

Javanese Campursari and Historical Entity; a Linguistic Relativity of *Joko Tingkir Ngombe Dawet*

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ABSTRACT

A Javanese *campursari* is a popular musical genre characterized by light lyrics, comedy, parody, and expressive gestures. A controversy emerged when Prabu Jaka Tingkir (also known as Mas Karebet or Sultan Hadiwijaya), a significant historical and religious figure, was used as the subject of a musical parody. This raised concerns about the distortion of cultural and historical values. Using the theory of linguistic relativity, this study explores how the language of parody frames audience interpretations of *Jaka Tingkir*'s legacy. Primary data were taken from YouTube parody videos, supported by secondary data from online news coverage. A qualitative contextual approach was applied with content analysis techniques, including coding, classification, and contextual interpretation. The findings reveal that many young viewers perceive *Jaka Tingkir* mainly as an entertaining character rather than a respected historical ancestor. For example, YouTube comments often label him as "a funny king" or "just part of a meme," reflecting limited historical awareness. Similarly, news articles framed the parody as a trending issue without deeper cultural explanation. These results indicate that popular media plays a stronger role than formal education in shaping perceptions of historical figures. The study suggests incorporating cultural-historical content into educational curricula to provide a more balanced understanding of Indonesia's heritage.

1. INTRODUCTION

The public's music tastes have changed in recent years. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, social restrictions and the closure of entertainment venues accelerated the public's shift toward online platforms. Studies have shown that YouTube usage increased significantly during this period because it provided affordable, on-demand entertainment accessible from home. Events of a live musical performance has become less popular compared to Joox, YouTube music, *Langit Musik*, and *Pandora*

The top tier music styles nowadays is pop Malay and Javanese *campursari*. These kinds of music controlled the top range of views from several music platforms in the last five years. Newcomers in Javanese pop *campursari* have been rising in popularity such as *Denny Caknan*, *Happy Asmara*, *Yeni Inka*, *Niken Salindry*, and many more. According to general observations, audiences commonly favor music that is easy to listen to, has simple and memorable lyrics, incorporates collaborative genres, and features light melodies and rhythms. Consequently, the genre of *campursari*, which has existed for decades in Javanese musical tradition, has experienced a revival of popularity, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic.

In recent years, musical parody has become a popular form of entertainment on digital platforms such as YouTube. In the Javanese context, this trend often intersects with cultural and historical elements, particularly through the genre of *campursari*. While

campursari is appreciated for its humor, code-mixing, and creative performances, problems arise when it involves respected historical and religious figures. One example is the portrayal of *Prabu Jaka Tingkir* (*Mas Karebet* or *Sultan Hadiwijaya*), who is not only remembered as a Javanese king but also regarded as an ancestor of *ulama* and religious leaders. Presenting him merely as a humorous character in parody videos raises questions about historical awareness and cultural respect. One title of the Javanese *Campursari* song is *Jaka Tingkir Ngombe Dawet*. The related song was composed by Ronald Dwi Febriansyah and Tama Halu. This popular song was primarily released on June 1st, 2022 from Sandi Records Digital YouTube channel. The lyrics are included in Appendix A for reference.

The song “*Jaka Tingkir Ngombe Dawet*” playfully portrays the historical figure of *Jaka Tingkir*, a Javanese king and ancestor of *ulama*, as if he were casually drinking *dawet*, a traditional beverage. This humorous representation blends cultural heritage with everyday imagery, creating a light and catchy parody that appeals to popular audiences. The key theme lies in the tension between humour and history, where a respected figure is simplified into an entertaining character. Through its repetitive lyrics and comedic tone, the song reflects how *campursari* as a genre mixes traditional music, parody, and cultural symbols. At the same time, it illustrates how digital media can reshape collective memory, since many young listeners perceive *Jaka Tingkir* more as a funny or ordinary character than as a figure of historical and religious importance.

