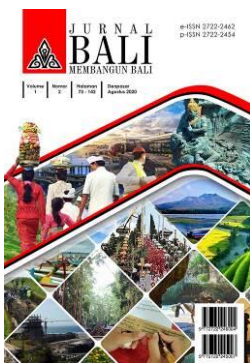




The Function and Meaning of "Kulkul" in Balinese Society: A Case Study in Batuaji Kawan Traditional Village, Tabanan (A Cultural Linguistics Review)

I Gusti Putu Sutarma¹, I Wayan Jendra²,
Ida Bagus Artha Adnyana³, Ni Kadek Muliati⁴, Ni Wayan Wahyu Astuti⁵
^{1,2,3,4,5}Politeknik Negeri Bali

E-mail : ¹gustiputusutarma@pnb.ac.id, ²wayanjendra@yahoo.com, ³arthaadnyana@pnb.ac.id,
⁴kadekmuliati@pnb.ac.id, ⁵wayanwahyuastuti@pnb.ac.id



Abstract

Purpose: This research was conducted to analyze the communicative function of language and the meaning of *kulkul* in Balinese society.

Research methods: Data were collected using interview and observation methods with the help of note-taking techniques, then analyzed using descriptive-qualitative methods. This study uses the Cultural Linguistic Theory which is synergized with the Theory of Language Functions to analyze the function of *kulkul* and the Social Semiotics Theory to analyze the meaning of *kulkul*.

Results and discussion: *Kulkul* in Balinese society has a communicative function of language: informational, directive, aesthetic, and phatic. Based on this function, *kulkul* implies *odalan* (religious ceremony at the temple), *kepancabhayan* (crush), *baya pati* (rage), *sangkepan/peparuman* (meeting) or *ngayah* (mutual cooperation), and *kelayusekaran* (death of residents). *Kulkul* also has a sacred function, namely as a sign of a religious ceremony at the temple.

Implication: As a marker of Balinese culture (local wisdom), *kulkul* is a linguistic phenomenon, especially sign language which has a unique function and meaning.

Keywords: *kulkul*, sign language, function, meaning, cultural linguistics.

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Abstrak

Tujuan: Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk menganalisis fungsi komunikatif bahasa dan makna *kulkul* dalam masyarakat Bali.

Metode penelitian: Data dikumpulkan dengan metode wawancara dan observasi dengan bantuan teknik catat, selanjutnya dianalisis dengan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan Teori Linguistik Kebudayaan yang disinergikan dengan Teori Fungsi Bahasa untuk menganalisis fungsi *kulkul* dan Teori Semiotika Sosial untuk menganalisis makna *kulkul*.

Hasil dan pembahasan: *Kulkul* dalam masyarakat Bali mempunyai fungsi komunikatif bahasa: informasional, direktif, estetis, dan phatik. Berdasarkan fungsi itu, *kulkul* dapat menyiratkan makna: *odalan* (upacara agama di pura), *kepancabhayan* (kegentingan), *baya pati* (mengamuk), *sangkepan/peparuman* (rapat) atau *ngayah* (gotong royong), dan *kelayusekaran* (kematian warga). *Kulkul* juga memiliki fungsi sakral yaitu sebagai penanda adanya upacara keagamaan di pura.

Implikasi: Sebagai penanda kebudayaan (kearifan lokal) Bali, *kulkul* merupakan fenomena kebahasaan (linguistik) khususnya bahasa isyarat yang memiliki fungsi dan makna yang unik.

Kata Kunci: *kulkul*, bahasa isyarat, fungsi, makna, linguistik kebudayaan.

INTRODUCTION

Life in the broadest sense always requires interconnectedness or interaction between members of one community and other members of society. In this relationship, a communication tool is needed, namely language. With language, one can convey thoughts and opinions to others. Because of the large role of language for humans, it is not surprising that many experts make language the object of scientific study.

The study of language is the study of humans through verbal texts produced in the context of the culture of the speech community. Humans as God's most perfect creation have a soul and a body, have a mental living space, have a dimension of spiritual life in a complete unity of life, both individually and collectively in a certain language community, society and culture. This dialectical relationship between humans and language, thought, and culture is the object of cultural linguistic studies (Halliday & Hasan, 1994: 6-7).

In this regard, language does not only function as a means of thinking, but also as a result, part and condition of culture (Laksana, 2009: 11). Language as a product of culture means that the language spoken by a society is a reflection of the entire culture of that society. Language as part of culture means that language is one of the markers of culture in addition to tools, institutions, customs and beliefs. As a condition of culture, it means that culture is learned through language.

