

“TIMPEDAN” and “JEJANGKITAN” in Balinese Society

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ABSTRACT

Balinese so far actually has two types of traditional riddle genre. Those are *timpedan* which is commonly known as ‘riddle’ and *jejangkitan* that does not have any equivalent Indonesian and English term. These two genres have many kinds of communicative functions in Balinese society, and both of them are confused one to another, whereas they have very different linguistic characteristics even though these two traditional formulas extensively exploit various kinds play on words. This paper intends to reveal the linguistic structure differences of these traditional expressions, play on words, and their implicative communicative functions.

Keywords: riddle, traditional, and linguistic formula

Introduction

Riddling is an important activity enjoyed by traditional as well as modern community members. Riddle as one genre of verbal contests has many functions and roles in human life. In spite of delivering humour for achieving many kinds of amusements, the existence of humour can also function to show intellectual capability either of the addresser or the addressee. In societies of having diverse community members, riddling activities have central role in ritual and cultural transformation processes. For example, Gonds community, in Central India, Men gathered in the village side when one of its community member died and riddled accompanied by drum beat (Cook, 2000, 79). Handelman (1996, 49) notes societies in Africa, Caribbean, and South East Asia use riddles in conducting ceremonies, such as wedding, burial, night vigil, and worshiping. In East Toraja, riddles are played when they stay all night watching a corpse before burial ceremony while in West Toraja, riddling is performed during the rice grains are coming out.

Balinese traditional and modern society, has various kinds of traditional formula, and two of them, i.e. *Timpedan* and *Tejanita* are simply called “teke-teki” in Indonesian terminology. Although, both of these traditional formulas exploit very extensive play on words (pun), they actually has internal linguistic characteristics which are different one from another. This paper will try to reveal those linguistic characteristic differences, the consequent play on words, and their communicative function consisted between them. These problems have not been so far seriously discussed by the folklorists. This research accordingly has very important benefit in order to explore one of Balinese local wisdom concealed in its oral tradition heritages.

Literature Review

Even though, a lot riddle materials has been found either concerning Indonesian or local languages in Indonesia (Bengkulu, Lampung, Basemah, Aceh, Batak, Nias, Toraja, etc.) and even more collections recorded in the digital era, only a few serious studies deeply discuss such materials. This condition might be caused by its little formula, and it constitutes a product of non-literate society, and modern western society members tend to regard that everything associated with play on words is trivial, childish, and funny (Cook, 2000, 78) regardless the fact that this little formula gives a significant influence in ritual, art, religion, and magic as well. Stokhof (1981) analysed 100 of Woisika Riddles with regard of their communicative function, formula, and its themes. Meanwhile, Wijana (2014a) analyses structure, play on words, themes, and functions of modern Indonesian riddle found in a riddle collection book. Wijana (2013, 26-30) discusses riddle discourse in relation with linguistic pride. In that paper he clearly shows that modern Indonesian riddles exploiting various type of play on words which indicate that

Indonesians are very proud of foreign cultures, but disrespectful of their own culture. Meanwhile Wijana (2014b) discusses the exploitation metalinguistic function in riddling found among literate Indonesian community members. This rareness is the main reasons of choosing one of local language riddles as a discussion topic of this paper. The discussion will cover three crucial problems concerning linguistic characteristics, play on words, and communicative functions of the two types Balinese riddle, *Timpedan* and *Jejangkitan*. The discussion is expected to reveal the differences existed between them.

Theoretical Frame Work

Human beings, because of their various abilities, have many calls. One of them is “homo luden” for their ability to play (Huizinga, 1949, 2-8). Playing is a part of their learning process for enhancing their life quality (Daeng, 1982, 212). They can play with many kinds of thing, including the language they use to communicate. As far as the play with language is concerned, various genres of pun appear in the use of language, and more importantly they able to exploit the pun for achieving various kinds of communicative purposes in spite of its main functions to create humour, such as for criticizing social conditions, testing intelligence, chatting, advertising, etc. As such, it is obviously unreasonable to argue that play on words found in any kind of discourse are funny, unimportant, and trivial because high literary texts are also full of such kinds of play. Shakespeare’s master pieces are interesting because of his dedicated punster (Cook, 2000, 81). Huizinga further states that cultural organization developed as an extension of play, arises as a secondary effect. Societies are created and held together by institutionalised activities which are essentially play-like, such as found in art, religion, education, warfare, philosophy, law, etc. (see also Cook, 2000, 111). So, civilization arises and unfolds in play. From this theoretical starting point, extensive word plays found in Balinese riddle are not different from other kinds of play which certainly have very central role in maintaining social cohesion of the Balinese community.

