan*, for instance, commonly used in the daily interactions of Javanese people, conveying a neutral meaning. In formal settings or when addressing someone of high regard, the use of *mangan* might be perceived as a dysphemism or inappropriate. On the other hand, in a relaxed environment with an equivalent or corresponding interlocutor, the same word may be considered a euphemism. Consequently, dysphemism and euphemism emerge due to the speaker's necessity to tailor their speech according to the context of the sentence, specific situations, and prevailing conditions.

2.2 Cognitive Semantics

Cognitive semantics explores the conceptualization of meaning and cognitive knowledge, which are deeply intertwined with human experiences and interactions with the external world (Bylund & Jarvis, 2011; Langacker, 2019). Meaning arises from experiential contexts, and cognitive semantics explores into these experiences to understand meaning formation (Jackson et al., 2019). This field analyzes data by examining relationships formed through experiences, conceptual systems, and semantic structures embedded in language usage, aiming to reveal conceptual structures and the process of conceptualizing meaning across domains (Wong et al., 2018).

Cognitive semantics involves expressing metaphorical ideas through conceptualization to illustrate connections between source and target concepts (Jensen et al., 2021). Metaphors, integral to cognitive semantics, are concise comparisons representing transformations or comparisons against reality, often grounded in image schemas (De Giorgis et al., 2022; Hedblom et al., 2019). The image schema, a foundational abstract topology for cognitive models, facilitates effective communication by providing a shared foundation for understanding (Bottini & Doeller, 2020; Huang et al., 2018).

This study employs the cognitive semantic process, utilizing the conceptual metaphor, image schema, and metonymy thinking framework. The image schema, universally shared among individuals, comprises objects or actions (images) and rational understandings (schemas) representing knowledge about the external world

(Baslamisli et al., 2018; Cohn et al., 2019). TR and LM concepts within the image schema represent focal and secondary participants, respectively (Dan et al., 2020; Huang, 2021; Mori, 2019).

The analysis in this study follows a source domain and target domain approach, where the source domain refers to metaphorical usage in Javanese eating dysphemism and the target domain relates to experiential meaning (Ahmad et al., 2018; Aisyah, 2022). TR (trajectory) and LM (landmark) differentiate metaphorical elements in Javanese eating dysphemism, while metonymy clarifies complex units by associating terms with the entities they represent (Chaerunnisah, 2020; Li & Man-yu, 2021; Littlemore & Tagg, 2018). An example is “Pekanbaru says...”, where the city represents the entity being referred to.

3. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach. Qualitative inquiry entails a comprehensive exploration of the surface-level aspects and the underlying meanings driving actions, thus contributing to a comprehensive understanding of social phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2007). The primary aim of qualitative research is to offer insights and explanations.

3.1 Participants

The study included 20 individuals of Javanese descent from Riau who met the criteria of being native Javanese, aged between 35 and 65 years, and have proficient command of the Javanese language. This age range facilitated the researchers’ assessment of language validity across a range of usage within the Javanese community. Participants were selected through probability sampling based on the specified age criteria (Acharya et al., 2013). The effectiveness of the study, as highlighted by Flick et al. (2004), relied significantly on the informants’ proficiency. Therefore, participant selection and categorization were systematically guided by factors such as tribe, age, residential environment, and social interactions.

3.2 Instruments

Interviews serve as the instrumental tool for data collection. The semi-structured interviews, which involved a series of open-ended questions, enabling researchers to obtain comprehensive insights and enrich the dataset (O’Keeffe et al., 2016). This approach is particularly suitable for capturing the perceptions and experiences of interviewees (Schatz, 2012). Mökander et al. (2023) also suggested that data validity facilitates structured analysis for researchers based on its inherent characteristics.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

In qualitative studies, the researcher assumes the dual role of principal data collector and analyst, guiding the study toward its intended goals (Creswell & Poth, 2007). Interviews were systematically conducted with a diverse group of Javanese participants originating from Central Java, including individuals fluent in both

Javanese *ngoko* and *kromo inggil* levels. Based on interviews with 20 research participants, data on *nggayem* was collected from three respondents, *ngermus* from two respondents, *ngrokoti* from three respondents, *nguntal* from four respondents, *nyekek* from three respondents, *badhoq* from five respondents, *gaglak* from five respondents, and *gragas* from one respondent. The interviews were conducted in Javanese to enhance communicative effectiveness, audio recorded, and transcribed.