Language as part of culture means that language is one of the markers of culture. This kind of language is called sign language, which is a language that does not use the sound of human speech or writing in its symbolic system. This sign language uses gestures such as hand, head, body movements or movements and signs that have agreed meanings and are used to exchange information (Depdiknas, 2008: 116).

Kukul in Balinese society is an example of sign language because it is a sign whose meaning has been agreed upon and is used to exchange information. Until now, kukul is a traditional means of communication used in Balinese society. Various traditional organizations in Bali use kukul as a means of communication, such as: adat villages, banjar adat, subak, and various sekaa (organizations). The existence of kukul today still exists in the midst of the development of modern communication tools such as loudspeakers and social media. This is because kukul cannot be separated from the social conditions, customs and culture of the people in Bali. Kukul relates to Hindu customs and religious activities in Bali. In addition, the existence of kukul in Balinese society also has a sacred function, namely as a marker of religious ceremonies at temples (Sadguna, 2010; Putra et al., 2016).

The existence of kukul as a traditional communication tool in Bali has been discussed in several studies. The research referred to includes: (1) "Kukul as a Traditional Communication Media in Pakraman Village in Bali (Case Study in Banjar Sari, Pakraman Sukahet Village and Banjar Pande Mas, Kuta Traditional Village)" (Putra et al., 2016); (2) "The Effectiveness of Utilizing Village Kukul in Religious Activities in Pengotan Traditional Village" (Wadhanti, 2014); and (3) "Kukul as a Balinese Cultural Symbol" (Sadguna, 2010). In general, the focus of the three studies is the existence and development of kukul as a symbol of Balinese culture and a traditional means of communication in the midst of the development of modern communication technology.

Based on this explanation it is clear that previous research and this research are different. The difference lies in the point of view or review of each. Previous studies looked at kukul from the perspective of communication science which focused on the existence of kukul in the midst of the development of modern means of communication. While this research looks at kukul from a linguistic or linguistics point of view. This research is focused on the function and meaning of kukul from the point of view of Cultural Linguistics, Language Communicative Function, and Social Semiotics.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is descriptive qualitative. The subject of this research is the Balinese people, especially the people of the Batujai Kawan Traditional Village, Tabanan Regency, Bali Province, while the object of research is the problem studied, namely the function and meaning of kukul in terms of Cultural Linguistics.

The methods and techniques in this study include: methods and techniques for providing data, methods and techniques for data analysis, and methods and techniques for presenting the results of the analysis. In collecting data, the method of observing, interviewing, and observing with the help of note-taking techniques was used. To analyze the data, the descriptive method was used combined with the extralingual equivalent method and the extralingual comparative linking technique. Research results are presented using formal and informal methods with a combination of both techniques (Mahsun, 2007).

To discuss the problem, there are three theories used in this study. The three theories are Cultural Linguistic Theory, Language Function Theory, and Social Semiotic Theory. The Cultural Linguistic Theory which is an interdisciplinary theory is used because this kukul research is a study in the field of Cultural Linguistics; Language Function Theory is used to find out the communicative function of kukul

language in Balinese society; and Social Semiotic Theory is used to examine the meaning of kulkul in Balinese society. According to Refika Ayu Zellya, et al. (2022), semiotic theory is relevant for describing the meaning of certain signs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kulkul is a cultural symbol of the Balinese people, functioning as a traditional communication tool, very closely related to organizational activities that are customary in Bali. The existence of kulkul in Balinese society cannot be replaced by modern communication tools such as loudspeakers and social media. In general, kulkul, which produces sign language, functions as a traditional communication tool, while in terms of the theory of the communicative function of language, it is found that kulkul has informational, directive, aesthetic, and phatic functions. Furthermore, based on this function, kulkul in Balinese society has the following meanings: *odalan* (religious ceremony at the temple), *kepancabhayan* (crush), *sangkep/parum* (meeting) or *ngayah* (mutual cooperation), *baya pati* (rage), and *kelayusekaran* (death).

1. Function of Kulkul

The general function of a language is as a means of communication. In addition, there is also a special function of a language which is called the communicative function of language. The communicative functions of language can be divided into five, namely: informational, expressive, directive, aesthetic, and phatic. Informational function means the function of language to convey information; expressive function, is to express the feelings and attitudes of speakers; directive function is a function to influence someone's behavior and attitude; the aesthetic function, is the function of language for the sake of the work itself without any hidden intentions; and the phatic function means the function of language to maintain good relations in social groups (Leech, 1997: 52-53).

