



Communication in the Dramatari Performance of Arja Muani Akah Canging in Bali: An Aesthetic and Educational Exploration

Ni Nyoman Serati¹, Venny Indria Ekowati², Tri Wahyuni Floriasti³, Restu Budiyan⁴, Fitri Rokhimah⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5} Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia

ni_nyomanseriati@uny.ac.id, venny@uny.ac.id, triwahyunifloriasti@uny.ac.id,
restubudiyan@gmail.com, rokhimahfitri@gmail.com

<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v12i9.7043>

Abstract

This article examines the verbal and nonverbal communication patterns ingrained in the traditional Balinese dramatist Arja Muani Akah Canging. Through interpretive analysis and direct observation, this study uses a qualitative descriptive method to identify important communicative features expressed through vocal modulation, gestures, facial expressions, costume symbolism, and narrative structure. The results show that the performance of Arja Muani Akah Canging exhibits a complex interaction between cultural messaging and performative aesthetics, with nonverbal clues originating from Balinese performative traditions supporting and frequently enhancing verbal conversation. In addition to being artistic mediums, these communication techniques are also means of disseminating social criticism and cultural values. Beyond its cultural value, this study emphasizes how traditional performances can be used as inclusive teaching tools, especially in vocational tourism education, where cultural competency and multimodal communication are crucial.

Keywords: *Verbal and Nonverbal Communication; Traditional Performing Arts; Dramatari Arja Muani; Balinese Cultural Expression; Vocational Tourism Education*

Introduction

Art is a potent medium for communication, in addition to being an expression of creativity. In ways that words alone frequently cannot, artists use performance to communicate their ideas, emotions, and cultural expressions to the audience (Sayuti, 2024; Uduak & Akpan, 2020; Lyu et al., 2022). Similar to language, art has an organized system of meaning that enables artists to convey intricate concepts using a mix of visual, aural, and movement clues (Suminto, 2024; Schechner, 2003). According to Knapp, Hall, and Horgan (2013), these components combine to provide verbal and nonverbal communication, which frequently coexist in traditional performances. Both types of communication are deeply integrated into the presentation of a Balinese performance. While gestures, clothes, facial expressions, and spatial movement all contribute to the nonverbal message, Balinese, Old Javanese, and Indonesian dialogue, chants, and songs provide vocal meaning. These elements indicate deeper cultural values in addition to supporting the story (Bandem & deBoer, 1995).

One well-known example is Arja, a traditional Balinese performance that combines song, dance, and theater into a one, harmonious display of joy and beauty (Bandem, 1984; Wahyuningsih, Arsiniwati, & Artati, 2021). Its aesthetic approach is reflected in the term Arja, which is derived from the Old Javanese word *reja* ("beauty"), while its musical quality, particularly the usage of *tembang*, gives the performance emotional resonance (Ranuara, interview, July 20, 2023). Arja has evolved into different forms over time. Arja Muani is one of the more distinctive and vibrant versions, where male artists—including those playing female characters—perform all roles. Arja Muani Akah Canging (AMAC), a performance that is still performed today and has great cultural appeal, is the subject of this study. Spoken lines, lyrical music, lighthearted banter, and subliminal messages about morality, love, and social behavior are all used by AMAC. In order to interact with the audience, it also makes extensive use of nonverbal cues including gesture, costume, movement, and staging. A lot of these communications are humorous, which makes it easier to take in criticism and guidance. A unique charm is added by the gender-play component, which enables actors to express their creativity and engage the audience on several levels.

AMAC is examined in this article as a means of cultural communication that uses both spoken and visual expression to link artists and audiences. The study uses a qualitative descriptive methodology that is backed up by interviews, performance documentation, and direct observation. AMAC provides an opportunity for cultural learning and values-based reflection in addition to enjoyment. Its distinctive fusion of communication and artistry can also stimulate fresh perspectives on performance as a tool for inclusive education and vocational training in the tourism industry.