3.4 Data Analysis

The researchers systematically analyzed the data by following the six stages of thematic analysis by Christou (2023, pp. 6-12): familiarization with the research data, generation of initial codes, searching for and reviewing themes, theme definition, creating conceptual diagrams and theory-building, and finally, producing the final report. The analysis covers the application of conceptual meaning, image schema, and metonymy on the word ‘eat’ in Javanese society.

This cognitive framework facilitates individuals’ understanding of linguistic phenomena related to expressions or thoughts. Conceptual metaphors, image schemas, and metonymy serve as efforts to articulate the principles of thought, enabling comprehension through the conceptualization of reality embedded in conveyed meanings. In traditional theories, such as comparison theory and semantic approaches, metaphor is often perceived merely as unconventional word usage or abbreviated comparison. Previous research predominantly focused on its semantic aspects without probing into the reasons for metaphor emergence, its essence, nature, the mechanisms behind its generation, and its role in cognitive processes (Beknazarova et al., 2021). Thus, this article observes further development of metaphor theory closely linked to the advancement of cognitive linguistics. The practical significance of this research lies in presenting metaphor not solely as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a fundamental cognitive tool.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Javanese usage of the word ‘eat’ stands out due to its unique characteristics, enabling listeners to comprehend the implied meanings associated with variations of the term. Semantic cognition is employed to distinguish the intended meanings within utterances, drawing upon past experiences. The analytical process integrates various components of cognitive semantics, including conceptual metaphor, image schema, and metonymy (Beknazarova et al., 2021; Moisiuk et al., 2022). Table 1 present the dysphemism expressions of ‘eat’ in Javanese.

Table 1. Dysphemism expressions of eating in Javanese.

No.	Expressions of ‘eat’ in Javanese	Translation
1.	<i>Ra kesel yo nggayem ae kerjane</i> ‘Don’t you get tired? You haven’t stopped eating!’	Continuously eating without taking a break
2.	<i>Lambene ngermus wae ket mau</i> ‘Your mouth keeps (on) eating’.	Eating everything without consideration.
3.	<i>Wes, ngrokoti koyo tikus</i> ‘You eat like a rat!’	Eating like removing corn kernels.
4.	<i>Gimin esuk-esuk wis nguntal</i> ‘Gimin eats too early in the morning’	Eating much and quickly.

Table 1 continued...

5.	<i>Wah, Yahene wis nyekek ping pindho</i> ‘You have eaten twice by this time!’	Eating much and regularly.
6.	<i>Nyo, badhog kabeh. Aku rasah dingengehi</i> ‘Eat all the food and don’t bother to spare for me!’	Eating everything without leaving for others.
7.	<i>Panganan kok di gaglak</i> ‘How come you (are) gulping the food?’	Eating by gulping.
8.	<i>Menungso kok gragas</i> ‘How on earth (could) you only eat!’	Eating incessantly and without selection

4.1 Conceptual Metaphors

Table 1 reveals eight Javanese eating-related expressions based on life experiences. These expressions fall under conceptual metaphors, divided into structural and orientational types, reflecting cultural perceptions and societal norms regarding eating behaviors.

4.1.1 Structural metaphors

There are six structural metaphors from the word ‘eat’ in Javanese culture. They are *nggayem*, *ngemrus*, *ngrokoti*, *nguntal*, *gaglak* and *gragas*. Each is explained below.

a. *Nggayem*

The metaphor *nggayem*, as illustrated in the phrase *ra kesel yo nggayem ae kerjane!* ‘don’t you get tired? You haven’t stopped eating!’ falls under the category of structural metaphor, involving the transfer of a concept from one domain to another.

