Erotical Riddles in Javanese and Indonesian

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Abstract
This article is about erotical riddles found in Javanese and Indonesian. By using data collected and formulated through an introspective method, it is found that the addressers commonly construct erotic riddles in odd interrogative sentence types intended to deceive and mislead the addressees. The riddled topics are mostly about human genital and everything related to it, woman’s breasts, and sexual activity. The humorous riddle discourses are created by various riddling techniques, such as analogy and metaphor, homonymy, sound change, word and syllabic permutation, and metonymy. Javanese and Indonesian erotic riddle discourses often contain code-mixing of the two codes mastered almost equally well by the bilingual interlocutors living in bilingual and diglossic speech communities.

Keywords: riddle; erotic; discourse

Kata Kunci: Teka-teki; erotis; wacana

1 Introduction
Language play is enjoyed by most language speakers even though with different gradience. There are speakers who are extremely fond of punning, and there are ones who are just average or mild to like this activity (Crystal, 1998, 1; Wijana, 2003, 1). Mainly, play on words will be found in all speech communities. This fact is essentially a direct consequence of human destiny as homo luden in a line of other kinds of “homo” labeled to them, such as homo symbolicum, homo faber, homo loquen, homo sapien etc. Accordingly, various kinds of humorous discourse genres is not surprising. Riddle is one kind of discourse that belongs to this genre. Riddling activities are also pervasive in all communities that cause the emergence of various kinds of riddle in terms of structure, theme, punning technique, etc. among the society members. This paper will focus on one type of riddle that exists in the use of Indonesian and Javanese, i.e., erotic riddles. Those are riddles used among adult Javanese community members who automatically have fluent and sufficient mastery in Indonesian, their national and official language. They are called “erotic riddles” because their themes or contents are...
mainly about sexual matters related to activities and human body organs related to them. For more clearly, consider erotic riddles (1) and (2) below:

**Riddle 1**

Question:
Apa bedane wong wedok karo pit?
What difference the human female with bicycle
What is the difference between a woman and a bicycle?

Answer:
Nek pit, dipompa dhisik lagi ditumpaki
if bicycle to be pumped first then to be ridden
The bicycle is pumped first and then it is ridden
Nek wong wedok, ditumpaki disik lagi dipompa
if human female, to be ridden first then to be pumped
The woman is ridden first, and then she is pumped.

**Riddle 2**

Question:
Apa bedane soto karo Siti?
what difference the soto (chicken/beef soup) and Siti
what is the difference between Soto and Siti?

Answer:
Nek Soto mine putih
If Soto (chicken/beef soup), the noodle is white
Soto has white noodle
Siti mine ireng
Siti the noodle black
Siti has black noodle

From these two examples, it seems that several problems that can be questioned concerning Indonesian and Javanese erotic riddles. The first is the types of sentences commonly used to ask riddle questions. Are they always concerned about the differences between two extremely different entities or are there other types of questions. Second, what are the topics that dominate the erotic riddles found in Indonesian and Javanese? If they are mostly concerned about human body parts, which body parts mostly do the questioners use as the targets of riddling activities? Third, both riddle (1) and (2) consist of riddling techniques, a woman is analogously compared with a bicycle, woman public hairs are compared with noodle, pumping and riding bycicle is compared with sexual activity movement, the word Soto 'chicken/beef soup' is compared with Siti 'personal name' which has the only slight phonological difference. These phenomena arise the third question, which can be formulated, what are riddling techniques commonly exploited by the riddlers in creating their erotic riddles. So far, these problems have not been extensively explored by the scholars who have carried out research on riddles in Indonesian or local languages in Indonesia.

The rareness of studies on humorous issues seems rooted in the vehement insights about the importance of roles might be played by humorous discourses, to which riddles belong, in enhancing the quality of human life. In fact, a lot of puns can release human beings from various tensions they come across during their lifetime. Consider the following quotation cited from Cook (2000, 81):