Method

Research Design and Approach

The verbal and nonverbal communication mechanisms inherent in the traditional Balinese dramatari Arja Muani Akah Canging (AMAC) are examined in this study using a qualitative descriptive methodology. As is typical of qualitative research, the researcher serves as the main tool, interacting with informants, closely observing performances, and immersing themselves in the cultural context to create a comprehensive, contextualized understanding (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; Lim, 2024).

Data Collection and Analysis

Three primary methods were used to gather data: (a) seeing AMAC performances in real time; (b) conducting in-depth interviews with community members, performers, and cultural leaders; and (c) examining supporting material, such as field notes, scripts, and visual records. Interpretive categorization, theme grouping, and iterative condensation were used to process the data. Table 1 below provides a summary of the data collection and analysis procedure to improve clarity and openness.

Table 1. Data Collection and Analysis Overview

Aspect	Description
A. Data Collection Techniques	a. Direct observation of Arja Muani Akah Canging performances. b. In-depth interviews with performers and cultural informants. c. Documentation analysis, including photographs, performance scripts, and field notes.
B. Research Instruments	a. The researcher (as the main instrument in qualitative inquiry). b. Observation sheets and field note templates. c. Interview guides with semi-structured questions. d. Audio recorder and camera for capturing data.
C. Types of Data Collected	a. Verbal communication: songs (<i>tembang</i>), dialogues, poetic chants. b. Nonverbal communication: gestures, costumes, facial expressions, staging, and movement. c. Audience feedback and interaction. d. Contextual and ethnographic information from performance settings.

D. Data Analysis Techniques	a. Data condensation (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014): selection, focusing, simplification. b. Thematic grouping of communicative elements. c. Interpretive analysis based on Segers' communication model. d. Aesthetic communication framework application. e. Triangulation across observation, interviews, and documentation.
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Results that could not be adequately explained by verbal narration were also supported by visual resources like photos and performance stills. The conclusions were reached gradually and should provide fresh perspectives on the multiple levels of meaning present in AMAC's artistic expression.

Analytical Framework

The communication model used in this study is derived from Roman Jakobson's semiotic theory, specifically as it was developed by Segers (1978) for literary texts. Segers proposes a triadic process—often called communicative communication—that involves the reader, the text, and the author. In the present study, the audience serves as readers, the performance as text, and the performers as authors. Figure 1 below illustrates this procedure:

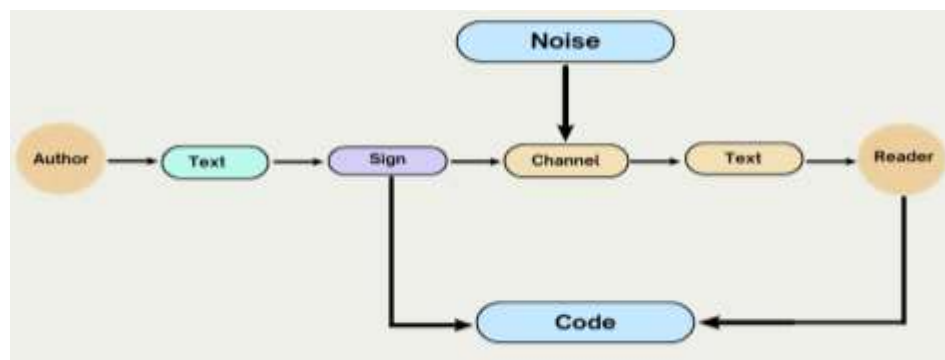


Figure 1. Model of Literary Text Communication Process
(Adapted from Segers, 1978)

The way these three elements work together reflects how AMAC uses layered, symbolic, and spontaneous forms to convey aesthetic themes such as humor, critique, and moral instruction. Based on Jaeni's (2012) theory of aesthetic communication, the study acknowledges that through shared cultural experience and emotional resonance, artistic meaning is not only conveyed but also co-constructed between the performer and the audience.

