

LANGUAGE, HUMOR, AND FOCUS AS MAIN KEYS IN WAYANG PRESERVATION

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Abstract

Wayang is one of the Indonesian ancestor's heritage and the nation's indigenous pride. However, as time goes on, Wayang is slowly being abandoned. This is due to various factors that make people uninterested. Some of those factors are the difficulty to understand the language that is being used, the low amount of humor, and the long duration of the play so the concentration or focus of people cannot keep up with it. The truth is, besides serving as a show and entertainment, Wayang also has a moral value to tell. However, the difficulty to grasp the language and the attention of the audience have lowered people's interest in the show therefore a solution to this problem is needed. The problem is, "How do we approach and manage the problems in order to preserve Wayang in the current developing era?" So, the author aims to find the relation between language, humor, and concentration or focus on the Wayang show. Thus, finding a possible solution in hope to attract people or even the younger generation's interest to Wayang. The author used *literature review* as a method to gather data and a descriptive-qualitative research to analyze the data. Various data gathered and connected with each other, thus has proven that Wayang can be modified to suit the developing era better. The limitation of this research is that this is just a theorycraft therefore it needs to be practiced in real life situations to see how it goes.

Keywords: language, humor, focus, wayang, preservation

INTRODUCTION

The Wayang shadow play is an Indonesian indigenous culture that has been acknowledged by the world and awarded by UNESCO as Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity on 21st of April 2004 in Paris, France. UNESCO's former director-general, Koichiro Matsuura, suggested to Wayang narrators or *dalang* so that they preserve and develop the Wayang shadow play.

However, as time goes on, Wayang is being abandoned instead. Culture observationalist, Indra Tranggono, says that the nation has been ignoring the local culture. Mass foreign cultural penetration that is also supported by capital power has made the local culture even more marginalized. "What an irony, when UNESCO put Wayang as one of the world heritage, the nation does not do any

clear protection," says Tranggono during the Wayang and Young Generation seminar that was conducted at Koesnadi Hardjasoemantri Culture Centre.

Sri Waluyo, an artist who graduated from Indonesian Art Institute says that the lowering interest of the young generation towards national arts, not only caused by the foreign culture that gets in, but also due to the persistence of senior artists that holds on culture and arts tradition. During his time at The Jakarta Art Building, he also explained that kids nowadays have trouble understanding the language that is being used on Wayang.

Language is an introduction element that also gives understanding to a story. A story or act that uses difficult language will cause difficulty to grasp the story's central theme. This difficulty caused people to hesitate or get bored to continue listening to the story. However, the truth is, Wayang has a point or

moral value that should be delivered to the audience so that they can take the lesson from that Wayang show.

Besides the difficulties in language understanding, the need for an appropriate amount of humor can help attract people's attention. Research that was conducted by Djunaidi (2019), proved that an inserted humor can help someone to feel fun, increasing their memorizing ability, and increasing the learning quality. However, Ki Manteb Soedarsono said that, if there is too much humor or *campursari* in the play, that will just make the moral value cannot be delivered as intended. Therefore, when inserting humor during a lesson or in this context, the Wayang play, the *dalang*, or the Wayang narrator should pay attention to the humor amount so the aims of Wayang play with delivering moral value can still be delivered.

The next factor is the level of focus or concentration of the audience. As the world develops, students are being forced to face complex difficult conditions to be fulfilled. In this context, one example from Rahmawati (2019) is the increase of learning laziness due to the students' focus on gadgets or smartphones. This era that demands effectiveness and efficiency or quickness, if correlated with the long duration of Wayang play, becomes less suited. People tend to choose something quick and appropriate with the developing era. This less suited Wayang play duration and the tendency of people during this era has caused disinterest towards Wayang, and based on Nurhasanah (2020), it could indirectly affects a person's level of concentration or attention.

Based on the factors above, the author searches for the relation between language, humor, focus level on Wayang, and also provides a possible solution for the problem. Other than that, the need to attract the young generation's interests towards Wayang and to provide a creative solution for Wayang's concept as an effort to preserve the Indonesian indigenous culture are also the reasons for doing this research.