Research Method

Most data presented in this paper are riddle collection from my childhood time in Singaraja, Northern part of Bali. Some of them I got from bed time riddling with my parents and grandmother. The others are collection with play mates. These data are added with ones found in: www.aryaokawordpress.com/PojokBali-script/ceCimpedan/.

Firstly, the data are classified based on their linguistic structure, types of word play, and finally the communicative functions they possibly perform in varieties of speech act. The data are transcribed orthographically through two stage glossing, i.e. word to word, and free translation.

Results and Discussion

Based on linguistic characteristics, the riddling formulas of Balinese society can simply be differentiate into two types, i.e. *timpedan* and *jejangkitan*. These two genres will respectively be described more profoundly in the following sections.

Timpedan

Timpedan is essentially traditional “questions” expressed by the language speakers for joking activities or intelligent testings to the addressee. The complete formula of *timpedan* discourses should be consisted of “question” and “answer”. The question constitutes the “problem” (P), and the answer is the “solution” (S). See (1) and (2) below:

(1) + Apa cenik makamen, gede malalung? (P)
what little wearing sarong, big naked

‘When s(he) is small wearing sarong, but naked when (s)he is grown up, What is it?’

- Embung (S)
'Bamboo shoot'
- (2) + Apa gong malu, lelontek duri? (P)
What gong precedes, banner behind
'What is gong coming first, and banner follows behind?'
- Kuluk (S)
'dog'

Bamboo shoot is commonly cooked by the Balinese for vegetable. In (1) the Balinese people analogically perceive, the bamboo seedling is like a wearing sarong person, and the coverage will release when it getting tall, and this condition is perceived like a naked person. Meanwhile, Balinese ceremony procession generally begins with a group of people bringing banners followed by another group beating gong, and never the other way around, like the riddle problem in (2). This cultural phenomenon inspires Balinese people to create this riddle by analogically comparing the banner with the dog wiggling tale and the sound of gong with dog's bark.

Balinese community members have at least 3 types of *timpedan*. Those are *timpedan* based on analogy, sound similarity, and play on words.

***Timpedan* Based on Analogy**

Analogy based *timpedan* is any riddle created by physical or state similarity perception that hold between the question and the answer, such as (1) and (2) above, and (3) and (4) below are the other examples:

- (3) + Apa cenik mepusungan, gede megambahan? (P)
What little wearing hair bun, big long haired
'When (s)he is small wearing hair bun, but when (s)he is grown up, has long hair.'
- Paku (S)
'edible fern'
- (4) + Apa cekuk kejengitin? (P)
What choke, grin at it
'You choke it, and grin at it. What is it?'
- Caratan (S)
'earthenware flask with neck and spout for drinking water'

Like a bamboo shoot, fern is also cooked by The Balinese for vegetable. The plant shape from small to mature are perceived conversely like a person. Wearing hair bun when it is small, and the leaves are freely spread when the plant is grown up (3). Meanwhile, human being is the other way around. Balinese traditional people used to drink water sprayed directly from the spout of the earthenware. They choked the earthenware, and grinned at it to gulp the water (4). Analogy based *timpedan* has various of topics, such as human body part (5), plant (6), animal (7), house utensil (8), sky objects (9), etc.

- (5) + Apa sampi mapalu selat pundukan? (P)
What bull fight border on bund
'Two bulls fight bordering on bund. What is that?'
- Alis (S)
'eyebrow'
- (6) + Apa ngudane putih, di wayahne gadang? (P)
What when young white, in old green
'When young it is white, when old it is green. What is it? (S)'
- Busung (S)
'Coconut leaf'