Result and Discussion

Communication is viewed as a dynamic process in the performing arts, as messages are sent from the artist to the audience via a variety of spoken and nonspoken means. Such exchanges take place on the culturally rich stage of the traditional Dramatari Arja Muani Akah Canging. The performance, which has its roots in Balinese performative traditions, reinforces common societal ideals among its audience by conveying messages both artistically and emotionally. According to Yunus (2020), as long as art is a fundamental aspect of human existence, communication will continue to occur within art performances.

Verbal Communication

In Arja Muani Akah Canging, vocal communication takes place through songs (*tembang*), conversations, and well-known songs that are played live. Every linguistic component adds unique aesthetic, affective, and educational aspects that complement the characters and the cultural undertones present in the story.

Tembang

Tembang, a type of vocal art that combines poetic lyrics, is originated from dangding and has historically been influenced by Mataram culture (Hendrayana et al., 2020, p. 411). Three different tembang are used in the Arja Muani Akah Canging performance; each one represents a different character and fulfills unique narrative and expressive purposes.

1. Tembang Pangkur (Galuh Liku)

Galuh Liku, the character, performs a *tembang pangkur*, which is usually connected to happy and energetic emotions. The pangkur style fits Galuh Liku's personality, according to Widastra (interview, September 27, 2023): she is vivacious, enjoys flattery, and is self-admiring, all of which are signs of narcissistic personality disorder (Septiyani & Viandika, 2019). These are the lyrics:

rage lemu magolér
 adeg lanjar
 bangkiang rengkyang sada ramping
 mairib warnan iratu
 jeriji lurus mangancang
 kenyungané peliate manis muluh
 manuutang cecapangan
 magélohan ngaras pipi (Widsatra, I.N.W, personal communication, 27 September 2023)

English meaning:

Her body is supple and graceful,
 tall and slender, with a narrow waist,
 such is her figure.
 Her fingers are small and straight,
 her smile and gaze are captivating,
 fine strands of hair frame her cheeks,
 softly lining her face.

The tembang evokes admiration from the audience by expressing its beauty through melody and vocal artistry, even though it is performed in sophisticated Balinese that may be hard for younger listeners to completely understand.

2. Desak Rai, or Tembang Dangdang

The *tembang dangdang* performed by Desak Rai, a female servant who is described as flirty, arrogant, and hilarious, conveys a woman's apprehension towards love trickery (Sandiyasa, interview, 19 July 2023). These are the lyrics:

titiang takut kena munyi manis
 ngakutresna
 gampang nagih nadtad anak luh uling dini
 bantangan baan slake siu
 joh para bakatang bli
 saling ke aji kemikan
 makemulan galir bungut
 tuyuh ngucap
 adénang sube manengil
 jabin nundun dakin basing (Sandiyasa, S.T.P, personal communication, 19 July 2023)

English meaning:

I am afraid of sweet talk,
 of false love,
 men thinking they can easily claim women like me.
 Wait a minute—
 Even with wealth and status,
 you might not win me over.
 Especially without any real merit,
 just empty flattery.
 You better stay quiet,
 or you'll only make me angry.

A strong, independent female character who warns against manipulation and superficial materialism is shown in the *tembang*. Additionally, it sends a more general social message about dignity and self-worth, particularly to young women.

3. Durma Tembang (Mantri Buduh)

Mantri Buduh plays a *tembang durma*, which is characterized by its forceful and serious tone, in the role of a great king. The character's religiosity and sense of obligation to his people are reflected in it (interview, July 19, 2023). These are the lyrics:

laksanané ngastawayang
 sang hyang suksma
 widhi widana né luwih
 aturang sarahina
 ring ida sang hyang raditia
 reh ida meraga saksi
 saksi sekala
 meraga hyang maha suci (Karmita, I.M., personal communication, 19 July 2023).

English meaning:

A king must pray to the divine spirit,
 offering the finest devotion daily,
 especially to the Sun God
 who serves as a witness
 in both the seen and unseen worlds—
 the manifestation of the Supreme Holy.