This research aims to find the relation between language, humor, and focus level on Wayang play. The difficulty of understanding language, the low amount of humor, and the long duration of wayang have caused people's disinterest towards Wayang. Therefore, the author decided to find a solution to this problem.

Based on the facts and backgrounds that have been written above, we can write down the problem that we are going to discuss, which is, "What is the relation between language, humor, and focus level and its relevance with this era for Wayang?"

METHOD

Author aims at Wayang traditional shadow play as the research object. The traditional play uses a stage, *gamelan*, and the traditional play ethics. In this research writing, the author uses the Literature Review technique. This technique is used to gather the needed data as material to discuss the addressed problem. The author also screened the data so the used data sourced from credible sources such as Google Scholar and Garuda within 2019-2021 range sources. Then, the derived data is written down and connected so it will be able to answer the addressed problem. Analysis method used is descriptive-qualitative. With this method, the explanation is expected to be descriptive and gives a comprehensive explanation for the addressed problem.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Language

The first aspect that will be discussed in this paper is about the language that is used during Wayang play. Usually, a Wayang show uses Javanese. Javanese that is used can also come in variety since there is also a language degree or level for mannerism. Besides, where the *dalang* comes from can also affect Wayang show's language usage. One *dalang* can differ from other *dalang* in saying the words in Javanese with different tones or articulation. This determines whether it is easy

or not for someone to understand the story during the Wayang show.

In this paper, the author picks a Wayang show example which was done by *dalang* Ida Bagus Sudiksa on the Calonarang Lakon Kautus Rarung Wayang show. Ida uses various languages during the show, such as Kawi, Ancient Javanese, Bali, Indonesian, and others as per each character's needs.

The variety of language used demands for people to know the words so that they can understand the story or moral value that the *dalang* wants to deliver. This indirectly confuses understanding the language which also causes difficulty in understanding the story.

Furthermore, research that was conducted by Dewi NK (2019), stated that kindergarten students nowadays lack in mannerism and mixed Indonesian and the lowest mannerism degree Javanese when talking with the teacher. This is because parents tend to use Indonesian in everyday life so children accept Indonesian as the first language.

Article 32 Section 2 of The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia encourages the nation to respect and preserve the local language as national culture assets. Research that was conducted by Bayu Aji Suseno recommends the introduction of Wayang to freely use the local or national language, which is Indonesian. This mainly depends on the local ethnic situation; if there is no other ethnicity that presents at the location, then the local language is applicable. However, if there are other ethnicities in the location, then the national language Indonesian is recommended so it is more flexible in introducing Wayang. Research by Suseno BA (2021) also states the sense of pride of the younger generation which makes them reluctant in using local language due to globalization. Furthermore, research that was conducted by Suhariyanti (2020), shows that the usage of Indonesia's national language can be an effective communication choice in delivering information.

Besides the decline in the ability to speak Javanese of the younger generation, the need for English speaking skills especially in this globalization era also affects them in learning Javanese. English plays an important role during globalization for international competition and the simpleness of getting connected with other nations in the world. Therefore, English that has been used as an International language became one of the

important courses that need to be taught in various schools besides the local language. Not to mention that there is a demographic bonus for Indonesia in the year 2045 where there will be many Indonesian people with productive age. This situation encouraged the government to push the knowledge that could be useful for Indonesia to face globalization especially on the ability to speak English.

Humor

The next one is about humor. Humor is one of the efforts to make someone laugh. Humor can be done in various sectors, not just in school. Research that was conducted by Djunaidi (2019) has proven that a humor insertion with Strategic Pause technique can make the situation or atmosphere to be fun and also increase the brain ability of students to remember and grasp lessons.

The statement above can be adapted into the Wayang show. This is because a Wayang show is connected with delivering moral value to the audience. Therefore, humor is expected to help people's understanding process and help lessen the tension of the atmosphere during the Wayang play.

The form of humor that can be adapted into Wayang is verbal humor, which is the humor that uses language to present it; it usually comes in written or spoken form. With the use of language, the audience is presented with the play of words that can be unexpected and cause amusement.

This humor technique is already researched by Yuwana (2019), which discussed the verbal humor strategy that is used by Cak Lontong. Cak Lontong is famous for its non-physical appearance-related humor, so his humor can be grasped by vast types of people. The play of words that Cak Lontong presents common words and language that is known by the majority of people which then by using his language experience, he makes those common words become humor.

