Linguistic and Philosophical Investigations
ISSN: 1841-2394, e-ISSN: 2471-0881
Vol 23 (1), 2024
pp. 13–20

Dissemination of Balinese Script Religiosity in Balinese Calligraphy: Semiotic Studies

Ida Bagus Rai Putra[1], Ida Ayu Putu Aridawati[2], I Wayan Simpen[3]

Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Udayana University[1,3]

National Research and Innovation Agency[2]

Correspondence: wynsimpen60@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: Balinese calligraphy was born in the middle of the strong issue about Balinese language marginality. Although, the art of writing Balinese script beautifully has been found since Ancient Bali period, a special awareness of writing Balinese calligraphy appeared since 2013, when Balinese language subjects would be replaced with cultural and arts. Since its appearance, Balinese calligraphy does not only contain profane themes, but is also loaded with religious values. Thus, indirectly Balinese calligraphy actually disseminates the dimension of religiosity in Balinese script. This dimension of religiosity is important to be studied more deeply to reveal the spiritual messages written by calligraphers. This study examined the religiosity of Balinese calligraphy with data sources derived from the collections of the Gunarsa Museum, the Center for Lontar Studies of Udayana University, Cultural Office of Denpasar, and the Indonesian Hindu University. The data were collected by using listening methods and were analyzed by using semiotic theory and phonology. Starting from this theory, the religiosity of Balinese script in Balinese calligraphy is revealed and presented by informal methods or using ordinary words. Based on the studies conducted, it can be revealed that the dissemination of Balinese script religiosity in Balinese script calligraphy is manifested in the form of calligraphy which is taken from sacred characters and mantras. This finding strengthens the superiority of Balinese calligraphy in the world of creative industries.

Keywords: Balinese Calligraphy, Dissemination, Semiotics, and Religiosity

Received: 12 May 2024 **Revised:** 08 June 2024 **Accepted:** 28 June 2024

1. Introduction

The Balinese calligraphy nowadays has strong roots in the historical dynamics of Balinese script. During the *Bali Kuna* period, Balinese script was not only used to write inscriptions, but also to write functional *rajah kajang* in the death rites of the Balinese people. Rajah kajang does not only uses literacy facilities, but also non-script factors such as certain images, so that besides it symbolizes religious values, it also has a very high aesthetic value. During the Central Balinese period, the literatures of *Kidung Puspa Sancaya* and *Kidung Padma Muter* were written on padma flower petals so as to create an aesthetic impression that resembles the calligraphy forms of Balinese script today.

In the Modern Balinese era, the appearence of Balinese calligraphy was celebrated by holding Balinese Language Festival at the Gunarsa Museum in 2013 Since the Balinese language festival held at the Gunarsa messeum in 2013, the passion for the creation of Balinese calligraphy has increased. This can be seen from the existence of a number of institutions that also keep Balinese script calligraphy such as the Center for Lontar Studies of Udayana University, Indonesian Hindu University, and the Cultural Office of Denpasar. The development of Balinese calligraphy is supported by Balinese calligraphy competitions conducted by some institutions such as schools, government offices, and universities.

The development of Balinese calligraphy art actually indirectly disseminates the dimensions of Balinese script religiosity. The religiosity of Balinese script in the Balinese calligraphy landscape is important to be examined more deeply to strengthen its potential in the world of creative industries. It is undeniable that the values of religiosity are a distinguishing feature of Balinese calligraphy from other types of artworks. Therefore, it is very important to trace the role of calligraphy in disseminating these values in various spheres of life. Starting from the background, this research problem is focused on two related to religiosity disseminated in Balinese script calligraphy and the role of Balinese script calligraphy in disseminating Balinese script religiosity. Solving these two problems is very important because Balinese script calligraphy is a new form of creativity in empowering Balinese script in the middle of the global world current.

The potential of Balinese script calligraphy which has strong roots in the dynamics of Balinese script and the use of ordinary and sacred script as an important element in its creation which can enter to various layers of space in the life of Balinese people. Therefore, research on the superior potential of calligraphy in disseminating aspects of Balinese script religiosity needs to continue. Thus, this research provided important benefits both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research would be useful in identifying Balinese calligraphy that is rich in religiosity, but has not received much attention. Meanwhile, practically this research can be used as a guide to make calligraphy works that contain elements of religiosity.