The function of language as mentioned above is also found in sign language, which in this case is kulkul in Balinese society. In general, kulkul in Balinese society functions as a traditional communication tool, while based on the communicative function of Balinese language, kulkul is found to function: informational, directive, aesthetic, and phatic. So, what is meant by the kulkul function in this study is the kulkul function in terms of the theory of the communicative function of language. The four functions of kulkul in Balinese society can be explained as follows.



Figure 1. Kukul Banjar
(Source: Sutarma, 2023)

The picture above is an example of kukul in Batuaji Kawan Traditional Village. Kukul is used as a means of communication in society. When viewed from the communicative function of language as mentioned above, the kukul has several language communicative functions. This is in line with Leech's statement (1997: 53) which states that in language practice it is very possible to combine a number of different language functions. The communicative functions of the language contained in the kukul above can be explained as follows.

Informational function means the function of language to convey information. In this case, the information conveyed to the Batuaji Kawan Traditional Village community. Information is conveyed by sounding the kukul which is carried out by traditional officials or organizational leaders. The information conveyed by kukul is in the form of: there is a religious ceremony at the temple, there is an emergency or dangerous event, there is a social activity such as Paruman or meetings and mutual cooperation, and there is a death in the community. The information is delivered with a different voice kukul.

As mentioned above kukul is used to convey various information to the public. It is hoped that the delivery of this information can influence people's attitudes according to the sound of kukul. For example, the sound of kukul stalking (ting ... tung ... ting ... tung ... ting tung tang ... tung tung tung) is a sign that the piodalan ceremony at the temple has started. With the sound of kukul like that addressed to the community, it is hoped that it can influence the attitude of the community to immediately come to the temple to pray. Likewise with the standard kukul sound (tung tung tung... tungtungtungtung...tung tungtung) which is usually used as information on the existence of sangkepan/paruman (meeting) and ngayah (mutual cooperation). With the sound of the kukul, it is hoped that it will influence people's

attitudes to immediately head to the village hall or banjar hall to attend sangkepan/paruman (meetings) or mutual cooperation. The language function that is used to influence the attitudes of others, in this case society, is called the directive language function. So, this kulkul also has a directive function, because the information conveyed can influence people's attitudes.

Kulkul is the use of sign language in the form of a work of art through its sound. The function of language to express works of art as something of artistic value is called the aesthetic function. This aesthetic function is also found in kulkul. This is reflected in the rhythm of the sound of the kulkul, which varies according to its function, giving it a distinct artistic nuance.

The information conveyed by kulkul is expected to be followed by the community according to its purpose. For example, as mentioned above, when you hear the sound of kulkul stalking (ting ... tung ... ting ... tung ... ting tung tang ... tung tung tung) as a sign that the piodalan ceremony at the temple has started, people will come to the temple. This is a symbol of togetherness and community unity in maintaining the harmony of life. If this is achieved, with good attitudes and actions, namely obedience to the rules (sound kulkul), harmony will certainly be maintained in society. Relationships among members of the community will be well maintained, as well as the environment. So, kulkul also has a phatic function, namely the function of language to maintain good relations in social groups.

Based on the description above, kulkul in the Balinese community, especially in the Batujai Kawan Traditional Village, found several implicit meanings which stated: odalan (religious ceremony at the temple), kepencabhayan (crunch), sangkep/parum (meeting) or ngayah (mutual cooperation), baya pati (rage), and kelayusekaran (death).

Odalán is a religious ceremony at the temple. In the temple there are three kulkuls of different sizes with different sounds. During the odalan ceremony, the kulkul is slapped (hit/sounded) as a sign of the odalan ceremony. The sound of the kulkul in the temple as a sign of asking for odalan is called nguntit (ting ... tung ... ting ... tung ... ting tung tang ... tung tung tung tang). The beating was repeated for a few moments in accordance with the series of ceremonies in the temple, giving rise to a very beautiful sound/rhythm. The sound of kulkul stalking is what is said to express the meaning of odalan or religious ceremonies at the temple. If there is no collateral damage at the temple, stalking the kulkul will not be carried out. The officer who slapped this kulkul was not a random person. Usually the person is appointed by the customary kelian (leader).

