

Narrative within conversation in Cirebon Javanese  
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This paper is a preliminary survey of where and how narrative sits within informal conversation in the Cirebon variety of Javanese. Informal conversation is a complex and fluid site of interpersonal interaction. Through face-to-face talk, conversationalists negotiate and co-construct multiple aspects of identity, shared knowledge, and social relationships. Narrative is one vehicle through which conversational interaction occurs. Using a corpus of informal conversation in Cirebon Javanese, I examine how narratives are structurally and interactionally marked off from other types of conversational work and what purposes narrative plays vis-à-vis non-narrative portions of conversation. The narratives that emerge from these data can be characterised as small stories, rather than the larger, personal narratives that have often been the focus of narrative analysis in the past. The small stories in Cirebon Javanese conversation exhibit a variety of organisational patterns; while half are produced in a linear, temporal order, nearly half again are produced with a cyclic pattern. This cyclic telling of a story entails repeating the main event a number of times, each time adding additional background or details. These retellings are often listener-driven and frequently involve (progressively more intense) commentary until ending with the revelation some unexpected information that give a further explanation to what went on in the story. Thus close analysis of these small narratives in conversation reveals a common strategy of conversational interaction among Cirebon Javanese speakers.