



## Revealing the Religious Meaning of Bakayat Sasak Oral-Text



I Made Suyasa <sup>a</sup>  
I Nyoman Weda Kusuma <sup>b</sup>  
I Nyoman Suarka <sup>c</sup>

### Article history:

Received: 14 September 2016

Revised: 13 October 2016

Approved: 20 October 2016

Published: 1 November 2016

### Keywords:

Sasak;

Bakayat;

Oral-Text;

Religious;

Metembang;

### Abstract

The aim of this study is to reveal the religious meaning of the spoken text 'bakayat' Sasak in the form of performances. Bakayat as a form of writing in the type of tale was delivered by metembang (singing) it along with its translation and interpretation in Sasak language. This spoken-text resembled pepaosan Sasak and mabebasan in Bali. It was used on Islamic celebration day and religious rituals of the Sasak people. The Bakayat Sasak as the religious text has religious meaning and it was interpreted in the various forms of meaning in its performance. The theory used to analyze the meaning of the spoken text 'bakayat' in this study is the theory of articulation. This theory stated that the connectivity between two or more elements of different cultural circles in the construction of the meaning of a cultural product always occurs in a certain condition. The relationship between various elements which are not fixed, essentials and absolute is a dialogical relationship. It occurs in specific coincidence condition. Therefore, the establishment of meaning is a dialogical relationship between the various sections of elements in the circle and it is always in the process. This study used 'bakayat' spoken texts as a primary source of data and interviews, observation, and documentation as its secondary data. The qualitative analytical method was used to analyze the data in this study, where the spoken texts were transcribed and translated. The data were analyzed based on the meaning of the performer of the bakayat spoken text. The results of this study indicate that the meaning of 'bakayat' Sasak not only contained religious meaning, but also social, historical, political, and aesthetic the meaning.

2455-8028 ©Copyright 2016. The Author.

This is an open-access article under the CC BY-SA license

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)

All rights reserved.

### Author correspondence:

I Made Suyasa,

Doctorate Program, Linguistics Studies Program, Udayana University,

Jalan P.B. Sudirman, Denpasar, Bali-Indonesia,

Email address : [kadeksuyasa@gmail.com](mailto:kadeksuyasa@gmail.com)

<sup>a</sup> Doctorate Program, Linguistics Studies Program, Udayana University Denpasar, Bali-Indonesia

<sup>b</sup> Doctorate Program, Linguistics Studies Program, Udayana University Denpasar, Bali-Indonesia

<sup>c</sup> Doctorate Program, Linguistics Studies Program, Udayana University Denpasar, Bali-Indonesia

## 1. Introduction

*Bakayat* Sasak is a tradition of uttering the Malay texts which contained religious meaning. The text comes from the books of the saga or poem that comes from the religious text of Islam. The book comes into this area at the same time of the spreading of Islam religion the Sasak people. It came from the Malay Peninsula and it was taken by traders as well as *mubaligh* (missionary). The saga book with Islamic tone had become reading material for the community as a way of Islamic learning. But in its development, it became a tradition that resembles in a form of a performance like *pepaosan* in Sasak and *mabebasan* in Bali. The *bakayat* was uttering by singing along with its translation and interpretation in Sasak language. It was performed alternately by the singer (*pemace*) and the interpreter (*bujangge*).

Another role of *Bakayat* tradition was used as a media of learning Islam religion. It is also used as a complement on the commemoration of Islamic special days (*Isra 'Mi'raj* and the *Birth of the Muhammad Prophet*). It is also used on a lot of rituals activity and religious customs (marriage, *bretes*, circumcision, *ngurising*, *nyiswaq*, Hajj celebration) by Sasak people. As time goes by, the tradition was left behind and the tradition was so rare nowadays. However, there are still some communities in specific areas such as Mapak Dasan Sasak village and Mapak Belatung Mataram city held this tradition and have become research areas. Because of the religious meaning it contained, the tradition of *bakayat* was held in various rituals.