- (1) *Ra kesel yo nggayem ae kerjane!* ‘Don’t you get tired? You haven’t stopped eating!’
 Target: *nggayem*
 Source: *makan* ‘eating’
 Image scheme: *atas-bawah* ‘top-down’

In this context, *nggayem* refers to eating continuously but not quickly or excessively, with a time gap between consuming different foods. Weiler et al. (2017) explain that practicing moderation in eating habits contributes to effective food processing. Therefore, *nggayem* does not imply stopping eating altogether but rather emphasizes the importance of avoiding rapid or excessive consumption. The metaphor employs a top-down image scheme to illustrate this concept.

b. *Ngemrus*

The word *ngemrus*, as illustrated in the phrase *lambene ngemrus wae ket mau* ‘your mouth keeps eating’, exemplifies a structural metaphor that involves transferring a concept from one domain to another.

- (2) *Lambene ngemrus wae ket mau.* ‘Your mouth keeps eating’
 Target: *ngemrus*
 Source: *makan* ‘eating’
 Image scheme: *atas-bawah* ‘top-down’

The use of *ngemrus* in speech or discourse conveys a sense of irritation. In Javanese culture, *ngemrus* refers to a lower-level, unethical eating behavior characterized by continuous and excessive consumption. Colaizzo-Anas (2014) highlights the negative health impacts of such overeating from religious and cultural perspectives. Therefore, *ngemrus* carries a negative connotation, denoting undesirable eating practices. The metaphor employs a top-down image scheme to illustrate this concept.

c. *Ngrokoti*

The metaphor *ngrokoti*, as illustrated in the phrase *wes, ngrokoti koyo tikus!* ‘you eat like a rat!’, is a structural metaphor characterized by the act of consuming food gradually and in different segments.

- (3) *Wes, ngrokoti koyo tikus!* ‘You eat like a rat!’
Target: *ngrokoti*
Source: *makan* ‘eating’
Image scheme: *bagian-keseluruhan* ‘part-whole’

Chen (2009) explains that this metaphor reflects selective consumption, where only the most desirable parts of the food are eaten, leaving it partially consumed and uneven. This metaphorical concept falls under the structural metaphor category due to its conceptual transfer. The imagery conveyed by *ngrokoti* follows the part-whole schema, symbolizing a way of eating that dissects the food into separate components, disrupting its cohesion.

d. *Nguntal*

The metaphor *nguntal*, as illustrated in the phrase *Gimin esuk-esuk wis nguntal* ‘Gimin eats too early in the morning’, falls into the structural metaphor.

- (4) *Gimin esuk-esuk wis nguntal* ‘Gimin eats too early in the morning’
Target: *nguntal*
Source: *makan* ‘eating’
Image scheme: *bagian-keseluruhan* ‘part-whole’

Nguntal means consuming food prematurely or hastily. This metaphor involves a conceptual shift, fitting the structural metaphor type, and follows the part-whole schema. In the context of *nguntal*, it represents a type of eating that disrupts the unity of a meal, with rapid consumption breaking it into disjointed parts. Such hurried eating habits can disrupt digestive processes and potentially lead to accelerated weight gain (Yamaji et al., 2017). Therefore, eating behaviors associated with *nguntal* are considered unfavorable.

e. *Gaglak*

The metaphor *gaglak* as illustrated in the phrase *panganan kok di gaglak?* ‘how come you gulp the food?’ falls within the category of structural metaphors. *Gaglak* involves transferring concepts from one domain to another. The use of *gaglak* in

speech or discourse evokes irritation. In Javanese culture, *gaglak* refers to directly swallowing food, similar to drinking water.

- (7) *Panganan kok di gaglak* ‘How come you gulping the food?’