The research location targets Balinese Calligraphy storage sites, including (1) the Center for Lontar Studies of Udayana University (Denpasar), (2) the Art Studio of Hindu University of Indonesia (Denpasar), (3) the Cultural Office of Denpasar, and (4) the Gunarsa Museum (Klungkung). The data sources used were divided into two, namely Balinese calligraphy in written and interviews with Balinese calligraphy owners or artists. The method applied in this study follows three stages consisting of (1) data provision, (2) data analysis, and (3) presentation of analysis results. At the stage of providing data, two methods are used, namely the listen method and the cakap method. Once the data is available, the next stage is data analysis. The stages of data analysis are adjusted to the theory, namely phonological theory and semiotic theory. In the stage of presenting the results of data analysis, the methods used are informal and formal methods

2. Discussion

The religiosity of Balinese calligraphy can be divided into two such as the religiosity of various types of sacred characters and the passage of mantras. The sacred characters in question are ongkara, rwa bhineda, tri aksara, dasaksara, and dasa bayu.

Of the five types of characters used in making calligraphy, the three most common types of characters found in calligraphy are the sacred ongkara script, the sacred script Rwa Bhineda, and the sacred script Triaksara. In detail, described below,

2.1 Balinese script

2.1.1 Ongkara Sacred Script

The sacred ongkara script became one of the most inspiring Balinese calligraphy artists. When the awareness to paint Balinese calligraphy was first carried out by Balinese painting maestro I Nyoman Gunarsa in 2013, he also painted ongkara script with various ornaments. In Gunarsa museum was found a number of Balinese calligraphies that used ongkara script as the main script. Below are presented a number of calligraphies works of Balinese script using ongkara script.



Calligraphy by Kadek Novi Wulandari, entitled The Nature of Human Birth and Rwa Bhineda.
Collection of Nyoman Gunarsa Museum

The Balinese calligraphy on the picture uses combination of colors which is dominated by black, and combined with yellow, red, and white. In the script section is written in yellow, at the bottom of the script there is a red lotus flower, and ornament that resembles tree roots on the right and left sides with yellow. In addition, there are thin scratches of OM script that are analyzed in white.

Balinese script is written in the middle of the image with a large size. Meanwhile, the characters that are written with the word OM with a smaller size, written randomly at each corner of the picture.

Overall, the calligraphy uses the Sanskrit variety of OM. The OM script in Jñanasiddhanta's text is emptiness and the highest principle, which is also the highest goal, is considered equal to Lord Shiva and equal to the highest abstract syllable.

2.1.2 Sacred Script of Rwa Bhineda



Calligraphy collection of Yadiawati, S.Pd, with the title Meditation.

Collection of Nyoman Gunarsa Meseum

The Balinese calligraphy on the picture uses combination of colors which is dominated by white and black, and combined with gray and brown. There are two pictures at the base such as there is a picture of the sun on the top and there is a picture of a lotus flower at the bottom. Meanwhile, the series of Balinese characters written in calligraphy uses black and white, and forms a manifestation of people who are doing meditation

The rwa bhineda or biaksara script in the Balinese calligraphy is written in a vertical row that can be read from bottom to top, namely AH (at the bottom) and ANG (at the top). The sacred script AH is a symbol of amertha or holy water of life possessed by the masculine energy of the universe (purasa). Meanwhile, the ANG script is a symbol of fire possessed by the feminine energy of life (pradana). The string

of bijaksara in Balinese calligraphy above is a formula that causes death because it is written the opposite of the creation formula, namely ANG, AH. This concept is contained in one of the literary texts entitled Jñanasiddhanta.

2.1.3 Tri-Character Sacred Script



Calligraphy by I Ketut Jaya with the title Tryaksara.

Collection of Nyoman Gunarsa Museum

The Balinese calligraphy on the picture uses combination of brown, white, blue, and green colors and which is combined with red and black. At the base, it looks like an ardhacandra, winding, and tone mark. The three signs are usually placed on top of the O (Ongkara) script. Meanwhile, a series of Balinese characters written in black and brown for ANG and MANG, and red for UNG. The calligraphy series is commonly referred to as Tri Aksara.