The religious meaning of Islam in the saga and Malay poetry of *bakayat text was delivered by singing (menembangkan)*, translate and interpret the text in Sasak language. This was done to facilitate the audience in order to understand the Malay literary texts. In this performance, the singer of *bakayat* appreciates the text by connecting the original text with the Sasak people social discourse at that time. The spoken text of *Bakayat* as a literary text and in the hands of the *bakayat* singer and its society had become renewable text.

Macherey in Storey (2006: 38) said that the fiction text is 'spread out', in fact, it was not a complete fiction text. Furthermore, Macherey said that it should be added for the sake of making it as a unity because the texts were composed of a confrontation between several discourses: explicit, implicit, silent, and the absence or empty space. All of this became a task of critical practice to explain the gaps in the text that lead to conflict in meaning. The meaning of this text was 'inside and abstain' and repeat its self-understanding which caused failure in explaining the text correctly. The task of critical analysis practice was not to complete what was not mentioned in the text, but rather to produce a new knowledge about the text. It described the ideological importance of silence, absence, and its incompleteness. What the performer (singer) of *bakayat* did in its performance was matched with Macherey's view. It was showed that in giving the meanings of Malay saga text by translating and interpreting the text in Sasak language, therefore, it can connect the gaps between the text and the audience. In addition, it made the text become closer to real situation of the society.

*Bakayat* was originally a spoken-text containing religious meanings. Nowadays, it was revealed by the performer of *bakayat* and by its specific situational society. The purpose of the meaning revelation of the text is to describe it more clearly in order to fulfill the spiritual needs of its audience. According to Hall (2011: 226), the process of defining is not "natural" it is more like a product of articulation between two different movements. The theory of articulation revealed that the form incomplete definition of the text meaning as presented in *bakayat*. The output of the performance in the form of translation and interpretation performed by *Bujangga* was observed and studied as articulation product of the *bakayat* text. The working process is based on the view that the extension of the text meaning; it was born on the incompatibility of some meaning, the strongest bond is put on reality and confrontation which is constantly renewed (Macherey, 1978: 79-80). Furthermore, the interpretation of the text is not fixed and it is always changing based on the historical aspect, the situation, and the interests of the owner of the culture. The process of defining the meaning was a form of text articulation and disarticulation which performed by its fans and owners.

Based on those views, this study revealed the religious meaning of *bakayat* spoken-texts in the daily life of Sasak people. The meaning was revealed through various cultural practices and performances, which are still held in Sasak society today. The study provided an overview of the social situation of the performer and the audience of *bakayat* show which lead to a different point of view.

## 2. Research Methods

This study focused on the revelation of the religious meaning of the spoken text *bakayat* Sasak. The performance of the spoken text was held in the Mapak Dasan village and Mapak Belatung village in Mataram, Lombok. *Bakayat* was chosen as the main focus of this research because the Sasak *bakayat* spoken-text tradition

as cultural heritage was abandoned by their owners and its society. Therefore, the results of this study are important for documentation. *Bakayat* as verbalizes text was an interpretative qualitative research. In this study, researchers analyzed the discourse of the spoken text *bakayat* to discover the religious meaning it contained. The data were collected through performance recording. The recordings were transcribed and translated to facilitate understanding the text. *Bakayat* text discourse was analyzed in order to reveal the religious meaning that appeared in the cultural community. The actualization of the text discourse showed the proportion or form of the sentences and the events that lead to a dialectic (Probonegoro, 2008: 112). Dialectics can bring a wide range of behaviors and responses regarding the meaning of the *bakayat* text carried continuously.

### 3. Results and Analysis

*Bakayat* as the cultural practices of the Sasak people is presented in the form of a show or performance, which is the literary arts, and vocal form of spoken text. *Bakayat* becomes a tradition of the Sasak people of Lombok in the form of readings the saga/poetry by singing (*menembang*), along with its translation and interpretation in Sasak language alternately by the singer (*pemace*) and interpreter (*bujangge*). This tradition has a long history. From the data, this tradition started approximately in the 16th century or in early of the 17th century and it still continues today (Jamaluddin, 2011: 63-88). The demand to perform this tradition was not much, usually the parents, especially in rural areas as well as in the specific communities in urban areas, which still adhere to the traditions and customs of the past. The tradition usually performed on the commemoration of Islamic holidays such as: Isra 'Mi'raj and the Birth of the Prophet as well as religious custom events such as marriage, circumcision, baby haircut, *bretes* (celebration of 7th month of pregnancy), *nyiwag* ( the 9<sup>th</sup> days of memorial day of the dead ), and pilgrimage celebration. The performances were held in the evenings, moreover to convey the messages of religious preaching educational and entertaining way.