The composers of the related songs featured *Jaka Tingkir* as the main character” because this clearly says that the song tells a story about *Jaka Tingkir*. According to historical records, *Jaka Tingkir*—also known as *Sultan Hadiwijaya*—was the founder of the Pajang Kingdom and an influential figure associated with Demak Regency. His legacy is closely tied to religious and cultural authority, as he is remembered both as a political leader and as an ancestor of prominent *ulama*. However, this symbolic weight becomes problematic when such a figure is reinterpreted in *campursari* parody songs, where the representation shifts from a respected historical-religious leader to a humorous character. This contrast highlights the central research problem of how symbolic figures are transformed through popular music and how such transformations influence public perception. The legend of this character is developed through oral stories. People from the *Pantura/Pantai Utara* area conceded *Jaka Tingkir/Sultan Hadiwijaya* exhaustively. A literature feature namely *Babad Jaka Tingkir* regarded as tangible evidence of *Sultan Hadiwijaya*’s dignity (Farha, 2017)(Widiyanto, Suyitno, & Supana, 2022a).

As the historical description said, *Jaka Tingkir* has a remarkable personality (Imron, 2018). Firstly, the genealogy factor. *Sultan Hadiwijaya* was a descendant of King *Brawijaya V* (Dhana & Agustapraja, 2018). Therefore, secondly, from cognitive ability. *Prabu Jaka Tingkir* was an inordinate trainee of *Sunan Kalijaga*, one of *Walisongo* clants (Siswanta, 2020). Thirdly, leadership sense of ability (Samudra & Djuniadi, 2017). *Sultan Hadiwijaya* was noted as the next successor of the *Demak Kingdom*(Faruq & Riyanto, 2024) and based on the final story, this prominent figure established a new kingdom namely *Pajang* (Alfiona & Dini, 2022).

Moreover, *Prabu Jaka Tingkir*, or *Sultan Hadiwijaya* or other names has been recognized as *Mas Karebet*, helped spread and strengthen Islam (Rokhman, Yuliana, & Zulkarnain, 2016). In the historical record, *Mas Karebet* also contributed power, finance,

and intelligence to the Islamic increase (Camila & Hudaidah, 2022). Therefore, this figure is considered as *sesepuh*/senior ulama (Islamic spreaders) in Pantura, a north coast area in the Java Sea included in Demak Regency, Rembang, Kudus, and Jepara (Pramutomo, Slamet MD, & Mulyadi, 2018). Under *Prabu Jaka Tingkir*'s authority, Islam religion in Java Island was shaped broader and broader. Consequently, people in Java Island considered Mas Karebet as a charismatic legend in the Islamic Javanese story.

In this research, a qualitative pragmatic approach is applied to analyze how assertive speech acts and symbolic representations appear in YouTube parody videos about *Prabu Jaka Tingkir*. The data were collected from selected monologues and comments in the videos, supported by online news articles as secondary sources. Using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, the data are coded, categorized, and interpreted to identify patterns of meaning, especially how language and parody construct the image of *Jaka Tingkir*. Content analysis is employed to connect linguistic features (choice of words, metaphors, and humour) with their social and cultural implications.

Two recent studies are relevant to this research. Agus Widiyanto, et.al. would hold the first study, entitled *Heroic Values in Jaka Tingkir folklore from Javanese Culture*. As the historical description said, *Jaka Tingkir* has a remarkable personality (Widiyanto, Suyitno, & Supana, 2022b). This study was a narrative study by embracing a qualitative approach. This research was an observational investigation of indigenous people around the *Prabu Jaka Tingkir* site. According to historical data, *Prabu Jaka Tingkir / Mas Karebet/Sultan Hadiwijaya* is recognized as the founder of the Pajang Kingdom. The chosen place was in Butuh Village, Gedongan Village, and Pupuh Village. Those villages were in Sragen Regency, Central Java. Previous researchers regarded the four oldest people categorized as Indigenous people or historical figures. The range of informants was from 41 years to 87 years. Primary data sources were from interviews with those purposive informants. Widiyanto, et.al. investigated the folklore and heroic values of *Prabu Jaka Tingkir*. The triangulation technique was engaged to link the hypothesis and data source. The result are as follows. *Prabu Jaka Tingkir* has served four components of hero values; a) discipline, and courage, c) responsibility, and d) good leadership.

