

The *paraphrase* as a performance discourse genre: the case of the Balinese vocal genre *Palawakya*

Edmundo Cruz Luna – Kyushu University

<luna.cruz.edmundo.347@m.kyushu-u.ac.jp; ed.lawar.ijo@gmail.com>

Paraphrasing is the uttering of discourse which displays a “sameness of meaning between different wordings” (Vila et al. 2011:83). This is vital in the Balinese performance genre called *palawakya* (Herbst 1997). *Palawakya* are poetic verses with localized Sanskrit-based poetic meters, with four-line stanzas in predetermined syllable counts. These are in *Kawi*, the poetic register of Old Javanese (hereafter OJ), a predominant language of cultural dissemination in both Bali and Java (Herbst 1997, Zurbuchen 1987). Since OJ is radically different from contemporary Balinese (Malayo-Sumbawan), paraphrasing becomes essential for any *palawakya* performance, so much so that it should be considered a distinct performance-centered discourse genre. For this OJ content to be understood by Balinese speakers, the practice of *babaosan* ‘reading’ involves one participant singing a line of text, then another paraphrasing it in refined Balinese:

(1) Basantatilaka Kekawin Ramayana – [https://youtu.be/Z-_DYmz9JOk], accessed 2019/12/15

OJ Verse: Kawit saratsamaya kala nira r para ngka //

by.chance autumn time DEF 3.CONJ DEM.PL there

Verse translation: “It happened to take place in the autumn season.”

Paraphrase (Balinese): Nemunin sasih katigane, nampih sasih kapate punika.
N-meet-TRNS month ORD-three-DEF N-overlap month ORD-four-DEF that
‘It fell on the third lunar month into the fourth.’

As (1) shows, the OJ verse itself may be rather brief; the paraphrase, however, must include all relevant information – for example, *saratsamaya* ‘autumn’ being interpreted as the period between the third and fourth lunar months, i.e., October, since ‘autumn’ does not exist in tropical Bali. Through an examination of various *palawakya* and their refined Balinese paraphrases, I demonstrate that this paraphrasing exhibits characteristics suggesting that it constitutes its own discourse genre, such as distinct intonational contours, as well as frequent references to either the paraphraser or the audience itself. This practice thus helps bridge the mythic past of OJ text to the world of contemporary Balinese.

References:

- Herbst, Edward. 1997. *Voices in Bali: energies and perceptions in vocal music and dance theater*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Vila, Marta, M. Antonia Marti, and Horacio Rodriguez. 2011. Paraphrase concept and typology. A linguistically based and computationally oriented approach. *Procesamiento Del Lenguaje Natural* 46: 83–90.
- Zurbuchen, Mary. 1987. *The language of Balinese shadow theater*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.