Target: *gaglak*

Source: *makan/mangan* ‘eating’

Image scheme: *penggabungan* ‘merging’

However, unlike water, food requires chewing to pass through the throat. *Gaglak* is considered the most unethical and unacceptable way of eating in Javanese society, typically associated with the lowest social class. Bessadet et al. (2013) explain that such eating habits can lead to behavioral changes and affect the muscles responsible for food digestion. They emphasize the importance of thoroughly chewing food for better digestion as a healthier eating habit. The metaphor employs a merging image scheme to illustrate this concept.

f. *Gragas*

The metaphor *gragas*, as illustrated in the phrase *menungso kok gragas?* ‘how on earth do you only eat?’ falls within the category of structural metaphors. *Gragas* involves transferring concepts from one domain to another. The use of *gragas* in speech or discourse suggests irritation. In Javanese culture, *gragas* is associated with an indiscriminate, animal-like style of eating that disregards established norms and societal expectations.

- (8) *Menungso kok gragas* ‘How on earth you only eat!’

Target: *gragas*

Source: *makan/mangan* ‘eating’

Image scheme: *penggabungan* ‘merging’

Gragas is considered the most unethical and unacceptable way of eating in Javanese society, typically reserved for the lowest social class. Egolf et al. (2018) elaborate that unrestricted and indiscriminate eating is highly undesirable behavior. Persistent engagement in such habits can negatively shape one’s character, leading to immoral and low moral standards. The metaphor employs a merging image scheme to illustrate this concept.

4.1.2 *Orientational metaphors*

There are two orientational metaphors from the word ‘eat’ in Javanese culture. They are *nyekek* and *badhog*. Each is explained below.

a. *Nyekek*

The metaphor *nyekek*, as illustrated in the phrase *wah, yahene wis nyekek ping pindho* ‘you have eaten twice by this time!’ is an orientational metaphor characterized by the idea of repeated eating out of the usual norms. While *nyekek* literally means eating, it also signifies repeated consumption without sufficient intervals between meals.

- (5) *Wah, yahene wis nyekek ping pindho* ‘You have eaten twice by this time!’
Source: *makan/mangan* ‘eating’
Target: *nyekek*
Image scheme: *eksistensi* ‘existence’

This metaphorical usage aligns with orientational metaphors by transferring concepts related to human experiences and suggests imagery related to existence. However, societal norms or remarks often view such eating habits unfavorably, hindering the recognition of this eating behavior. Douglas (2018) emphasizes the importance of individuals being mindful and capable of assessing their eating behaviors, highlighting the role of awareness in maintaining social politeness.

b. *Badhog*

The metaphor *badhog*, as illustrated in the phrase *nyo badhogen kabeh, aku rasah dingengehi* ‘eat all the food and don’t bother to spare for me!’ is an orientational metaphor that represents overeating without considering others’ portions. While *badhog* literally means eating, it implies excessive consumption without regard for others’ needs.

- (6) *Nyo badhogen kabeh. Aku rasah dingengehi* ‘Eat all the food and don’t bother to spare for me!’
Source: *makan/mangan* ‘eating’
Target: *badhog*
Image scheme: *jalan* ‘path’

This metaphorical usage aligns with orientational metaphors by transferring concepts related to the orientation of human experiences and reminding imagery related to existence. The cycle begins with *nyekek* and progresses to *badhog*. According to Herman and Polivy (2005), such behavior is considered highly undesirable and uncivilized. Engaging in eating activities associated with the *badhog* concept can be very negative in social interactions, especially during events such as parties or communal meals.

4.2 Image Scheme

4.2.1 Top-down image scheme

This study identifies two instances of eating dysphemism within the Javanese community: *nggayem* and *ngemrus*. *Nggayem* is perceived as less severe and more standard than *ngemrus*, which is considered annoying. Despite being a dysphemism, *nggayem* does not convey irritation or annoyance and is viewed as more courteous. In Data 1, *nggayem* involves consuming something continuously but moderately, with pauses between items. *Ngemrus*, described in Data 2, involves eating continuously without pausing, even when the mouth is full. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between the trajectory (TR) and the landmark (LM) in this dysphemism. Using cognitive semantics, these can be associated with an up-down image schema, with *nggayem* (TR 1) representing eating within limits (LM 1) and *ngemrus* (TR 2) representing eating without limits (LM 2).