Secondly, Wulan Gurito conducted a study entitled *Nilai Nilai Keislaman Cerita Joko Tingkir sebagai Materi Ajar Keterampilan Membaca Pada Mahasiswa Bahasa Indonesia Bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA) Tingkat Lanjut di Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Mas Said Surakarta*. This study was a literature study by embracing some documents as a source of data. The purpose of this study was to know, explore, and adopt the moral values of *Prabu Joko Tingkir* as teaching material in the program of Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA). As a component of the curriculum of BIPA, local culture was one of the primary ingredients in delivering material for Tanah Air Indonesia.

In conformity with this previous study, there is a novelty in writing the current study. Nonetheless, in another aspect, the historical symbol of *Prabu Jaka Tingkir* has been adopted as figural art in Javanese *campursari*. Therefore, there were some strict protests from several public elements, such as religious figures.

This article examines the social controversy surrounding *Jaka Tingkir Ngombe Dawet* and its relation to the historical figure *Sultan Hadiwijaya*, also known as *Prabu Jaka Tingkir*.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Based on those previous studies above, the term researcher planned to conduct an study. Specifically, it applies the theory of linguistic relativity by Edward Sapir. According to Sapir, language is connected to three elements: culture, society, and cognition (Silalahi, 2011).

This study examine how language, in this case as the arrangement of lexemes in the art products (song lyrics), shape the public reactions. The Sapir-Whorf *Hyphotesis* concluded that the style people conquer the world will have been decided by the language people use. This study aims to reveal a constructional analysis of anthropolinguistics between historical entities and linguistic phenomena.

Furthermore, this study engaged a qualitative approach. This method was appropriate for identifying anthropolinguistic study. A qualitative method was necessary because this study explores the relationship between linguistic products (song lyrics) and public responses. This study provides a detailed analysis of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs (Zahiroh, Setyono, & Sukmaantara, 2024)(Burns & García, 2018)(Alqurashi, 2024). In addition, this study applies a contextual approach, as external factors are central to the research focus (Vivi, 2021)(Anam & Hidayat, 2020). The contextual focus of this study includes the historical background and social impact of the figure of *Jaka Tingkir* as presented in the song. Unlike the formalist approach, the contextual approach considers external factors such as cultural background, social identity, traditional customs, and geographical settings (Fitriana & Putra, 2022)(Nasution et al., 2025).

In this anthropological determination, there were two data sources: primary data and secondary data. All data were collected from YouTube channels. Therefore, this study falls under the category of documentary research. The term focused on content, substance, and public response for announcing related videos (Kurniawan, Bunau, & Wardah, 2021)(Nst, Daulay, & Dewi, 2023).

Primary data from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ihrh6pXr9CM> were obtained from the Sandi Records YouTube Channel, which originally published the song *Joko Tingkir Ngombe Dawet* (Simanjuntak, Silalahi, Sihombing, & Purba, 2021)(Anggraini, 2021). Secondary data from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oKXTh4OPdpl> (Gus Muwafiq Channel) which is included public reactions from prominent religious figures such as Gus Muwafiq (Yogyakarta), K.H. Anwar Zahid (Bojonegoro), and Mas Ulin Nuha (Cilacap), gathered from multiple YouTube videos. Additionally, a video of public clarification and apology by the songwriter (Tama Halu) was also included this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhWRntbYvAk>. This platform entitled *Dianggap Lecehkan Ulama, Pencipta Lagu Joko Tingkir Minta Maaf*.