The king's duty to sincerely render *yadnya* (sacrificial devotion) is emphasized in the *tembang*. According to Sloka 12 of the Bhagavad Gita, people must sacrifice in return for the protection that the gods provide for us (Pudja, 2013). Kings must set an example of gratitude to the Creator as divine ambassadors (Pudja & Sudharta, 1995). Even while not all spectators would immediately understand the *tembang's* deeper meanings, they are communicated through emotional resonance—through melody, tone, and delivery—improving the artistic exchange between artists and the audience.

Dialogues

In Arja Muani Akah Canging, dialogue between two or more characters is an essential verbal communication method. Iswantara (2016) asserts that good dialogue in play uses spoken language to express characterisation, humor, and moral lessons while involving several characters. The Balinese audience finds

great resonance in the performance's discourse, which is full of humorous aspects, gender-bending roles, and cultural allusions. The following is an instance of amusing dialogue from the character Desak Rai:

"Why do you keep staring at Mbok Gek's breasts? Mbok Gek's breasts are branded 'Erricson,' soft and squishy like foam. Meanwhile, the housewives' breasts are branded 'Nokia,' firm, tight, and 100% natural."

In this instance, Erricson and Nokia are mobile phone companies that are figuratively utilized to contrast natural and artificial physical traits. A man actor portraying a female role, Desak Rai, mimics breasts with foam padding, adding layers to the humor both vocally and visually. The cross-gender act and the words both make the crowd laugh. Another example is a proverb that has been humorously twisted:

Penasar Kelihan: "An elephant dies leaving its tusks..."

Penasar Cenikan: "...and a transvestite dies leaving behind stockings."

This line, directed at Galuh Liku—a cross-gender character who always wears stockings—triggers laughter due to its unexpected twist and cultural reference. It also highlights how gender and attire intersect with humor to challenge norms without offending.

A more complex dialogue occurs during a conversation about sacred Balinese architecture:

PK: "Where will Galuh Liku be placed after death? The right chamber is for male ancestors, the left for female, and the center for the Supreme Deity."

PC: "There's no place for someone like her. What about a transvestite?"

GL: "Just build a *canopy*—problem solved."

The rong tiga (three shrines) in Balinese family temples, where both male and female ancestors are revered, are the subject of this debate. The joke emphasizes how difficult it is to classify someone who breaches gender boundaries. The statement playfully deviates from theological norm by implying a "canopy"—a term borrowed from secular construction. Nonetheless, the underlying message is one of understanding gender diversity and honoring ancestors' customs. A discussion about Leak, a Balinese mythological being, contains additional satire:

PK: "Kids, don't go out at night—there's *leak*."

PC: "Do you know what *leak* really means? It comes from 'li' and 'ak.' When those two meet—scary things happen. Kids shouldn't see it. Let the adults *leak* in peace."

The word "leak," which is typically connected to dark magic and terror, is reinterpreted as some double entendre that refers to adult intimacy and is li for women and ak for men. Although the innuendo is lighthearted, it emphasizes a lesson: in order to safeguard youngsters, adult concerns should be kept private. Balinese audiences that are aware of the subtleties of culture and religion like this fusion of fun and education. According to Sworo (interview, October 1, 2023), good humor in Arja should be "kasar mendasar saru berilmu"—risqué yet enlightened, coarse but grounded. In this way, the conversations in Arja Muani Akah Canging offer social, cultural, and moral insights woven throughout humor in addition to providing entertainment.

Popular Songs

The performance of Arja Muani Akah Canging incorporates modern songs (lagu pop) that improve verbal communication with comedy and emotional resonance in addition to traditional tembang and dialogues. The listener can relate to the plot and consider social values while listening to these songs, which are influenced by both local Balinese and larger Indonesian or Javanese pop culture. The Balinese pop song

"Tiuk Tiing" by Luh Srikandi, which is sung by the character Mantri Buduh to show romantic interest in Galuh Liku, is one such instance. The following are the lyrics:

Merase cager
 Andel teken pedéwékan
 Nyalanang kenehé demen
 Buke senggaké kiyapé galengin
 Sinah pejang sirep lep lep
 Beli kedaut luh, beli terléna luh
 Sing buungan beli kanti mengipi
 Keliwat demen
 Elah ben iluh mogbogin (In a live performance, Mantri Buduh character sang *Tiuk Tiing* (personal performance, July, 2022).