Balinese script is written vertically from bottom to top, consisting of three characters such as ANG, UNG, and MANG. This concept is contained in the text of Jñanasiddhanta. ANG, UNG, and MANG characters are included in the concept of Tryaksara with a combination of arcandra windhu and tone. The Ang script usually symbolizes Lord Brahma as the ruler of fire energy in the universe. He served as creator. Furthermore, the Ung script symbolizes Lord Vishnu as the ruler of water energy. He served as a custodian. Finally, the Mang script symbolizes Lord Shiva as the ruler of the wind. He served as a god who restored his original life or pralina.

2.2. Quote of Mantra

Passages that serve as sources of Balinese calligraphy art found in this study are divided into three. First, the opening mantra is om swastyatu Second, the mantra of supplication to get a good mind. Third, mantras are used to worship Lord Gana.

2.2.1 Mantra of Opening

Mantra which is used to open an event as well as the opening greeting in Hinduism is called om swastyastu. In addition, om awighnamastu is also often used. Calligraphy that uses the opening mantra om swastyatu in Balinese calligraphy is presented below.



Calligraphy by I Ketut Suwidiartha

Collection of Nyoman Gunarsa Museum

The Balinese calligraphy on the picture uses a combination of colors dominated by red, dark green, white, brown, black, and blue. In general, the series of Balinese characters are written in black, but the Balinese script in the middle is written in two colors, such as white and black on a black and red background. Meanwhile, the series of Balinese characters written in calligraphy does not show certain figure and one script which is located in the middle of a box also does not form a certain embodiment or figure.

Balinese script is written in a row horizontally from left to right. Overall, the calligraphy uses a variety of Balinese Sanskrit in the series of characters that form sentences, namely Om Swastyastu. The existence of Balinese calligraphy written om swastyastu actually disseminates the religiosity of Balinese script. The opening mantra om swastyastu can cause the mantra to enter various layers of circles because it is presented in a very aesthetic form by Balinese calligraphy artists. This has become very important in the world of creative industries. Because, with the meaning of asking is expected that it will always be safe. Balinese Hindus most likely want to collect them in various suitable spaces.

2.2.2 Mantra of Good Thought



Calligraphy by I Nengah Kariasa

Collection of Nyoman Gunarsa Museum

The Balinese calligraphy on the picture uses combination of colors which is dominated by black and white and combined with red. At the base, you can see an image like a flying lion in the upper right corner, a picture of several ejections in the middle, and a picture of a canoe (upakara) in the lower left corner. Meanwhile, the series of Balinese characters written in black and in calligraphy do not form a certain embodiment or figure.

Balinese script is written in a row horizontally from left to right. Overall, the calligraphy uses a variety of Sanskrit, namely Om Anohadrah Kratawayantur Wiswatak. Overall, the mantra means that good thoughts come from all directions.

2.2.3 Mantra of Worship to Gana



I Wayan Karta, S.Pd., M.Si.

Collection of Nyoman Gunarsa Museum

The Balinese calligraphy on the picture is dominated by black and white. There was a snake wrapped around resembling the Ongkara script. At the bottom of the script there is a lotus beside which there is a picture of water. Meanwhile, in the middle of Ongkara, there is an inscription resembling Lord Gana holding a Trident. The writing reads Om gham ghanapataye ya namah. The writing is a mantra usually addressed to Gana as the god of science in Hinduism.

2.2 The Role of Balinese Calligraphy in Disseminating Balinese Religiosity Balinese script

Calligraphy is part of the development of Balinese script which is loaded with religiosity values. The view of modern society certainly places the script as a means of inscription of thoughts or feelings. Therefore, the script is referred to as a way that can represent not only the thoughts and feelings of the author, but also contained values and policies. Through the existence of script, these values can exist, survive, and be passed on to one generation to the next.

Written language is able to see all aspects of human life, both physical and mental, spiritual. Written language will also be able to record the culture of its people, if one day the spoken language dies (no longer used). Writing is a tool for preserving spoken language (Antara, 2005: 180). Writing can transcend the boundaries of time and space as well as across generations. Some that are not recorded, will and have been lost to the generation that sought to maintain that greatness through oral tradition.