These data sources were analyzed using an anthropolinguistic framework, focusing on language, language users, and worldview. The study aims to draw conclusions based on the interplay between these elements. This study adopted content analysis principles based on Krippendorff's model. The data analysis involved three stages: sampling selection, coding, and contextual interpretation. Sampling selection was to decide the classification of analysis. The coding step was to fit data collection into a specific status for analysis and the last one will be a contextual explanation(Bijker, Merkouris, Dowling, & Rodda, 2024). In this final step, the researcher interprets how the

song reflects and contributes to the broader social controversy surrounding *Jaka Tingkir Ngombe Dawet*.

3. RESULTS

In this chapter, the term will draw systematically data discussion of Jaka Tingkir Ngombe Dawet. First is language product. The song Jaka Tingkir Ngombe Dawet exists in two different versions. Tama Halu composed the original version of the song. The complete lyrics are provided in the appendix of this article. A denotative analysis of the lyrics reveals that the song conveys relatively superficial or everyday themes.

Second was language user. Several weeks after the song's release, it drew various public reactions. The first reaction was from Gus Muwafiq, a popular religious spreader from Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta. The short monologue from the YouTube channel Gus Muwafiq Channel by attaching transcription in the minute 27:07 as below.

"Sultan Hadiwijaya utowo Joko Tingkir sing ngedunke ulama ulama Jowo mulo juengkel ono Joko Tingkir Ngombe Dawet sopo tho iki sing ngarang ngawur goleki ndang dituturi kuwi sing ngarang iki dudu jeneng sembarangan kuwi dadi Joko Tingkir iku Sultan Hadiwijoyo ramanipun Pangeran Benowo, menantu Sultan Trenggono, muridipun Njeng Sunan Kalijaga Ulama gede, ojo ngerti ngerti ono bocah Joko Tingkir Ngombe Dawet Jo dipikir marai mumet iki sopo kurang gawean iki bocah gek lagu sing digawe lagune sholatullah salamullah ala toha rosulillah shalatullah salamullah ala yasin habibillah ala yasin habibillah kok iso dadi Joko Tingkir Ngombe Dawet kabar kabar sopo sing ngarang kapan kapan sampeyan parani dielingno ojo kang ngawur wae kanjeng joko tingkir ulama ojo ngono ah ngarang wae dipikir joko tingkir iku nama bebas ngawur buktine sampek saiki ora ono bocah jenenge joko tingkir"

The researcher added the English version transcription as follow

Sultan Hadiwijaya or Jaka Tingkir has been a descendant of many Islamic spreaders in Java Island so I was cranky about that. Who is the composer of *Joko Tingkir Ngombe Dawet*? I was so bungling. *Jaka Tingkir* is not an ordinary name. He was *Pangeran Benowo*'s father and Sultan Trenggono's son-in-law. He was student of Kanjeng Sunan Kalijaga. He/*Jaka Tingkir* was great ulama. It is so ridiculous when there is *Joko Tingkir Ngombe Dawet Jo Dipikir Marai Mumet* (in a melodic monologue). Who is the composer? The composer was so lack of creativity. Even the melody was a sholawat (a melody for praising Prophet Muhammad) sholatullah salamullah. Why there was, a person could compose *Joko Tingkir Ngombe Dawet*. Please inform me. Who would be the composer of that song, please remind him that *Joko Tingkir* was not an ordinary person. There is evidence that until nowadays, there is no one who had the name of *Joko Tingkir*.

The second public reaction came from K.H. Anwar Zahid, a religious priest from Bojonegoro Regency, East Java Province addressing these monologues.