The song's lyrics express feelings of longing and confidence. Intimacy and sincerity are evoked by the analogies employed, such as the comparison of love to sleepiness relieved by a pillow. Because of its emotional and linguistic intimacy, this song, which is sung in informal Balinese, strikes a deep chord with the audience. The same figure continues to court Galuh Liku by performing another hit song in Indonesian:

Kau gadis yang rupawan
 Oh manis senyumanmu
 Lesung pipit di pipimu
 Kau memakai baju biru
 Kau mempesona hatiku... (In a live performance, Mantri Buduh character sang *Amoy* written by Eddy K. and popularized by Mario (personal performance, July, 2022).

Audiences of different ages will readily understand this song's simple, romantic tone. The performance's inclusive and lighthearted tone is reinforced by the usage of Bahasa Indonesia, which also improves accessibility. Using the character of Desak Rai, the Javanese dangdut song "Pamer Bojo" by the late Didi Kempot serves as a third example:

kaya ngéné rasané wong nandang kangen
 rina wengi atiku rasane peteng
 tansah kélingan kepingin nyawang
 sedhéla wae wis emoh tenan
 cidra janji tegané kowé ngapusi
 nganti sepréné suwéné aku ngenténi
 nangis batinku nggrantes uripku
 teles kebes netes eluh céndhol dawet
 céndhol dhawet, céndhol dhawet seger
 céndhol céndhol dhawet dhawet
 céndhol céndhol dhawet dhawet (In a live performance, Desak Rai character sang *Pamer Bojo* written and popularized by Didi Kempot (personal performance, July, 2022).

The song's emotional depth and rhythm cut beyond linguistic barriers, even though it is performed in Javanese. The allusion to the well-known Javanese beverage *céndol dawet* is humorous and symbolic, which increases audience participation. Yusuf (2020) claims that the song's appeal to listeners of all ages is due to its catchy melody and relatable message, which cause them to move or dance impulsively. In conclusion, Arja Muani Akah Canging's use of famous songs in multiple languages and cultures enhances the performance's visual appeal and strengthens its verbal communication techniques. Encased in humor and rhythmic delight, the song conveys complex themes about love, identity, and social expectations in addition to providing entertainment.

Non-Verbal Communication

A fundamental component of performative works, the visual medium of artistic expression directly enhances the aesthetic pleasure of the audience (Djelantik, 1999; Patterson, Fridlund, & Crivelli, 2023). Movement, costume, and stage design—all of which have substantial dramatic and communicative weight—are key ways that nonverbal communication is expressed in the Arja Muani Akah Canging performance.

Dancing Movement





In dance, movement has aesthetic and expressive purposes (Haas, 2024, p. 1). Movement is orchestrated to convey particular feelings or intentions as part of its expressive function. A character may, for example, point angrily at another as a dismissive or angry gesture. On the other hand, movements can occasionally be performed only for aesthetic purposes, such as creating visual beauty rather than conveying a story (Hawkins, 1990, p. 101). In general, there are two forms of movement in traditional Balinese performances: realistic and stylized (Bandem & Murgiyanto, 1996, p. 57). Movements that adhere to set guidelines and are timed to the beat of the music are referred to as stylized. Conversely, realistic motions include things like pointing, slapping the chest, or pulling out a ceremonial dagger. Dramatari Arja employs both forms of movement to tell the story to the audience. Ngigelang gending, or dancing while singing, is a characteristic of stylized movement in Balinese culture, and it is used in Arja Muani Akah Canging to perform movement in harmony with sung verse (*tembang*). Not all of the choreography in this performance, meanwhile, exactly follows Balinese customs. The show incorporates hybrid movements, blending classical Balinese dance with elements from other regional traditions outside Bali. Dancers are expected to learn the rigorously codified patterns, or *pakem*, that govern traditional movement in Balinese dance. These consist of four fundamental components that are necessary for Arja performers: *tangkis* (gesture), *tandang* (transitional movement), *agem* (stance), and *tangkep* (facial emotion) (Dibia, 2013, p. 64).