- (7) + Apa mara majujuk endep, mara nyongkok tegeh? (P)
 What when stand short, when squat high
 ‘It is short when stand, but high when it squat. What is it?’
 - Cicing (S)
 ‘dog’
- (8) + Apa anak cerik maid cacing? (P)
 What child little drag worm
 ‘A Little child drags worm. What is it?’
 - Jaum (S)
 ‘needle (and thread)’
- (9) - Apa menek bajang, tuun tua? (P)
 What rises young, goes down old
 ‘It is young when it rises, but old when it falls. What is it?’
 - Surya (S)
 ‘sun’

In (5) the human body parts, two eye brows, is compared with fighting cows, and the space separated them is perceived like a bund. In (6) coconut leaves is compared with other entities that are usually green when young, and turn to white or other colors (red, brown, black, etc.) when they are getting old, but not the other way around. In (7) an animal. dog is compared to other animals which are commonly taller when they are standing than squatting. In (8) sewing devices, needle and its thread, are compared with a little child. In (9) the sky object, the sun, is metaphorically compared with human age.

Timpedan Based on Play on Word

Play on words which are created by various kinds of ambiguity constitute the most important source of Balinese *timpedan*. For more clearly, see (10) and (11) below:

- (10) + Anake makokohan apane sakitange? (P)
 The People coughing, what fell hurt
 ‘The people who got cough, what the body part was hurt?’
 - kolongane (S)
 ‘the throat’
 + Salah, limane (Correction)
 ‘It is wrong, the hand’

- (11) + Ken Johan Tihingane ajak Timune? (P)
 Which is farther Tiingan than Timun
 ‘Which is farther between Tihingan and Timun?’
 Johan Timune
 ‘Timun is farther’
 + Salah, Johan Tihingane. (S)
 ‘It is wrong, Tihingan is farther’

Example (10) played on the ambiguity of *makokohan*. This word can mean ‘coughing’ from [ma- + *kokoh*(an)], in which *kokoh* is an onomatopoeic sound of cough. This meaning is intended to be grasped by the addressee. The other meaning is ‘digging with hand’ from [ma-/an + *kokoh*], in which *kokoh* mean ‘to dig’. This meaning is not aware of by the addressee because it does not relate with illness. Meanwhile (11) has more complicated explanation. Because of its deictical character, this riddle must be uttered in a place where Timun ‘place name’ is farther than Tihingan ‘place name’ for deception. This is possible because in spite of to mean ‘farther’ from [joh ‘far’ + -an], *johan* can also mean ‘bamboo pole’ which is commonly made

of tihing ‘bamboo’. This metonymic relation between johan ‘bamboo pole’ and tihing ‘bamboo’ of which it is made are not usually aware of by the addressee.

***Timpedan* Based on Sound Similarity**

Timpedan based on sound similarity constitutes the simplest of all types of Balinese riddle. This riddle genre is created on the basis of phonological resemblance that hold between the problem and the its solution. The problem is the acronymic form of the answer or solution. There will certainly be more than one possible answer available for the addresser that make the addressee will never be able giving the correct solution. For example see (12) and (13) below:

(12) + Apa cing dag? (P)

What cing dag

‘What is cing dag?’

- Cicing mageledag (S)

Dog bump sounds dag

‘Dog is bumping, it sounds “Dag”’

+ Salah, Cicing mawadah bodag’ (correction)

Wrong, dog placed in big woven bamboo container’

‘Wrong, it is a dog in big woven bamboo container’

(13) + Apa cing lem? (P)

What cing lem

‘What is cing lem’

- Cicing gelem

Dog sick

‘a sick dog’

+ Salah, cicing selem (correction)

Wrong, dog black

‘Wrong, it is a black dog’

***Timpedan* Based on the Balinese Spelling System**

In a very rare case, there is also a riddle created on the basis of the complicated Balinese spelling system. Balinese spelling has a close relation with Javanese spelling. It is a syllabary system in which the vowel sounds are marked by certain markers. The /i/ vowel and its allophone [I] is marked by “wolu” over the character, /u/ and its allophone [U] is marked by suku under the character, and /e/ and its allophone [E] is marked by taleng in the left side of the character, and the vowel /o/ and its allophone [O] are marked by “taleng and tedong” hemming the character. In riddling activity, for disguising purpose taleng and tedong spelling markers are shortened into leng and dong. See the following (14), in which ga and da with taleng and tedong will become godo, and adds with [h] will become godoh ‘fried banana’.