*In the contemporary science-dominated world punning is kept at arm's length; people frequently apologize for punning (by saying no pun intended) and the ritual response is a groan, even when*
All of these matters are regarded as unfair because other kinds of wordplay full of semantic incongruities, such as rhyme, alliteration, metaphor, and irony, are highly respected in literary works. In literary criticism, punning is largely neglected. The literary critics did not realize that the works of Shakespeare are full of punning which are intended either for comic or tragic purposes. In Indonesian literary works, this phenomenon can easily be found in the famous Sutardji's Poem entitled Tragedi Winka & Sihka (The tragedy of Winka & Sihka), in which two semantically related Indonesian words kawin 'get married' and kasih 'love' played through syllabic permutation and typography. Sutardji's Poems are considered to bring many innovations in Indonesian poetry writing (Pradopo, 2012, 111). The same phenomena are also found in Indonesian local traditional plays such as Sam Pek Eng Tai in Bali and Arya Penangsang in Java. The skeptical attitude also comes from philosophers. Aristotle regards punning as a treat to philosophy (Ulmer, 1988). These trivial insights towards play on words may also cause indolence of scholars in Indonesia to conduct research on wordplays including riddles.

In fact, as reported by Stokhof (1981), a lot of riddle materials have been available in various languages, such as Bengkulu, Lampung, Basemah, Acehnese, Batak, Nias, Dayak, Toraja, Madura, Sundanese, Tabaru, Alfuru, Javanese, etc. As far as riddle studies in Indonesia are concerned, several types of research related to them have done by a few scholars. Wijana (2014b) has written a book entitled Wacana Teka-Teki regarding Indonesian modern riddle discourse structures, punnings, communicative functions, and themes. Meanwhile, in Wijana (2022), he investigates how internal aspects of language are juxtaposed or confused with the external ones, which are widely known as referents. Wijana (2019) and Wijana (2014a) conducted researches on various kinds and language plays of riddles found in Javanese and Balinese. Stokhof (1981) has done intensive studies on various aspects of 100 Woisika riddles. As explicitly stated by the title this paper will deal with Indonesian and Javanese erotic riddles with focus of attention on three issues have been mentioned above.

Several societies, in the past time and probably are still remaining recently, have special occasions in conducting riddling activities. As Stokhof (1981) has reported that riddling activities in Woisika community are commonly prescribed in certain occasions such as: during the night vigils over the dead before burial in East Toraja of the Bola'ang Mangondo, or during the period that the grains come out in Western Toraja. However, with regard to Javanese and Indonesian erotic riddles, it seems there is no tight restriction concerning the riddling time or whom the riddles should be played with, except they must be played in appropriate time and with proper interlocutors. Usually, this kind of riddle is uttered among and enjoyed by adult males in informal, relaxed, and happy circumstances. From pragmatic view point every riddle consists of two parts, i.e. question and answer. Unlike ordinary questions that serve information seeking, riddle questions are exploited to test the addressee's knowledge in witty and funny ways. Like any other humorous discourses, riddle including the erotic one is yielded from a non-bonafide process of communication (Raskin, 1984, 102-103) in which Grice's cooperative principles that in ordinary speech are tightly obeyed, are massively flouted. Compare the 4 maxims outlined by Grice for ordinary conversations and the way of speaking for eliciting laughter commonly exploited in creating jocular discourses below:

**Ordinary Discourse > Bonafide Communication**
- Maxim of quantity: Give exactly as much information as required
- Maxim of quality: Say only what you believe to be true
- Maxim of relation: Be relevant
- Maxim of manner: Be succinct (see Grice, 1975, 45-47)
**Humorous Discourse > Non-bonafide communication**

Maxim of Quality: Give exactly as much information as is necessary for the joke
Maxim of quality: Say only what is compatible with the world of the joke
Maxim Relation: Say only what is relevant of the joke
Maxim of manner: Tell the joke efficiently

As products of a non-bonafide process of communication, most kinds of humorous discourse, including riddles, will be full of various kinds of linguistic violations which considerably different from what are commonly found in the ordinary ones. By this theoretical approach, this paper seeks to find out the characteristics of language use exploited by the creators of Javanese and Indonesian erotic riddles.

2 **Method**

Unlike non-erotic riddles which are much easier to find, erotic riddles are tough to collect. Javanese lesson books, restricted by moral and ethical conduct, contain no erotic riddles. Accordingly, nearly all data presented in this paper are obtained through introspective gathering method. Accordingly, those data are mostly my own collection that I formulated my self in such a way to be as similar as possible with the riddles uttered by their native speakers. Those data are further classified according to their types of sentences or question formulas, topics, and various kinds of linguistic elements used as the source of riddle creation.