Agem (Basic Posture)

Studying the *agem*, the basic body position that serves as the foundation for all other motions, is the first step in studying Balinese dance. The dancer's orientation, energy distribution, and artistic shape are all established by this position. *Agem muani* (male stance), *agem eluh* (female posture), and *agem bebancihaan* (androgynous or mixed posture) are the three traditional genres into which Balinese dance is classified according to gender (Putra, Yasa, & Utama, 2022, p. 452). *Agem* is further divided into two categories based on the position of the arms, torso, and legs: *agem kiri* (left posture) and *agem kanan* (right posture). The left arm in *agem kanan* is in line with the chest, while the right arm is lifted to shoulder height for female characters. The left foot is positioned somewhat in front of the right ankle, while the right leg bears the weight of the body. Additionally, the posture creates a characteristic triple curvature with a bent waist and a forward-leaning torso (*degeg*). Male characters' *agem kanan*, on the other hand, shows more variation in stance and arm elevation. For *agem kiri*, the same guidelines are reversed (Dibia, 2013, p. 41). Arja dancers execute these delicate poses with accuracy, especially in entrance routines. In the performance's *papeson* (prologue) section, the *agem* is prominently displayed alongside *mungkah lawang*, a distinctive movement.

Mungkah Lawang (Opening the Curtain)

The *papeson* segment heavily emphasizes the *mungkah lawang* movement, which translates to "opening the door/curtain." To create a ceremonial and dramatic entrance, the dancer sings a *tembang* and gently opens the *langse* (stage curtain) (Made, Budasi, & Agustini, 2022, p. 280). With a well-defined *agem* attitude, both male and female characters execute *mungkah lawang*. This movement establishes the emotional and artistic tone for the story that follows in addition to introducing the character to the viewer. These positions and motions are depicted graphically in the following figures:

	
<p>Figure 1. <i>Agem Kanan</i> posture with <i>Mungkah Lawang</i> by Galuh Liku (photo by: Luh Ernita, 2022)</p>	<p>Figure 2. <i>Agem Kanan</i> posture with <i>Mungkah Lawang</i> by Mantri Budu (photo by: Luh Ernita, 2022)</p>
	
<p>Figure 3. <i>Agem Kanan</i> posture with <i>Mungkah Lawang</i> by Desak Rai (photo by: Luh Ernita, 2022)</p>	<p>Figure 4. Romantic Movement Scene between Budu and Galuh Liku (photo by: Luh Ernita, 2022)</p>

Costume

In addition to their utilitarian use, dancing costumes have deep cultural and historical significance (Kiss, 2023, p. 7). Costumes of Arja, a type of Balinese dance-opera, are painstakingly tailored to each character and serve as visual cues to help the audience identify parts. Character identity and narrative clarity are largely dependent on costume (Danesi, 2010, p. 261; Hold, 2011, pp. 143–146). Performers' costumes have a big impact on how the audience perceives them since they serve to enhance character representation and create emotional ambiances (Bezruchko et al., 2024, p. 3).

The male dancers in Arja Muani Akah Canging, many of whom assume female parts, rely heavily on their costumes to assist their gender performance and identity transition. Costume design supports this dramatic gender-bending both symbolically and visually. Character symbolism relies heavily on color choice in addition to form and structure. While blue costumes are often connected with virtuous individuals, they also represent cheerfulness, nobility, and charm (Soedarsono, 2020, p. 77). Red costumes are typically associated with bold or aggressive personalities.