"Urung tau krungu JokoTingkir Ngombe Dawet iki aku gak seneng blas iki lha iku termasuk maaf maaf maaf Jaka Tingkir iku Sultan Hadiwijaya iku jalur e kyai kyai sak Indonesia lho kok digawe parodi model ngono iku gak seneng blas gantien kate tak labrak wonge iku liyane po o ojo gawe jeneng Joko Tingkir liyane wak sukir opo yok opo wak pak sopir koyok opo pelecehan iku ganti ojo Joko Tingkir Joko Tingkir iku waliyullah ulama datuke kyai kyai sak Indonesia banyak kyai kyai yang jalur nasabnya tekan jaka

tingkir Mas karebet sultan hadiwijaya raja islam pertama di Demak eh di di di Pulau Jawa tepatnya di kerajaan Demak Bintoro lho kok digawe pelecehan model ngono."

The researcher added the English version transcription as follow
I had never heard before that *Joko Tingkir Ngombe Dawet*. I did not appreciate it anymore. I am so sorry to hear that song. *Jaka Tingkir* or *Sultan Hadiwijaya* was the descendant of ulama/Islamic priests in Indonesia. How this figure have been symbolized as parody. I will scold him. Please look for another name or figure. That is social abuse. *Jaka Tingkir* was waliyullah/ Great Figure/ Messenger of God. He was the datuk/grandfather of ulama in Indonesia. Please look for another name, *Wak Sukir* or *Wak Sopir* or other names. Many great ulama have been descendants of the *Mas Karebet* or *Sultan Hadiwijaya*, the primary king in the Demak Bintoro Kingdom eh on Java Island. That is no longer proper anymore. I am cranky. It is better to use my name as a parody.

The third reaction has come from Mas Ulin Nuha, an ulama/religious spreader from *Cilacap Regency*, by producing monologues as follows.

"Wong jowo sithik sithik ojo ilang jawane bukti hari ini wong jawa ilang jawane bukti otentik nganti ana Joko tingkir ngombe dawet itu salah satu bukti wong jawa ilang jawane saya kan ditanya mas ulin pendapat jenengan tidak ada masalah tidak ada penghinaan mboten wonten kenapa masalahnya joko tingkir nama tokoh dawet ya minuman halal apa salahnya dawet ya digawe wong Banjarnegara ... ora ana masalah, masalahny bukan pada dawetnya mbak dawet makanan halal minuman halal cendol dawet halal enak bergizi murah enak apa salahnya Joko Tingkir Ngombe Dawet dalam kalimat tidak ada masalah, masalahnya adalah ketika nama tokoh nggo dolanan nama tokoh disandingkan dengan hiasan nama tokoh disandingkan dengan lagu hiburan, "

The researcher added the English version transcription as follow
Javanese people please, do not leave your identity anymore. There was authentic evidence for losing identity (as Javanese people); *Joko Tingkir Ngombe Dawet*. I was asked for this social polemic. I responded that there was no problem. *Joko Tingkir* is the name of a figure. *Dawet* is a culinary symbol from Banjarnegara; it is a delicious beverage. The problem was when the prestigious name of the figure was shaped on a parody. Whereas, the original song of lyric arrangement that *Joko Tingkir Wali Jawa / Jaka Tingkir* a Great Messenger of God in Javanese Island. He was a pupil/follower of *Kanjeng Sunan Kalijaga /* one of nine Islamic popular spreaders on Javanese Island.

Following those public reactions, the current researcher could conclude that there was a negative stigma in using the name *Jaka Tingkir* in that song lyric. Both Gus Muwafiq and K.H. Anwar Zahid stated that they were so bungling. The religious figures emphasized that *Jaka Tingkir* holds a significant historical and spiritual status in Javanese culture. Three major qualities associated with *Jaka Tingkir* are his profound knowledge, strong leadership, and his role as a respected ancestor of many Islamic scholars in Java.

Besides that, Mas Ulin Nuha explained that the improper aspect of this song was the use of the symbol of *Joko Tingkir*, as great ulama. It means that the use of *Joko Tingkir*, as a parodic song was very impolite. This phenomenon was evidence of losing identity as Javanese Island people. In other notions, Mas Ulin Nuha concluded that nowadays generations could not recognize several great names/figures in historical identity. This point was the language users' reaction.