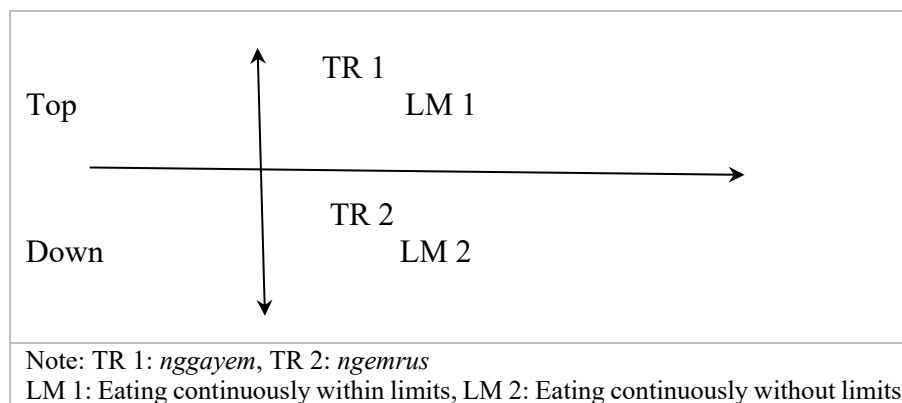


Figure 2. Top-bottom image schema on dysphemism of Data 1 and 2.

The Javanese community prioritizes positive aspects, and while both words mean continuous eating, their contexts have distinct connotations (Hariyanto et al., 2024; Suryadi et al., 2019). *Nggayem* is seen as regular eating within limits, whereas *ngemrus* is viewed as unethical due to its unrestricted nature. This reflects the Javanese community where specific expressions are adapted to situations, giving unique terms even for similar meanings. The image schema is top-down, with the upper concept (*nggayem*) seen as positive and the lower concept (*ngemrus*) seen as negative.

In terms of conceptual metaphor, *nggayem* is a positive dysphemism, while *ngemrus* expresses annoyance. This metonymy highlights that continuous eating within norms is acceptable, but exceeding these limits is seen as unethical. This shows the Javanese community's emphasis on ethics and manners in eating practices.

4.2.2 Part-whole image scheme

In Data 3 and 4, the Javanese dysphemisms *ngrokoti* and *nguntal* are discussed. *Ngrokoti* means eating irregularly across the plate, resulting in fragmented food, while *nguntal* involves eating too early. *Ngrokoti* stems from the Javanese practice of savoring food slowly and neatly arranging side dishes, whereas *nguntal* arises from adhering to customary mealtimes, leading people to eat their entire meal early to avoid wastage. These dysphemisms reflect a part-whole relationship within Javanese eating habits. Data 3 (*ngrokoti*) represents a component of Data 4 (*nguntal*), both connected to the broader concept of eating. Figure 3 in the study illustrates this, showing *ngrokoti* (TR 1) and *nguntal* (TR 2) as distinct yet interconnected elements of eating.

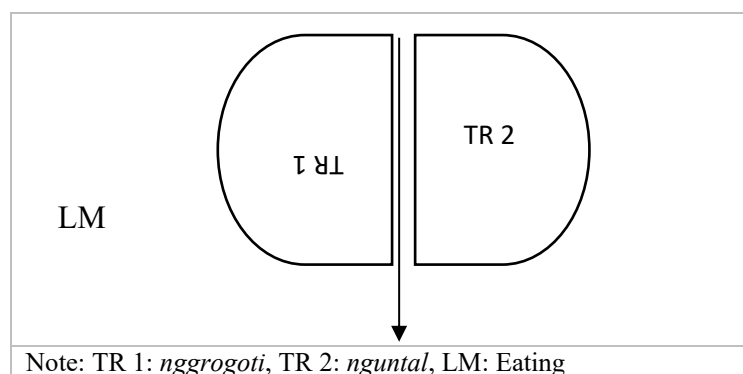


Figure 3. Image schema of part-whole in dysphemism of Data 3 and 4.