(14) +Apa ga leng dong da leng dong h? (P)

What ga leng dong da leng dong h

‘What is ga leng dong da leng dong h?’

-Godoh

‘fried banana’

Jejangkitan

Different from *Timpedan*, *Jejangkitan* is syntactically constructed by declarative sentence. This type of sentence pragmatically functions for delivering sensational news, and the sensation is actually fake after the play on words of *Jejangkitan* are discovered. For example, consider (15) s.d. (17) below:

- (15) Pan Dasi Mati magantung.
 Father of Dasi died hang
 'Dasi's father died of hang oneself'
- (16) Pan Carik Mati matumbeg
 Father of Carik died hoed
 'Carik's father died of being hoed'
- (17) Nang Kebrek mati magantung
 Father Kebrek died hang
 'Kebrek's Father died of hanging himself'

In (15) to (17) the proper names, more precisely personal names that do not contain meaning (Allan, 1986, 70-72), are combined with generic words and generic phrases, such as *dasi* 'tie', *carik* 'rice field', and *nangka berek* 'rotten jack fruit'. *Dasi* 'tie' is hung in the neck, *carik* 'rice field' is hoed in the land preparation, and *nangka berek* 'rotten jack fruit' is hung on its branch.

Further, *jejangkitan* can be differentiated into two types, namely *jejangkitan* based on play on word, and *jejangkitan* based on pragmatic use of language.

***Jejangkitan* Based on Play on Word**

This type of *jejangkitan* is created by various kind of complicated pun that are causing lexical, phonological, or grammatical ambiguities, such as ones shown in (9), (10), and (11). The other examples are (18) to (21) below:

- (18) *Dagdag* basangne Baang celeng
 Slit the stomach give pig
 'Slit the stomach for pig feeder'
- (19) *Tusing dadi meli panci nane putih*
 it is not allowed to buy cooking pan white
 'It is not allowed to buy a white cooking pan'
- (20) *Dini sebilang semengan ada film pejuang*
 Here every early morning be film hero
 'Here every early in the morning, there was hero film'
- (21) *Ada anak suud madahar layahne ilang.*
 There person after eat tongue disappear
 'There is a person who loosed his/her tongue after having meal'

Dagdag (18) in Balinese can mean two things, i.e. 'to slit' and 'taro, calladium leaves for pig feeder'. This *jejangkitan* has a performative function to threaten 'a naughty child'. The child will think that the older person will seriously slit his/her stomach. *Panci nane putih* 'the white cooking pan' in (119) is grammatically ambiguous with *paan cinane putih* 'the white Chinese tiger'. In (20) *pejuang* is an Indonesian word that means 'hero' from [pe- +juang] 'a person who is struggling'. This word accidentally homonymous with Balinese *pejuang* [peju- + -ang] 'to defecate'. *Dini* 'here' in (20) refers to a large land where the Balinese people used to defecate in the time before the home toilet has not been socialized. In (21), Balinese word *layah* 'tongue' is lexically ambiguous with another *layah* that means 'hungry'. So, it is not surprising that after having meal, any person will vanish his/her hunger.

However, sometimes the play on words are not easy to solve as they are combined with metonymy (22), topic deletion (23), and intonational change (24).

- (22) *Anake ditu nak beluluk jakana.*
 People there particle palm seed be cooked rice
 'People in that placed cook palm seeds (for substituting rice)'
- (23) *Tain kuluk magula ganting, dendeng goreng jaan.*
 'shit dog have sugar thick, dried in the sun fried delicious'

‘Dog shit with thick sugar dries in the sun, and fry will be delicious’.
(24) Tiang meli tumbak, kamen, piring, ental, ajine tuah satus
rupiah.

