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#FragmentedLanguageWorkshop2020

This presentation aims to examine the transmission of texts in Old Javanese, an Austronesian language formerly spoken in the central and eastern parts of the Indonesian island of Java, as well as the neighboring island of Bali.



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Currently, these texts are most often interpreted into a refined contemporary Balinese in a performance practice known as babaosan 'speech (performance)' or babasan 'reading' (Herbst 1997). For this, I will discuss a subgenre of this performance practice called palawakya.



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Ultimately, this is heavily mediated by a paraphrase – “sentences or phrases that convey the same meaning using different wording” (Bhagat & Hovy 2013:463). From paraphrasing in the babaosan/babasan, participants can creatively shape what their audience hears and interprets.



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Old Javanese (hereafter OJ) is a predecessor of modern Javanese. For about five centuries, it was used as a literary language, so any documentation from East/Central Java – as far as it existed – was rendered in OJ, usually in palm leaf manuscripts known as lontar.



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Preliminary examples of OJ are illustrated in (1) and (2). Here, we see that unlike contemporary varieties of Javanese, which are mostly verb-medial, OJ tends to be verb-initial, which would obviously align with most present-day “Philippine-type” languages.

- (1) Giri-girin tang ratu.
giri-giri-n ta=ang
fear-REDUP-LIG PRT=DEF king

‘The king is seized with fear.’

- (2) Lunghā tekang dūta.
 ta=ika=ang
leave PRT=DEM=DEF envoy

‘The envoy left.’

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The status of OJ in its homeland is sparse at best. OJ can still be found in sulukan ‘mood songs’ by the dhalang (shadowmaster) during a wayang kulit (shadow theater) performance. In (3), Becker illustrates the eroticism of this song, of which most performers are unaware.

- (3) (after Becker 1995:47)

Leng leng ramyanikang, sasangka kumenyar, O...
Mangrengga rumning puri, O...
Mangkin tanpa siring, halep ikang umah,
Mas lwir murub ring langit, O...
Tekwam sarwa manik, O...
Tawingnya sinawung, O..., O...
Saksat sekarning suji, unggwan Bhanuwati, O...
Ywan amrem alangen, mwang Nata Duryuddana, O...
Mwang Nata Duryuddana, O...

“Beautiful was the moon that shone over the palace where the women lived. More and more it grew golden, an incomparable golden house against the sky. And so too its curtain of gems, like flowers on an embroidered fabric. And here was the chamber of Queen Bhanuwati where she slept with King Duryuddana...”

7/12

In Bali, the performance of OJ text is a popular activity, namely through the performance genre palawakya, which comes in two varieties. One has two main participants: a reciter known as the juru tandak and an intermediary interpreter known as the juru arti (Sedana 2002).



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In this clip, the juru tandak (JT) says each OJ line fully before the juru arti (JA) paraphrases it in Balinese, as in (4). The JA spends most of his first turn on explaining what “autumn” is, while his second is for commenting that Prince Rama went on a journey.

(4)

JT: Kawit saratsamaya kala nira r para ngka//
by.chance autumn time DEF 3.CONJ DEM.PL there

‘It happened to be in the autumn season that they were there.’

JA: Nemunin sasih katigane, nampih sasih kapate punika.
N-meet-TR2 month ORD-three-DEF N-overlap month ORD-four-DEF that

‘It fell on the third lunar month and went into the fourth.’

JT: Nton tang pradesa ni hawanira kapwa ramya.//
AT-see PRT=DEF COLL-village LOC way-DEF all splendid

‘(They) saw all the villages and all was splendid.’

JA: Wantah dawasane dawa ida lunga marga.
only day-DEF long 3.H go.H path

‘On that very day, he (Prince Rama) went on his journey.’

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The other type of performance known as palawakya is a dance choreographed at some point in the 1940s by famed composer Gede Manik (Dibia and Ballinger 2004). The dancer is required not only to sing verses in OJ, but s/he must also be able to play the trompong gong-chime.



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If we examine this performance closely, we find many contrasts with the first example. As shown in (5), each verse is halved by the JT, then that partial text is paraphrased. The JA includes some evaluation: atur ning ayang titiang 'I'll say it as clearly and eloquently.'

(5)

JT: Kawit saratsamaya//
by.chance autumn

'By chance it was autumn,'

JA: Atur ning ayang titiang, ri pengadeng ening kartika masa.
say clear beautiful 1.H LOC NOM-slow clear fourth.month time

'I'll say it as clearly and eloquently as I can - the fourth lunar month was slowly approaching.'

JT: kala nira=r para ngka//
time DEF=3.CONJ COLL there

'At the time they were there'

JA: Ri kanyakan ing punika, ida dewa agung putra Sang Rama lunga mamarga.
LOC maiden LIG that 3.H god great prince HON NAME go MA-path

'Along with his maiden, the great lord Rama went on a journey.'

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Continuing the verse in (6), the JA then does something exceptional: during his second turn, he suddenly erupts in a fit of laughter. This may be due to this particular context (as it was during a mabarung or “battle of the bands” concert), but this is purely speculative.

(6)

JT: Nton tang pradesa//
AT-see PRT=DEF COLL-village

‘(They) saw all the villages’

JA: Katah punika desa para desa kacingak olih ida,
many that village COLL village PT-see OBL 3.HI

‘There were many villages and villagers that they saw,’

JT: Ri hawanira kapwa ramya.//
LOC way-DEF all splendid

‘Along the way all was splendid’

JA: Ri salantange pamargi wih @@@@@ wyakti ngulangunin pisan.
LOC one-long-DEF journey EXCL truly AT-enthrall-TR2 very

‘All through their journey [laughter], it was truly enthralling.’

12/12

As seen here, the paraphrase in Balinese palawakya takes on a crucial role, as it allows those who do so a degree of creativity, which is essential for conveying the point of a text in a language no longer used. In doing so, the value of using such texts are maintained.

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