These policies are not only concerned with matters related to the euphoria of people's daily lives, but also to relate to transcendent nature that they cannot touch. When it happens, there is a human effort to use script as a means of connection. This demand is what actually causes in the life of Balinese people, script is not only a means of inscription but also closely related to the spiritual world. Balinese script became multifunctional, not only a tool for writing our thoughts, feelings, folklore, agreement, and literature. However, it also became symbols of the power of the gods, status, weapons, human organs, how to cure diseases, and others. These factors cause the script called *makuta mandita* not only functions as an

ordinary written communication medium, but it is also called a sacred and powerful script because it is believed to be able to deliver supernatural and spiritual powers.

The Balinese script is thus not only a symbol for writing something, but also developed into a sound (word) that is believed to be able to generate and deliver mystical, occult, and spiritual forces beyond the limits of human ability. Of course, this is also what has been consciously and fundamentally understood and lived by the ancestors of the Balinese people. Therefore, experts then distinguish Balinese script based on its form and function into ordinary script and sacred script. Simpen, for example, (1979) distinguished Balinese script based on its function into three, namely (1) wreastra; (2) swalalita: (3) modre. Furthermore, Bagus (1980: 9), clearly incorporated wreastra and swalalita scripts into ordinary script. As well as the modre and wijaksara scripts into the sacred script.

Starting from the description of the types of Balinese script, Balinese script calligraphy actually participates in efforts to spread the religious dimension of Balinese script with an aesthetic or beautiful dimension. With calligraphy that takes sacred characters and mantras, Balinese calligraphy actually plays a very vital role in spreading the values of Balinese script religiosity which is symbolically contained in the calligraphy series. Thus, one of the advantages of Balinese script calligraphy is the aesthetics of the script that present the boundaries to things related to sacred values.

3. Conclusion

Based on the study conducted on Balinese Calligraphy, two things which can be concluded in this study. First. Balinese calligraphy is proven to play a role in disseminating religiosity in Hinduism through the use of sacred characters such as ongkara, rwa bhinneda, tri aksara, dasaksara, and dasa bayu. Balinese calligraphy also takes good mantra passages of opening mantras such as Om Swastyastu, good thought mantras such as Om Ano Bhadrah Kratawo Yantu Wiswatah, and worship mantras of Lord Gana as in the quotation of Om gham Ghanapataye ya namah. Second, starting from the religiosity of Balinese script disseminated by the calligraphy, the opportunity for Balinese calligraphy can also actually be used to decorate holy places. Thus, this study proves that Balinese calligraphy can be used as a creative industry because it can present into sacred domains.

References

[1] Antara, Gde Nala 2008, Eksistensi Aksara Bali dalam Masyarakat Bali. Denpasar: Jurusan Sastra Daerah Program dan Studi Doktor S3 Kajian Budaya.

[2] Bagus, I Gusti Ngurah 1980. *Aksara dalam Kebudayaan Bali, suatu Kajian Antropologi* (Pidato Pengukuhan Guru Besar) Denpasar Universitas Udayana.

[3] Bandana, I Gde Wayan Soken, dkk, 2012, Bahasa, Aksara dan Sastra Bali dalam Wacana Seremonial Kematian Denpasar: Cakra Press

[4] Gelgel, I Ketoet. 1923. *Tjontoh Menoelis Huruf Bali*, Weltevreden: Landsdrukkerij.

[5] Ginarsa Ketut 1980. *Sepintas tentang Sejarah Aksara Bali*. Singaraja: Balai Penelitian Bahasa Cabang 1.

[6] Granoka, Ida Wayan, 1997. *Perburuan ke Prana Jiwa Perburuan Seorang Ida Wayan Oka Granoka.* Maha Bajra Sandi dan Universitas Udayana.

[7] Hood, Beny H. 2008. *Semiotika dan Dinamika Sosial Budaya*. Depok Fakultas Ilmu. Pengetahuan Budaya (FIB) UI Depok.

[8] Jaman, I Gede. *Rerajahan dalam Kehidupan*. Surabaya: Paramita.