Javanese society integrates these diverse elements into a cohesive whole, highlighting its adeptness at incorporating various facets into the eating process. Based on the conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), eating is a unified activity comprising different supporting components, such as *ngrokoti* and *nguntal* in this society. These terms complement the overall structure of eating, even though they now represent distinct components rather than a unified concept.

The conceptual metaphor views eating as the source domain, with *ngrokoti* and *nguntal* as target domains, denoting reckless and prematurely timed eating, respectively. This metonymy captures the variety within eating practices, showing that *ngrokoti* and *nguntal* have evolved into distinct components within the broader unity of eating.

4.2.3 Cycle image scheme

Data 7 and 8 exemplify a cycle image schema related to travel, depicting eating habits in the Javanese community. Repeated eating without substantial breaks is termed *nyekek*, while excessive, inconsiderate eating is labeled *bhadog*. This cycle begins with *nyekek*, progresses to *bhadog*, and culminates in genuine eating (*madang*).

Nyekek indicates repetitive eating without significant pauses, deviating from traditional eating norms. *Bhadog* transforms eating into an act of greed, violating social and ethical standards. Phrases like *yah mene* ‘at this hour’ and *rasa dingegehi* ‘no need to spare’ highlight the progression from *nyekek* to *bhadog*, leading to fragmented eating practices. Figure 4 illustrates this cycle, showing how sarcastic remarks about eating behavior obstruct the genuine essence of eating, shifting its perception to an act of greed rather than nutritional sustenance (Setiawan, 2015).

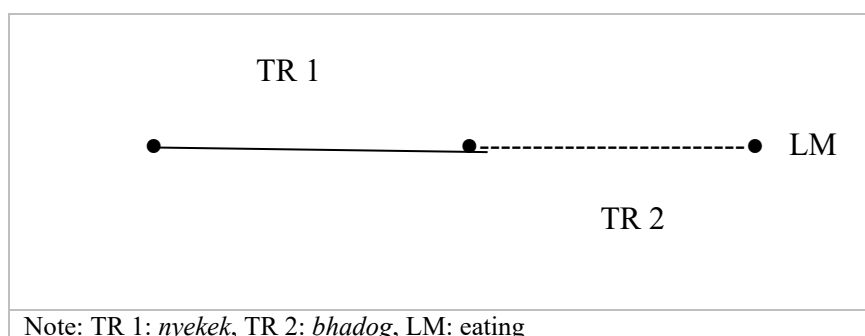


Figure 4. Cycle image schema on Data 7 and 8.

These expressions reflect a conceptual metaphor explaining the dysphemisms of *nyekek* and *bhadog*. *Nyekek* involves eating shortly after the previous meal, while *bhadog* signifies greedy eating. This conceptual metaphor maps these dysphemisms onto the broader eating habits in Javanese culture. Community opinions, termed *paidho*, hinder the application of the term ‘eating’, creating new Javanese eating dysphemisms.

4.2.4 Merging image scheme

The dysphemisms of *nggagak* and *nggragas* in Data 5 and 6 illustrate undesirable and unethical eating practices in Javanese society. *Nggagak* involves

swallowing food directly without chewing, akin to drinking water, which is impolite and potentially hazardous as it can cause choking. *Nggragas*, on the other hand, reflects eating habits similar to animals, indiscriminately consuming everything. This behavior not only lacks ethical consideration but also contradicts the human intellect and elevated status emphasized in Surah Al-Israa' verse 70, highlighting the responsibilities entrusted to humans by Allah.

“Indeed, We have dignified the children of Adam, carried them on land and sea, granted them good and lawful provisions, and privileged them far above many of Our creatures”. (The Qur'an, 2004, Surah Al Isra verse 70)

The verse implies that humans, endowed with intellect, should follow a righteous path guided by the Qur'an, resisting desires and temptations. Beyond survival, humans should promote respectability and earn appreciation through dignified and ethical conduct, including proper eating etiquette (Mir Hussein Niri, 2021). *Nggragas*, seen as animalistic behavior, contradicts human selectivity and is the most reprehensible form of eating in the Javanese community, undermining its calm and gentle image. This association between terms and dysphemism is illustrated in Figure 5.