3 **Results and Discussion**

The following are my research findings concerning three interelated issues: sentence types, topics, and riddling techniques or play on words of Javanese and Indonesian erotic riddles.

3.1 **Sentence Type**

Structurally, all riddles are constructed by two elements, i.e., question and answer. Question constitutes the riddle problem, and the answer is its solution. The first part is given by the utterer, and because of the deceiving question, the second part is mostly also the utterer’s response since the addressee commonly cannot give the right answer intended by the addressee. All of the riddle problems are questioned by odd interrogative sentences in which the addressee wishes to know the differences of two entities that are clearly and considerably very different. For example, it is certainly a lot of differences can be stated between bakul jamu 'herbal medicine trader' and pegawai PU 'public work workers', godong kathes 'papaya leaf' and wong wedok 'woman', gajah 'elephant' and wong lanang 'man', etc. But, the addressers do not need the serious and the right answers relating the differences of those clearly different entities. What he needs is irrelevant and not serious answers for achieving effective jokings of erotic matters. Consider (3), (4), and (5) below:

**Riddle 3**

Question:
Apa bedane bakul jamu karo pegawai PU (pekerjaan Umum)?
What difference between herbal medicine trader and public work worker?

Answer:
Nek pegawai PU gaweane ngambakake dalan.
Public worker’s work is to widen the road
Bakul jamu nyilikke dalan

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The herbal medicine traders work for narrowing the road

Riddle 4
Question
Apa bedane godhong kates karo wong wedok?
What difference the leaf papaya and person female
What is the difference between papaya leaf and a woman?

Answer:
Godhong kates isa ngempukke daging.
leaf papaya can soften meat
Papaya leaf can be used to soften meat
Wong wedok isa ngathoske daging.
person female can harden meat
A woman can be used to harden the meat

Riddle 5
Question:
Apa bedane gajah karo wong lanang
What difference the elephant and person male
What is the difference between an elephant and a man

Answer:
Gadjah, ndhase ana tlalene
elephant, head there is trunk the
With regard to elephant, the head has a trunk
wong lanang, tlalene ana ndhase
person male, trunk the there head the
With regard to a man, the trunk has head

Riddle (3) deals with woman genital perceived as road constructed by public workers. Because in Javanese it is often said dalan bayi 'the way of baby'. Riddle (4) does with man genital which is compared with daging 'meat' that can be soften when it is boiled in hot water and godong kates 'papaya leaf', and with a woman that can stimulate a male sexual desire and to harden his penis associatively resembled with the meat. In (5) about a man penis which is compared with elephant head and its trunk. The other type of sentence riddle is causative introgative using ngapa 'why', such as shown by riddle (6) below in which the urinate channel is compared with a tooth paste tube. This condition will cause a predestined male to be unable to have a baby.

Riddle 6
Question
Ngapa wong lanang ora isa nduwe anak
Why person male not can have child
Why a man can not have a baby

Answer:
Nek nduwe anak rupane koyok odhol
If have child face the like tooth paste
If he can, the child would be like tooth paste
3.2 Topics

Erotic riddles of Javanese and Indonesian are mainly dominated by 3 interrelated topics female or male genital and everything associated with it, woman breasts, and sexual activity. Several things associated with human genitals are woman public hair, testicle, male genital weight, and shape and characteristics. Discourse (7) deals with a woman genital, (8) with male genital, and (9) with woman’s breast, and (10) with testical.

**Riddle 7**

**Question:**
Apa bedane wong lanang karo wong wedok?
What different between a man and a woman
What is the difference between a man and a woman?

**Answer:**
Wong wedok uyuhe ora isa diwadhahi gendul
person female urine the not can put in container bottle
A woman's urine can not be put in a bottle.

**Riddle 8**

**Question:**
Apa bedane tumbake Den Behi nek awan karo bengi?
What difference spear the Den Behi if noon and night
What is the difference between Den Behi’s spears in the day time and night?

**Answer:**
Nek awan pancen tumbak, nek bengi dadi Mbak Tum
If day time really spear, if night become Mbak Tum
In day time it is really spear, but in night it becomes Mbak Tum

**Riddle 9**

**Question:**
Apa bedane susu bendera karo susu cap nona
What difference milk flag with milk brand nona (virgin)
What is the difference between bendera (brand) milk and nona brand milk?