The last concept of analysis was worldview. The unwanted responses from public society caused a clarification from the original composer; Tama Halu. A detailed transcription will be explained below.

Assalamualaikumwarrohmatullahhiwabarokatuh di video kali ini dan di kesempatan kali ini iijinkan saya untuk meminta maaf yang sebesar besarnya kepada masyarakat lamongan dan pihak pihak yang tersinggung atau kurang berkenan karena kalau saya membuat lirik menggunakan nama joko tingkir saya mohon maaf yang sebesar besarnya karena kurang ketidaktahuan saya ketidakpahaman saya di balik nama joko tingkir ini adalah sosok seorang ulama besar dan dihormati di jawa saya mohon maaf tidak ada niatan saya untuk melecehkan nama beliau saya akui karena saya tidak tahu dan saya kurang paham

Based on those, on this occasion, I would like to say my forgiveness to the Lamongan people and all people who are bungling as the song of Joko Tingkir Ngombe Dawet. I would like to forgive for my mistake and lack of knowledge. I do not recognize the great name of Joko Tingkir. I did not know that Joko Tingkir was great ulama on Javanese Island who was being respectful. I do not have the intention to blame Joko Tingkir's great name. I am not aware of that figure. I forgive this mistake. I have changed the lyrics on my YouTube channel. Last, I would like to say I forgive you all that I am not polite at all. I also want to forgive if my forgiveness now was improper.

Following those statements, the composer directly informed that he was lack of historical knowledge related to the symbol of Prabu Jaka Tingkir. Tama Halu, as the primary composer does not intend to release blame and abuse for the name of Mas Karebet. Based on the composer's statement, the use of Jaka Tingkir is only for taking the phonemic feature in shaping a poem. A related song composer was not aware of the name of Kyai's ancestor on the Javanese island/Prabu Jaka Tingkir. Nevertheless, the real fact was there is blame and abuse for a historical entity namely Prabu Jaka Tingkir/Sultan Hadiwijaya. The reason was, based on Mas Ulin Nuha (an Islamic spreader from Cilacap Regency, Central Java Province), there was no problem with denotative meaning in the song lyric of Jaka Tingkir Ngombe Dawet. The symbol of culinary dawet was a good and edible beverage. Nevertheless, the use of the name of this figure in music parody, even the music of dangdut campursari was identical with specific body gestures / goyangan. Therefore, it regarded as abuse and blame.

The overall findings indicate that the symbolic use of Prabu Jaka Tingkir in campursari parody songs reflects a shift in meaning from a respected historical and religious leader to a humorous entertainment figure. This symbolic transformation shows how popular culture, especially through digital media such as YouTube and online news, reshapes the public's perception of cultural and historical icons. At the same time, it highlights the gap between historical knowledge and contemporary reinterpretation among the younger generation. Addressing this gap is essential for understanding the broader implications of symbolic use in music and its influence on cultural memory.

4. CONCLUSION

After reviewing the data discussion, this study draws several key conclusions. First, the figure of Jaka Tingkir which is symbolically represented in the song of *Joko*

Tingkir Ngombe Dawet that is historically known by multiple names: *Sultan Hadiwijaya*, *Mas Karebet*, and the son-in-law of *Sultan Trenggono*. Rather than functioning merely as a personal name, “*Jaka Tingkir*” operates as a cultural and linguistic symbol that reflects Javanese ways of encoding status and lineage. Second, the findings suggest that many members of the younger generation are no longer familiar with the historical identity and layered meanings embedded in this name, illustrating how shifts in language use. Furthermore, the collective memory influence cultural continuity occurs.

Author's Contribution

The author conceptualized the whole ideas, formulized the grand design of research, and the last one would be finished the project. The only author, Kharisma Puspita Sari, only had covered this journal.

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