If the use of common words and language that Cak Lontong does in his humor is applied within the Wayang show, then it has the potential to present humor to the audience, therefore attracting people's interest towards Wayang. This is mainly because of the use of common words and language that is known by the majority of people so they can grasp the humor easier.

Furthermore, research that was conducted by Wijaya (2020), shows that someone who can receive or grasp humor has good emotional intelligence and tends to have openness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness personality.

In this context, the openness personality shows a joyful personality and is easy to accept people around. The use of humor in this context is expected to establish the openness personality so people can receive and enjoy the Wayang show.

Some statements above show the role of humor which, if being used with adequate proportion using the Strategic Pause method and verbal humor, is expected to attract people's interest, make the atmosphere fun, and increase the brain's ability in remembering. If this is applied to Wayang it is expected to give a new atmosphere, experience, and feeling during the show.

Focus

Focus or attention can also be called as mind centering towards a certain object. In this context, during a Wayang show, the audience is expected to focus on the show. If it is connected with Wayang, we can see it from the show's duration aspect. The usual Wayang show lasts around 9 hours. The first phase is the character introduction and conflict which lasts around 4-5 hours. The second phase is war and climaxes which usually lasts around 3 hours. Then the third phase or the ending and conflict resolving which lasts around 1-2 hours.

Indra Tranggono states that the duration of Wayang which is too long is also one of the factors which makes the younger generation avoid it. This long duration of Wayang drains the energy and attention of the Wayang audience. The attention of the audience slowly decreases and eventually, they feel bored. This boredom is one of the factors which causes the audience to not focus on the show anymore.

This focus or attention if correlated with the developing era is about how many matters that are present and the complex condition which forces students to face it and is difficult to fulfill. This complex condition is usually connected with various matters, especially with Smartphone technology, which is commonly seen even at a relatively young age. Research that was conducted by Nurhasanah (2020) shows the relation between students' matters and stress level, which indicates that they grow linearly with each other. This stress level affects students' attention levels. Furthermore, a student will have an easier time focusing on things they like more.

Other than that, the research which was conducted by Luh Putu Marhaeni (2021) shows that the excessive usage of smartphones on students can affect the concentration level to be on

the low level. Furthermore, students tend to do other activities than searching for information about the school course, this is because of the boredom that the course has. This excessive usage of smartphones can cause insomnia that leads to a decline in sleep quality. Based on Fitriahadi (2020), this causes a lower level of attention focusing (9). If correlated with Wayang, then the long duration of Wayang along with the developing era further affects the attention thus leads towards boredom and causes people to be distracted easier.

Based on the statements above, the author gives a possible solution towards the decline of people with Wayang in the current era. The first suggestion is about the language. The language which is usually used during the show is Javanese, and it has a mannerism degree which makes it hard to understand. Therefore, for the introduction of Wayang, the national Indonesian language should be used as an alternative solution. Therefore, with Indonesia's national language to introduce Wayang, people are expected to understand Wayang easier.

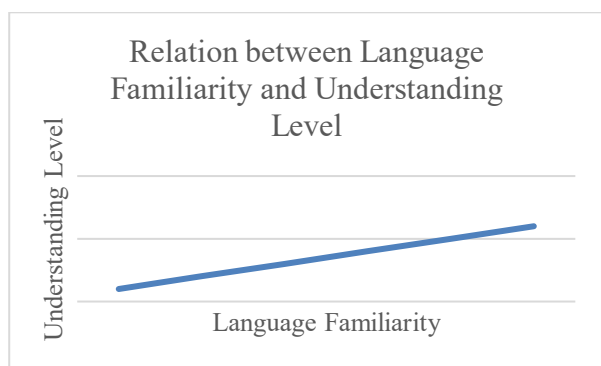
Related to humor, it has been mentioned that Wayang at the current state uses humor, but it needs to pay attention to its humor proportion so moral value or message delivering will not be forgotten. The humor form that can be applied to Wayang is the verbal humor with Cak Lontong humor strategy. Yuwana (2019) states that Cak Lontong uses common words and language, but with his strategy, he is able to make it an unexpected yet humorous one that can be accepted by the vast majority of people. More than that, based on Djunaidi (2019), with humor, the fun atmosphere during the show is expected to be built thus increasing the brain ability of the audience.