**Answer:**
Susu bendera kental manis
Milk flag thick and sweet
Milk flag is thick and sweet
Susu cap nona kenthal kenthul
milk brand nona always bounced
Nona brand milk is always bounced.

**Riddle 10**

**Question:**
Apa bedanya wanita dan laki-laki setelah berenang di laut selama 2 jam?
What difference the woman and man after swimming in sea for 2 hours
What is the difference between man and woman after having swum for two hours?
Answer:
Woman the not bring what-what man the bring egg salty
The woman brings nothing, but the man does salty egg.

Meanwhile, sexual intercourse topic is shown by riddle (1) above which compares the erotic sexual activity with bicycle pumping.

3.3 Riddling Techniques

To create erotic riddles, Javanese speakers who are also fluent in Indonesian exploit various techniques in many occasions done by wittily mixing the two linguistic codes that they master almost equally well. They can effectively exploited them to construct various genres of jocular discourse. In riddle (11) below, they intentionally confuse the use of polite form of Javanese word tiyang 'person' and Indonesian word tiang 'post'. Meanwhile, in riddle (9) above, the use of Indonesian adjective kental 'thick' is combined with kenthal as part of Javanese sound modification reduplication proses kenthal-kenthal 'always bounced'.

Riddle 11
Question: Apa bedane tiyang lanang karo tiyang listrik?
What difference the person male with post electricity
What is the difference between a male and electric post?

Answer:
Tiyang listrik isa madhangi.
Post electricity can illuminate
Electric post can illuminate (something)
Tiyang lanang can methengi (something)
Person male can methengi (a woman)

After carefully observing the data collection, it is found that several tehniques commonly used to create erotic riddles in Javanese and Indonesian. Those techniques from the most common technique to the least common one are analogy and metaphor, homonymy, sound change, word and syllabic permutation, and metonymy. The following subsections will consecutively describe these riddling techniques.

3.3.1 Analogy and Metaphor

The analogy seems to be the most common way the addressers exploit in creating erotic riddles. By this technique, the riddle topics are analogously perceived as other things to which they share certain similarities. For examples riddle (12), (13), and (14) below:

Riddle 12
Question: Apa bedane tumbake Den Behi nek awan karo bengi?
What difference spear the Den Behi if noon and night
What is the difference between Den Behi's spears in the the day time and night?

Answer:
Nek awan pancen tumbak, nek bengi dadi Mbak Tum
If day time really spear, if night become Mbak Tum
In day time it is really spear, but in night it becomes Mbak Tum

**Riddle 13**

Question:
Apa bedane asi (air susu ibu) karo susu kaleng
What difference mother milk with milk can
What is the difference between mother milk and can milk?

Answer
Nek susu kaleng, susune kanggo bapake kalenge dinggo anake
if milk can, milk the for father the can the for the child
For the can milk, the milk is for the father, the can is for the child
Nek susu ibu, susune dinggo anake, wadhahe dinggo babake
If milk mother milk the for the child container for father the
For the mother milk, the milk is for the child, the container is for the father

**Riddle 14**

Apa bedanya kain sarung dengan kurungan
What difference the cloth and bird cage
What is the difference between sarong and bird cage
Kurungan dibuka burungnya terbang
The cage is open bird the flies
If the cage is opened the bird would fly

Sarungnya dibuka burungnya nggandhul
Sarong the is opened bird the hanging
If the sarung is opened the bird would be hanging

In riddle (12) by the speaker's cognitive knowledge, the male penis is analogously compared with a spear, a long-pointed weapon commonly brought by the kingdom troops. In riddle (13) the woman's breast has resembled with a milk can, and it is also resembled with the child toy their father fond to play. In (14) the male genital and the testicle is conceived similarly to a bird. It is relatively more common for a male penis analogously compared with a bird. However, it is less common this male's vital organ to resembled with spear and other things, such as tooth paste tube (see riddle 6) unless for rising comic effect. The first phenomenon is called dead metaphor, while the second is called alive metaphor or “double etendre” (Tiersma, 1985, 35-36; Wijana, 1995, 173). The other example of metaphor exploitation can be seen in riddle (15) in which woman genital is resembled with heaven and the bird is the male genital below:

**Riddle 15**

Question:
Apa perbedaan wanita dengan burung cenderawasih?
What difference woman with bird name
What is the difference between woman and bird of paradise?