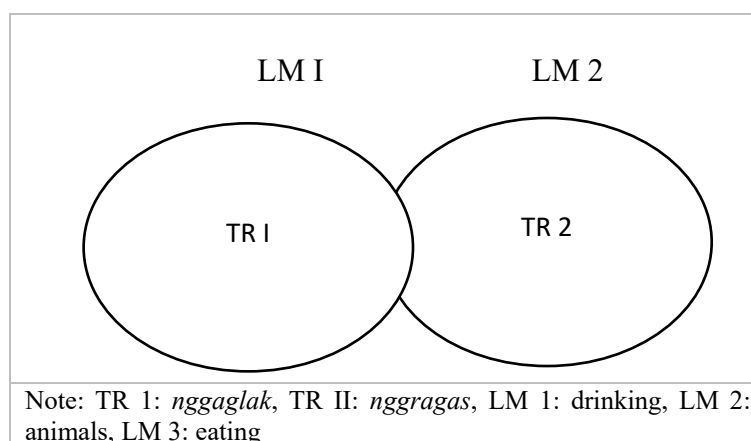


Figure 5. Merging image schema.

Figure 5 illustrates the integration of TR 1, *nggagak*, with LM 1, ‘drinking’, a convergence of distinct methods for a common purpose. Swallowing food without chewing, termed *nggagak*, parallels drinking. TR 2 represents human eating, intertwined with LM 2, animalistic eating. In Javanese society, indiscriminate eaters are likened to animals, emphasizing human reason and faith to govern desires, and upholding honorable status. LM 3 links these to eating dysphemism.

The conceptual metaphor involves *nggagak* and *nggragas* as source domains, with drinking-like eating and animalistic eating as target domains. *Nggagak* and *nggragas* are seen as highly undesirable, deviating from Javanese norms. Javanese eating, or *muluk*, uses hands to preserve food’s flavor (Rahman, 2011), avoiding utensils. Deviations occur with *nggagak* ‘swallowing without chewing’ and *nggragas* ‘greedy, indiscriminate eating’.

Dysphemism in *nggagak* and *nggragas* is rooted in the metonymy of food and *menungso*, symbolizing unethical eating behaviors. *Panganan* ‘food’ and *menungso* ‘human behavior’ function as metaphors. Through schema, conceptual metaphor, and

metonymy, *nggagak* represents improper eating without chewing, while *nggragas* represents animalistic eating, or greedy, both are seen as unethical despite human reasoning (Walton et al., 2022).

5. CONCLUSION

The study aimed to understand why individuals from a polite culture use such expressions. Dysphemism is selective and context-dependent, requiring consideration of the interlocutor. Certain expressions are reserved for specific situations and should not be directed at respected individuals. Dysphemism serves as a tool for reprimand, advice, and reflection on actions within the given context. Javanese society exhibits sensitivity to norms and ethics, using dysphemism primarily for constructive purposes.

This study explored dysphemism in Javanese eating habits, identifying eight instances of eating-related language expressions. Structural metaphors (*nggayem*, *ngemrus*, *ngrokoti*, *nguntal*, *gaglak*, and *gragas*) derive from systematic relationships, while orientational metaphors (*nyekek* and *badhog*) provide spatial orientation. Informants' perspectives enriched the cognitive process, revealing a conceptual metaphor that comprises various eating behaviors. Dysphemism in Javanese expressions related to eating is intentional, stemming from underlying causes, and performed systematically.

The study's limitation lies in its reliance on a descriptive qualitative methodology, which may not fully capture the quantitative aspects of dysphemic eating expressions in Javanese society. Future research should incorporate quantitative methods to validate and expand upon these findings, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena. Additionally, exploring the impact of these expressions across different social contexts and comparing them with other cultural expressions of eating can provide deeper insights.

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