I bought spear, sarong, plate, palm leaves the price only one hundred rupiah

‘I bought spear, sarong, plate, and palm leaves just one hundred rupiahs’

In (22) *jakana* ‘be cooked’ in relation of rice, from [jakan + -a] is by chance partially homonymous, and metonymically related with *jaka* ‘palm’ where *beluluk* ‘palm seed’ comes from. The sensation news is caused by the impossibility people cooking palm seed for staple food. In (23) it is certainly impossible to prepare dog shit becoming a delicious food. What is delicious in this case is *dendeng goreng* that can be interpreted into ‘dries in the sun and fry’ and ‘fried jerk meat’. So, what is delicious is the fried jerk meat, and the dog shit is left without consideration. In (24) the sensational fact is related to the cheap price of spear, sarong, plate, and palm leaves which is about one hundred rupiahs. This is made possible because of pause deletion. By this technique, *tumbak, kamen* ‘spear and sarong’ will become *tumbak kamen* ‘the spear of sarong’, and *piring, ental* ‘plate and palm’ leaves will become *piring ental* ‘plate made of palm leaves’. Metaphorically, *tumbak kamen* ‘the spear of sarong’ refers to *jaum* ‘needle’ and *piring ental* refers to *tamas* ‘plate made of palm leaves’. Through such complicated analysis, the cheap price sensation can be understood.

The most shaking sensation caused by *jejangkitan* happened in the 1970s when drama gong (Balinese play accompanied by gong, traditional music instruments) was booming around the island. The most famous drama gong group at that time, *Kacang Dawa* from Klungkung. This group is considered the best because of its male main character is skilful of playing flute, and all the characters master conversing in high Balinese speech level style which is no more well mastered by the Balinese younger generation. In the *jejangkitan* formula, drama gong group was reported suffering defeat from Banjar Pekambangan, a place name in Denpasar that did not seem to have drama gong group. Example (25) is the *jejangkitan*:

(25) Drama gong Kacang Dawane kalahange teken Banjar Pekambangane.

Play gong Kacang Dawa was defeated by village Pekambangan

‘Kacang Dawa’s drama gong group was defeated by Banjar Pekambangan group’

This *jejangkitan* is made possible because the place name *Kacang Dawa* in the generic phrase means ‘long bean’ [*kacang* ‘bean’ plus *dawa* ‘long’], meanwhile *Pekambangan* from [*kambing* ‘goat’ plus *pe-an* ‘place of’]. In This case long bean is the goat food stuff.

Finally *jejangkitan* (26) below is based on hyponymic relation of a puppet character and the puppet performance itself.

(26) Buin mani peteng di Bli Malene lakar ada wayang.

Again tomorrow night in Bli Malen (house) will be shadow puppet

‘Tomorrow night there will be a shadow puppet in Bli Malen’s house’

Actually there is no shadow puppet to be performed because (20) is intended to deceive the addressee by playing the proper name Malen and Malen, the character of Balinese punakawan malen or Tuwalen which is equivalent to Semar in Javanese puppet.

***Jejangkitan* Based on Pragmatic Use of Language**

The intention of speaker in expressing linguistic utterances is strongly determined by the contextual use of them in speech situation. The various possibilities of intention the utterance may perform are often exploited by the speakers in order to deceive the addressee’s pragmatic assumption. No matter how many assumptions an utterance may have, in certain contextual use of a language, there is usually only one assumption intended by the speaker. Accordingly,

in informing the passing people who will go acrossing a bridge, the *jejangkitan* (27) is intended to give a warning for them for not continuing their travel because the bridge was fallen down.

(27) Keretege ditu nak matektek.
Bridge there particle chopped down.
'The bridge there was fallen down'

This *jejangkitan* is uttered to lie the passing people, because what the speaker want to say that the bridge is made of chopped bamboo. It is certainly not possible constructing a bridge from bamboos that have not been chopped before. But, this common sense script is not the one assumed by the addressee.

Conclusion

Although both *timpedan* and *jejangkitan* extensively exploit play on words, these two Balinese riddle genres have very different linguistic characteristics. *Timpedan* is constructed by interrogative sentence and consists of two structural elements, i.e. problem and solution. Meanwhile, *jejangkitan* is expressed in declarative sentence. This linguistic characteristic implies the communicative functional differences of both riddle formulas. Besides, their main function to create humor and amusement for the addressee, *timpedan* is used to test the addressee's riddling ability by uttering problematic question, while *jejangkitan* is used to test the addressee's ability by uttering fake sensational news. The problem and the fake sensational news of both formulas are hidden in various types of unique word play. This finding hopefully inspires other researcher to deepen this genre or to investigate other types of Balinese traditional formulas, such as *wangsalan* (bladbadan), *sesenggakan* (proverb), traditional songs, humorous discourses, etc. The researches on them constitute an effort for preserving Balinese invaluable traditional cultural heritage.

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