Answer:
Kalau burung cendera wasih burung sorga
If bird name bird heaven
Cenderawasih is bird of paradise
Wanita adalah sorga burung
Woman is heaven bird
Woman is paradise of bird

The analogy can be pragmatic in character because it needs extralinguistic knowledges to comprehend, such as nowledge about how male people urinate and what they are different from horse, see riddle (16) below:

**Riddle 16**
Question:
Mana yang lebih berat, kemaluan manusia atau kuda?
Which that more heavy, penis human or horse
Which one is heavier, human penis or horse penis?

Answer:
Kemaluan manusia, karena manusia harus mengangkatnya dengan tangan waktu kencing.
Penis human. because human beings must lift it with hand when urinated
Human penis, because human beings must use their hand to lift it when they urinated

3.3.2 Homonymy

Homonymic clashes is very common found in joking activities. The pairs are created in many ways. Sometimes the pairs are not exactly identical but only in part, and it is not rare the combined pairs are taken from lexical items of other languages. In a bilingual and stable diglossic community like Indonesia these phenomena massively occur. The exploitation of kental manis 'thick/strong and sweet' and kenthal kenthul 'always bounced' in (9), and tiyang 'person' and tiang 'post' in (10) are examples of homonymic clashes.

3.3.3 Sound Change

Sounds as phonemic entities in any language are used to distinct the meaning of linguistic units in lexical or word level (Verhaar, 1996, 67-68). So, the word soto 'chiken/beef soup' can be differentiated with Siti 'typical personal name of woman in Indonesia'. This phenomenon together with analogical technique that resembles mi 'noodle' and 'woman public hair' is effectively used to create riddle (2) above.

3.3.4 Word and Syllabic Permutation

Permutation of whether involving words or syllables which form words is also important technique to exploit by riddle creators. The permutation of burung sorga 'bird of paradise' and sorga burung 'the heaven of bird' and its potentials to metaphorically refer male genital in riddle (14), ndhase ana talene 'the head has trunk' into tlalene ana ndhase 'the trunk has head' together with its metaphorical potentials in riddle (5) are examples for this technique. Meanwhile, the changes tumbak 'spear' becoming vocative Mbak Tum 'Older sister Tum' is an example of syllabic permutation.

3.3.5 Metonymy

Finally the possibility the word susu 'milk' in susu cap nona 'virgin brand milk' and susu bendera 'frisian flag milk' together with its catchy phrase kental manis 'thick and sweet' to be associatively related to young woman breast with its charasteristics to be kenthal-kenthul 'always bounced' is essentially an metonimic exploitation. See riddle (9) above and (16) below in which lontong 'long steamed rice' is associated with male genital if it is wrapped in banana leaf.
Riddle 16
Question:
Mengapa koteka dibuat dari labu panjang
Why penis sheath is made from pumpkin long
Why penis sheath of Irian is made of long pimkin?

Answer:
Karena kalau dibuat dari daun pisang, nanti dikira lontong
Because if made from leaf banana, later would think it lontong (long steamed rice)
Because if it is made of banana leaf, people would think it lontong

In any metonymic process the semantic relation is made possible by various kinds of neighboring association (Riemer, 2010, 249).

4 Conclusion

From a pragmatic viewpoint, it can be outlined that ordinary questions are fundamentally different from riddle questions. Ordinary questions are generally intended to seek information, while riddle questions are done for testing and misleading the addressees in humorous ways. As such, with regard to erotic riddles, the use of language for conducting riddling activities has several specific characteristics. The type of riddle questions are considered very odd because they question the differences of two extremely different matters. Most erotic riddle themes concerns with human genital and everything related to them, such as public hair, testicle, urine channel, shape and weight, etc., breast, and sexual activity. The humorous questions and its solutions are full of language plays created through various techniques, such as analogy and metaphor, homonymy, sound change, word and syllabic permutation, and metonymy. The play on words are often carried out by mixing Indonesian and Javanese as a direct consequence of multilingual and diglossic speech situations. The riddle interlocutors master both Javanese and Indonesian almost equally.

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