2. Meaning of Kukul

It has been stated above that to find out the meaning of kukul in Balinese society, Social Semiotic Theory is used. Social Semiotic Theory views semiotics as a general study of signs and language as part of semiotics (Halliday & Hasan, 1994; Riana, 2003; Santoso, 2003). The word social is related to the concept of social system and the concept of social structure. Thus, kukul is a sign while the user community is a social structure.

As a sign used in Balinese society, kukul has a very high philosophy of life. These values are called implicit meanings. This is in line with the social semiotic view which states that language is assumed to be a word that has explicit and implied meanings. The explicit meaning is the meaning of the language that can be seen in the dictionary while the implied meaning is the meaning of the language that is not contained in the dictionary. The implied meaning cannot be seen but can be traced by looking at the context (Riana, 2003: 10). According to Chaer (2002: 62), implied meaning is referred to as contextual meaning, namely meaning that is highly dependent on context, both the context of the sentence and the context of the situation. In line with this, Frawley (1992: 18-50) provides five formulations of approaches to meaning. The five approaches are (1) meaning as reference, (2) meaning as logical form, (3) meaning as context and use, (4) meaning as culture (meaning as culture), and (5) meaning as conceptual structure (meaning as a conceptual structure). Of the five meaning approaches stated above, what is related to this research is the third approach meaning as context and use and the fourth meaning as culture. This is because kukul in Balinese society has an implied meaning because it is very dependent on the social context of its users and the culture of the people. So, the meaning of kukul referred to in this study is the implied meaning which is marked by the sound of kukul hitting.



Figure 2. Kukul of Temple
(Source: Sutarma, 2023)

The meaning of kulkul states kepancabhayan (criscity) is marked by the sound of kulkul which is constantly or continuously pounding. This is known as atuludan bulus (tungtungtungtung...) without interruption/without stopping. The kepancabhayan (crunch) referred to here is for example a fire, belabar (flash flood) or other natural disaster. The sound of kulkul atuludan bulus or thumping is said to convey the meaning of kepancabhayan (crunch). That is, the community understands the sound of the kulkul being struck (taps) indicating that there is an event that is dangerous or critical.

Besides kepancabhayan (crunch), kulkul also has the meaning to express baya pati (people who are angry). The sound of the kulkul declaring baya pati (people going berserk) is called atuludan bulus nickel ping tiga. That is, the sound of this kulkul continues like a sign of kepancabhayan (crunch) but there is a pause and is repeated three times (tungtungtungtung... tungtungtungtung... tungtungtung).

Kulkul as a traditional means of communication was also found to express the meaning of sangkepan (meeting) or ngayah (mutual cooperation). The kulkul punch which expresses the meaning of sangkepan (meeting) or ngayah (mutual cooperation) is called atuludan banban (tungtung tung...tungtungtungtungtungtung...tung tungtung tung). That is, if the standard kulkul sounds like that, the community understands it as a sign of sangkepan/parum (meeting) or ngayah (gotong royong).

The meaning of kulkul to express kelayusekaran (death) is marked by the sound of kulkul atulu and banban nickel ping tiga. That is, this kulkul sound is slowly and intermittently repeated three times (tung tung tung ... tung tung tung ... tung tung tung). As soon as the community heard the sound of the kulkul, it was understood that one of the residents had died.

CONCLUSION

Kulkul is a traditional means of communication used in Balinese society. For example, the kulkul sign language is used by various traditional organizations in Bali as a means of communication, such as traditional villages, banjar adat, subak, and various sekaa (organizations). The existence of kulkul today still exists in the midst of the development of modern communication tools such as loudspeakers and social media. This is because kulkul cannot be separated from the social conditions, customs and culture of the people in Bali. Kulkul relates to Hindu customs and religious activities in Bali.

In addition to the general function of kulkul as a traditional communication tool, kulkul's function can also be viewed in terms of the communicative function of language. Based on the communicative function of language, it is found that kulkul has informational, directive, aesthetic, and phatic functions. Informational function means

the function of language to convey information; directive function is a function to influence someone's behavior and attitude; the aesthetic function, is the function of language for the sake of the work itself without any hidden intentions; and the phatic function means the function of language to maintain good relations in social groups.

In accordance with the communicative function of the kulkul language in Balinese society, especially in the Batuaji Kawan Traditional Village has several implied meanings which state: odalan (religious ceremonies at temples), kepencabhayan (crunch), sangkep/parum (meeting) or ngayah (mutual cooperation), baya pati (rage), and kelayusekaran (death).

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