The last factor is about the focus of the audience. The long duration of Wayang can potentially decrease the concentration level of the audience. Furthermore, based on Luh Putu Marhaeni (2021), the developing era and technology factors can also affect the level of the audience's concentration. Therefore, lowering the duration of Wayang but still delivering moral value or message is expected to attract people's interest. The form of reducing the duration can be done by reducing the unnecessary scenes that have less impact on the shown story.

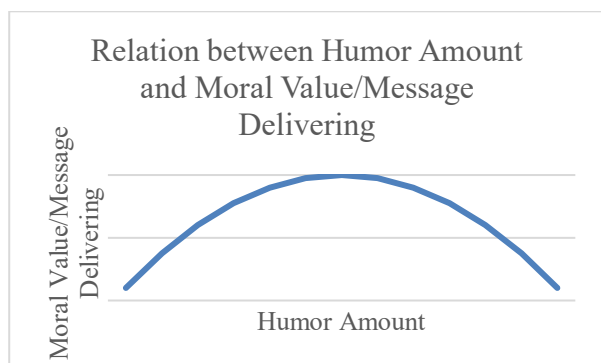
From the suggestions above, it can be inferred that: (1) Wayang needs to be first introduced with familiar language to audiences, (2) Humor with proper proportion or amount can be

used effectively to attract people’s attention but still able to delivering moral value effectively, (3) Shorter duration of the Wayang show should make it more relevant with the all quick or effective and efficient era therefore not wasting people’s time.

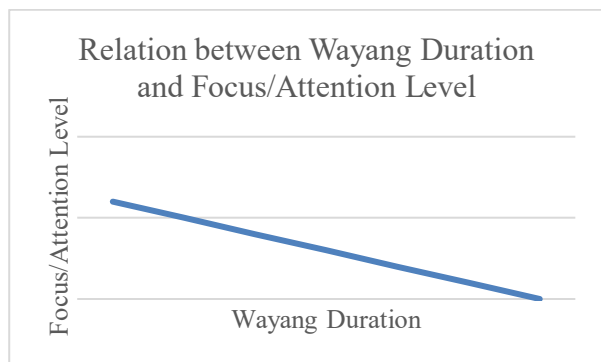
Pictures and Graphs



Graph 1. Relation between Language Familiarity and Understanding Level



Graph 2. Relation between Humor Amount and Moral Value/Message Delivering



Graph 3. Relation between Wayang Duration and Focus/Attention Level

CONCLUSION

Wayang is an indigenous Indonesian culture that has been acknowledged by the world. However, the low interest of the younger generation to learn and preserve it is one of the signs that could endanger the future Wayang culture. The reason is because of the low relevance between language used in the Wayang show with the current era, the need for proper humor proportion in the Wayang show, and the low relevance between the long duration and the current era.

The difficulty of language which is used during the Wayang show is one of the factors that cause Wayang to be avoided by the younger generation. They feel the difficulty of understanding and listening to the show that usually uses Javanese. Furthermore, globalization which encourages the younger generation to learn English pushed that factor further.

Besides language, the other factor is the long duration of the Wayang show. The younger generation nowadays expects the Wayang show to be quick, so it will not interfere with their other activities. Besides, the long duration of the show affects the attention or focus level of the audience. The decline in focus could cause someone to feel bored which leads to undelivered moral values or messages from the show. As a solution, inserting humor while reducing the duration should help attract more people's interest.

This research is limited to only theorycraft, therefore a real practical is needed for further research and to prove the solution model. Author gives suggestions and relevance of various aspects of Wayang with the current era which can be used for further research.

All in all, as Indonesian, they need to realize that Wayang is their indigenous culture that is in crisis condition for the moment due to globalization. If this thing goes ignored, then it is not a shock if their culture got erased or even taken away from other nations. For now, it is important for the nation to attract people or even the younger generation's interest towards

Wayang, before giving them the principles of a Wayang show.

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