

Veridicality mismatches in Javanese

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In this talk I discuss a violation of the Spector & Egré’s generalization about the correlation between veridicality in declarative and interrogative embeddings, (1).

(1) Spector & Egre (2015)’s Generalization:

A responsive predicate is veridical with respect to its interrogative complement (like *know* + question = knowing the true answer to the question) if and only if it is veridical with respect to its declarative complements as well (*know* + declarative entails – in fact presupposes – that the declarative is true).

(Spector & Egre 2015: 1732)

The counterexample to the generalization comes from Javanese: the verbs ‘know’ (*ngêrti*) and ‘remember’ (*kelingan*) in this language are veridical with respect to question embedding, (3), but, suprisingly, are not veridical with respect to the declarative embedding, (2).

(2) $x \text{ Vs } p \nrightarrow p$

aku ora ngêrti nek djoko nggambar gunung apa ora,
I NEG know C Djoko draw mountain or not
ning parto **ngêrti** /**kelingan** nek djoko nggambar gunung.
but Parto **know** /**remember** C Djoko draw mountain

‘I don’t know whether Djoko drew mountains or not, but Parto knows/remembers that Djoko drew mountains.’

(3) $x \text{ Vs } Q \rightarrow x \text{ Vs } p \text{ that is the true answer to } Q$

#Saka pitakone Esti mangan apa, ora ana sing ngêrti /kelingan jawabané
from question.the Esti eat what NEG there REL know /remember answer.the
sing bener, Budi **ngêrti** /**kelingan** nek Esti mangan apa.
REL true Budi **know** /**remember** C Esti eat what

Intended: ‘No one knows /remembers the true answer to the question ‘What did Esti eat?’, Budi knows /remembers (some answer to) what Esti ate.’

I propose that this pattern emerges from a combination of two factors: (i) embedded clauses in Javanese are always adjuncts, and compose with verbs as modifiers that specify the propositional content of the verbal eventuality (see Bogal-Allbritten 2016, Elliott 2017, Bochnak & Hanink 2021, Bondarenko 2022, a.o.), which leads to the lack of veridicality with declarative embedding; (ii) propositional content associated with *ngêrti* ‘know’ and *kelingan* ‘remember’ is required to be a single proposition, which in cases of interrogative embedding triggers insertion of an answerhood operator (Dayal 1996) that gives rise to veridicality.

I furthermore show that while *ngêrti* ‘know’ is non-veridical with declarative complements, it is different from ‘think/believe’: it comes with a presupposition that the embedded proposition is not known to be false. I suggest to encode this restriction as a definedness condition on the propositional content associated with the mental state that *ngêrti* denotes.

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