*Bakayat* as part of a cultural expression of the Sasak people in the literary art form. The text was read orally and became medium to reveal the meanings of texts in order to contextually communicated the content of the text to the society. Indonesian people, according to Teeuw (1994: 39) have *khirografik* culture, in a variety of environments where the reading of the manuscript has been prevalent and it is still prevalent. In some areas of Indonesia, this tradition is still occurring as *mabebasan*, *gegitaan* (in Bali), *macapatan* (in Java), *andpepaosan*, *bakayat*, *nyaer* (Lombok). Teeuw also stated that in the secondary orality, the text as written sources that underlying the verbal information that plays an important role (1994: 20-21). These events can be found in *bakayat* Sasak.

In *bakayat* text, it is always followed by religious meaning in every performance and cultural practices of the Sasak people. In each performance, the *bakayat* stimulated religious atmosphere through the singing (*tembang*), speech or words with religion nuanced (Islam) as well as the situation around the venue of the show. The center power of religious meaning in *bakayat* tradition evolved into various activities in the community life. It inspired the emergence of responses, thoughts, and ideas. All of that was a reaction from the reader or listener of the text in dealing with various phenomena. The phenomenon made the *bakayat* adjust with it in order to meet the needs of listeners/audience.

*Bakayat* presence in PHBI and various religious ceremonies have created a religious atmosphere to the Sasak people who carry it out. *Bakayat* was believed to give peace because the content of the text contained religious message so that the ceremony being held can be more preoccupied. The expression of gratitude and God's omnipotence in the text made the listeners feel protected and closer to the God. Religiousness perceived in *bakayat*, made few people use it as a compliment to religious ceremonies, vows (*bayar kaul*), and as media of preaching. The religious meaning is important in the text of *bakayat*, it gives the initial presence of writing of this text that used in preaching mission, namely the spreading and consolidation of Islamic Sasak community. Based on the mission of Islamic preaching, the text of *bakayat* was delivered in the form of stories, the prophets' stories to spread Islam. In those stories, a lot of messages that aimed to introduce monotheism in Islam was inserted at the same time strengthen the conviction of Islam as their religion.

*Bakayat* in its function as a media of communication associated with man's relationship with God and humanity's relationship to another human. God Almighty in everything presented and illustrated in the aesthetic language as a characteristic of the tradition of oral literature. Variety in literary use of the language and how it conveyed was not viewed in terms of its form, but also in how the text can arise the sense of pleased when the text was listened to. The presentation of *bakayat* not only created aesthetic effects to captivate the listener for smoothness and broadness of the story, but also make the spoken text can be soothing so it impressed as polite and not pushy. The use of polite language was part of the monotheism in the text of *bakayat* implied about the

singleness of God and His commandments must be obeyed by humans. *Bakayat* performer task was to explain and interpreted the vague of text and made it clear and brighter which conveyed in a pleasant way for its listener.

In the *bakayat* text that contained stories of the prophet's journey, there were a lot of lessons and meanings about life can be learned, both about the human relationship with God and human with another human. The historical meaning of the *bakayat* text in the story of Yusuf was not only created the sense of solidarity within the bounds of faith but also used as vessels in establishing the identity of the Sasak people who believe and made the story as guidance in life. The society can learn from history and through human history, they will remember every good deed of their predecessors who have guided them to the path of truth. Through human history, people could understand the nature of truth itself.