[9] Kaler, I Nyoman. *Krakah Modre II*. Denpasar. Percetakan dan Toko Buku Ria

[10] Kridalaksana, Harimurti. 2005, *Aksara dan Ejaan*, Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

[11] Mahsun, *Metode Penelitian Bahasa Tahapan Strategi Metode*, *dan Tekniknya*. Jakarta: Pt. Rajagrafindo Persada

[12] Medera, dkk. *Pedoman Pasang Aksara Bali*. Denpasar: Dinas Kebudayaan Provinsi Bali.

[13] Mertha, I Made. 1988. "Kajian Sejarah Ejaan Aksara Bali" (skripsi sarjana). Denpasar. Fakultas Sastra Universitas Udayana.

[14] _____1992. "Klasifikasi Aksara Bali"(Laporan Penelitian). Denpasar. Fakultas Sastra Universiats Udayana.
[15] _____1993. "Pelik-Pelik Pasang Aksara Bali"(Laporan Penelitian). Denpasar. Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Udayana.
[16] Nala, Ngurah. 2006. *Aksara dalam Usadha*. Surabaya: Paramitha.
[17] Ra, Anadas. *Pranawa Om*, 2008: Paramita: Surabaya.
[18] Ratna, I Nyoman Kuta. 2004. *Teori, Metode, dan Teknik Penelitian Sastra dari Strukturalisme hingga Poststrukturalisme Perspektif Wacana Naratif*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
[19] _____2005. "Peran Aksara dalam Perubahan Budaya Global: Menyimak Nilai-Nilai Kelisanan dan Keberaksaraan" Denpasar. Program studi Magister (S2) dan Program $3 Doktor Kajian Budaya Fakultas Sastra Universitas Udayana.
[20] Rawi, I Ketut Bangbang Gde. 1958. *Buku Sutji Prama Tatwa Suksma Agama Hindhu Bali*. Denpasar. Pustaka Bali Mas.
[21] Sastro, Mas Niti dan Ida Ketoet Djelantik. 1918. *Balineesche Schrijftaal*. Batavia: Landsdrukerij.
[22] Schwartz, H.J.E.F. 1931. *Oeger-Oeger Aksara saha Pasang Sasoeratan Basa Bali Kepara*.
[23] Simpen AB, I Wayan. 1973. *Pasang Aksara Bali.* Denpasar: Dinas pengajaran Provinsi Daerah Tingkat I Bali.
[24] Simpen,I Wayan 2008. *Pelangi Bahasa Indonesia*. Denpasar: Pustaka Larasan.
[25] Suasta, Ida Bagus Made. 2004. *Membaca Aksara Bali dalam Perkembangan Pasang Aksara Bali*. Denpasar: Jurusan Sastra Daerah.
[26] _____1998. *Bahasa Aksara Bali dalam Agama Hindu*. Denpasar: Jurusan Sastra Daerah Fakultas Sastra Universitas Udayana.
[27] Suastika, I Made dan Ratna, I Nyoman Kuta. 2005. *Keberaksaraan dalam Kebudayaan*. Denpasar: Program Studi Magister dan Doktor S3 Kajian Budaya.
[28] Suwija, I Nyoman. 2012. *Ngiring Nulis Bali*, Denpasar: Wineka Media.
[29] Tim Peneliti Fakultas Sastra Universitas Udayana, 1984/1985. Tata Bahasa Bali. Denpasar Proyek Pengembangan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia dan Daerah Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.
[30] Tim Penyusun Kamus Bali-Indonesia Beraksara Bali dan Latin, 2008. *Kamus Bali-Indonesia Beraksara Bali dan Latin Denpasar*. Badan Pembina Bahasa, Aksara, dan Sastra Bali Provinsi Bali.
[31] Tinggen. I Nengah. 1979. Pedoman *Perobahan Ejaan Bahasa Bali dengan Huruf Latin dan Huruf Bali*. Berdasarkan Keputusan Pasamuhan Agung Kecil Bahasa Bali 1957/1963. Singaraja: SPG Negeri.
[32] _____1993. Celah-Celah Kunci Pasang Aksara Bali. Singaraja, Indrajaya.
[33] Vira, Raghu. 1956. *Svara-Vianjana a Kawi-Balinese Dewanegral script-manual*. International Academi of Indian Culture.