The *bakayat* presence in the life of the Sasak people has a political meaning related to with the dimension of power that affects people's lives. Political affairs are identical with power and associated with the policy, tactics, and other. Foucault in Lubis (2014: 85) stated that the discursive practice as the root of social life, and the study of discourse is essentially a study of power. He stated that in every society the production of discourse is always controlled, selected, recompensed by power based on a number of the fixed procedure. The meaning of power contained in the text of *bakayat* lead to the creation and retention of the ethnic Sasak order of life as hereditary which has passed down by previous generations. Political meaning as described in the *bakayat* text can be observed in the some of the attitudes and actions made by the Joseph (Yusuf) Prophet when he was believed to be the ruler of Egypt.

*Bakayat* text which implied a political meaning. In the user of power entrusted by the people, a leader must know problem and distress of the society. Many leaders forget their past when they became a ruler, they forgot what made them become official authority or ruler. Political meaning contained in the *bakayat* text is to remind the leaders and politicians to make policy that based on behalf and sake of the people. The form of textual linguistic that exposed the role of leader was inserted like the prophet Josephs story when he ate something he always remembers of his people who were still hungry, so when had a meal he would not eat too much and did not show luxuries. What Joseph's prophet said and done was to give the message that a leader should be able to serve and protect its people.

The revealing of the aesthetic meanings in the *bakayat* texts means to convey ideas, thoughts, and feelings through the choice of words used by the interpreter (*tukang cerite*). The aesthetic meaning was also characterized by the type of song (*tembang*) in *bakayat* that followed the content of the story. In addition to the typical song (*tembang*) of *bakayat* was also used *pepaosan* in *bakayat* text. It is used in verbalization process of the text becomes more various and interesting. For the interpreter (*tukang cerite*), *bakayat* was meant to communicate ideas, thoughts, and feelings through the choice of words it used. The aesthetic meaning emerges the pleasure for the listener or audience whether implied or not in the text. Aesthetic meaning can be recognized from the means of how it was expressed and the diction it used. The aesthetic was revealed through the choice of words in the text and contained a sense of pleasure. In the form of delivery, there is pleasure feeling in the strains of songs when the text was read orally. The strains of songs closely related to the aesthetic meaning with *habluminanas habluminallah*. *Habluminallah* is man's relationship with Allah, which has superior almighty. The text, that was read verbally and softly, make the reader of the text be closer to the God. *Habluminanas* is the relation between human beings in order to establish communication and meet the needs of their existence.

In every traditional ritual and religious activities, the tradition of *bakayat* always involves the people and society in the preparation of the ritual. It is also recorded in the implementation of the performances of *bakayat* Sasak. The involvement of local people in every performance of *bakayat* is a representation of harmony in relations among its people. Those representations of meaning were seen empirically as the effectiveness of social which was constructed by the Sasak ethnic communities through *bakayat* performances. In addition, the text was chanting in *bakayat* text also implied social meanings. It can be observed in the following quote.

The social meaning in *Bakayat* was realized by society when they made decisions, both for the public and for the family, such as marriage and death. Therefore, the social meaning which is reflected in the *bakayat* text empirically manifested in attitude and actions. It was done by the Sasak people when they encounter problems and in order to find the solution of the problem. The solidarity which is reflected in the text should be learned by the Sasak people as the owner of the tradition. This tradition is expected to be maintained in order to establish unity and social solidarity of Sasak people which is now being abandoned by the younger generation. In a deep observation of the social changing in Sasak culture about spoken-text reading tradition, it seems

that bakayat tradition slowly is in danger of extinction. Therefore, it needs attention and efforts to save the existence of this tradition.

#### 4. Conclusion

The role of *bakayat* text in society in the context of socio-cultural Sasak had implied religious, social, historical, political, and aesthetic meaning. The religious meaning of the text reveals the greatness of Allah, God Almighty with all of His commandment. God is believed as a form of supreme being that rule the whole universe. God is the most benevolent and the most merciful. The almighty of God becomes a source of moral and spiritual strength in order to make human remember his position in society. This was illustrated in the story of Prophet Yusuf of *bakayat text* through his behavior of the characters. Conceptualization of preaching in *bakayat* has developed into some variety of meanings in the Sasak community. The historical meaning of *bakayat text* is not only able to established solidarity within the community which is bonded in faith through the stories of the characters, but also it is used as a vessel of meaning to establish the identity as Sasak people. Political meaning which is reflected in the *bakayat* text can be used as a way maintained the stability and order in Sasak people's life. Furthermore, the political meaning of the text is a reminder to the leaders and politicians to always take sides and defend on the behalf of the people. Aesthetic meaning gave pleasure feeling to the audience/listeners. It can be observed from the style of how the texts were delivered in the form of the strains of songs and through the choice of words is used to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings. The social meaning woke up social effectiveness in society on the beginning state of the performance. The text implied the social meaning which is associated with kinship, mutual cooperation, and open forum discussion which established within religious ritual and performances of Sasak ethnic communities.




#### Acknowledgments

I dedicated this article to my lecturers, advisors, and professors and the beloved *almamater* that has led me to achieve the highest level of education degree. To the lovers of science and to my beloved family who has given me the opportunity to devote my life to work in the field of education and science.

**References**

- Grossberg, L. (1986). On postmodernism and articulation: An interview with Stuart Hall. *Journal of communication inquiry*, 10(2), 45-60.
- Hall, S. (1996). On postmodernism and articulation: an interview with Stuart Hall', Hall, S., Morley, D. & Chen, KH.(eds) Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies.
- Hall, S. (1996). The meaning of new times. *Stuart Hall: Critical dialogues in cultural studies*, 222, 236.
- Hall, S., Hobson, D., Lowe, A., & Willis, P. (2011). Budaya Media Bahasa: Teks Utama Pencanang Cultural Studies 1972-1979. *Terj. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra*.
- Indiani, N. M., & Suda, I. K. (2018). Interpret Ogoh-ogoh towards Hindu Contemporary Society. *International Research Journal of Management, IT and Social Sciences (IRJMIS)*, 5(1), 65-71.
- Lubis, A. Y. (2014). Postmodernisme: teori dan metode. *Jakarta: Rajawali Pers*.
- Macherey, P. (2006). *Theory of literary production*. Routledge.
- Mandala, H. (2018). Divergent Principles of Politeness in Verbal and Non-Verbal Directive Speech Act. *International Research Journal of Engineering, IT and Scientific Research (IRJEIS)*, 4(2), 41-51.
- Putra, I. N. D. (2014). Popularizing Religious Values through Textual Singing on Interactive Radio and TV Programmes in Bali. *The Journal of Hindu Studies*, 7(2), 273-295.
- Suarta, I. M., Widana, I. W., & Citrawan, I. W. (2018). Lontar manuscript readability. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture (IJLLC)*, 4(2), 58-65.
- Teeuw, A. (1994). *Indonesia: antara kelisananan dan keberaksaraan*. Pustaka Jaya.
- Yusuf, M. (2006). *Sejarah Peradaban Islam di Indonesia*. Pustaka.

**Biography of Authors**

	<p><b>I Made Suyasa</b> is a student who has completed the Doctoral Program (S3) in Udayana University, Bali. He is a lecturer and researcher at the University of Muhammadiyah Mataram, Lombok in the field of languages, Indonesian, and the local literature. In addition, he also was a speaker at several national and international seminars and author of some articles in several local and national scientific journals. He is a trainer in the field of Indonesian language learning and Indonesian literature for middle and high school teachers in West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.</p>
	<p><b>I Nyoman Weda Kusuma</b> is a professor in the literature field of study in Udayana University, Denpasar, Bali. He is also a lecturer for doctoral and master program in several universities since 2001. His result of research in the field of Balinese traditional text was published in some papers, books, and scientific journals. In addition, he is also an active member in various professional organizations, one of the organization is the Association of Commissariat Spoken/Oral Tradition of Bali.</p>
	<p><b>I Nyoman Suarka</b> is a professor of literature at University of Udayana, Bali. He is also a researcher and author of papers and articles in several scientific journals which related to local literature, especially in the field of Balinese papyrus manuscripts. He actively conducted a lot of community service in the field of quality and creativity as well as material Balinese arts festival since 2007-2010 which sponsored and supported by the local government of Bali. He has won several national competitive types of research grants and the result of the research has been published in several books and papers.</p>