However, field observations indicate that traditional symbolic hue allocations are frequently subordinated to visual appeal and beauty in this specific performance. In Arja Muani Akah Canging, costume color is selected more for aesthetic appeal than for symbolic correctness, as stated by Dek Gung (interview, February 13, 2022), particularly in the situations of Galuh Liku and Desak Rai. One tactic to engage the audience is to prioritize visual impact, particularly when gender inversion is involved. As a result, costumes help to define character as well as to enhance dramatic presence, convey gender or moral identity visually, and indicate social standing (Harimawan, 1993, p. 131). The following figures demonstrate the unique outfits worn by each of the performance's main characters:



Figure 5. Costume of Galuh Liku
(photo by: Luh Ernita, 2022)



Figure 6. Costume of Desak Rai
(photo by: Luh Ernita, 2022)



Figure 7. Costume of Mantri Buduh
(photo by: Luh Ernita, 2022)



Figure 8. Costume of Penasar Cenikan
(photo by: Luh Ernita, 2022)

Stage

The stage is a space set aside for the performance of theater, dance, music, and other artistic mediums. To improve visibility, it is typically raised above the crowd (Martono, 2012, p. 2). The stage, also known as a *kalangan* in Balinese tradition, is a performance area that can be set up on streets, in courtyards, or in open fields (Raka, 2021, p. 70). These *kalangan* are frequently built at ground level, with bamboo or ropes separating the audience space from the performance area. The performance space for Arja Muani Akah Canging is very adaptable and frequently changed to fit the setup that the host or sponsor has prepared. At Banjar Munggu, for instance, a performance during a *tiga bulanan* (a Balinese ceremony for a three-month-old baby) was set up in a home's front yard, blending in perfectly with the current ceremonial event.

Arja Muani Akah Canging usually uses the entire audience area as an extension of the performance space, in contrast to traditional performances that are limited to the main stage. Funny and interactive sequences are purposefully set close to the audience, while the papeson and patemon pieces are presented on the central or formal stage to set the story and introduce characters. By breaking the fourth wall and encouraging greater involvement, this tactic produces an engaging and lively viewing experience.

The front, middle, and back stages are the three zones that make up the stage arrangement for this performance. The majority of scenes take place on the front stage, which serves as the main performing space and lets the audience see the action unfold. According to Irianto (2015), audience participation is seen as a crucial indicator of performance success, especially when it comes to emotional resonance. As the symbolic center of the show, the middle stage is usually utilized for formal sequences and character introductions. In the meantime, scene planning, cosmetics, and wardrobe preparation take place in the backstage area.



Figure 9. Performance stage layout in *Arja Muani Akah Canging* (photo by: Luh Ernita, 2022)

Arja Muani Akah Canging's multifaceted function as a cultural performance and a teaching tool with deep roots in Balinese traditions is revealed by an analysis of its verbal and nonverbal communication. By combining tembang, dialogue, gestures, costumes, and spatial dynamics, a semiotic system is created that provides a wide range of audiences with levels of meaning while entertaining and educating them.

The employment of tembang in spoken communication is indicative of a long-standing method of cultural transmission. Oral literature in performance contexts frequently functions as a storehouse of collective knowledge, encoding morals, feelings, and ethical stances through poetry and musical forms, as Finnegan (2012) emphasizes. Characters like Galuh Liku, Desak Rai, and Mantri Buduh all perform tembang in Arja Muani Akah Canging, which expresses messages of narcissism, female self-respect, and divine responsibility, respectively. These are instructional stories rather than just decorative elements. According to audience interviews, listeners internalize the symbolic content in addition to enjoying the tune, supporting Bruner's (1996) assertion that storytelling is an effective means of moral instruction.

The dialogues use satire, parody, and humor to further reinforce cultural and ethical instruction. Examples of what Bakhtin (1984) calls the "carnavalesque"—a type of folk humor that subverts hierarchies and encourages critical reflection within collective laughter—include the parody of cross-gender identification in Galuh Liku and the subversive play on spiritual notions like leak. These amusing verbal exchanges provide as a secure environment for challenging, reinterpreting, and navigating societal conventions. Unplanned laughter and emotional reactions show that audiences understand these messages, demonstrating what Dewey (1934) would refer to as "an educative aesthetic experience."

Agem, mungkah lawang, and ngigelang gending are examples of nonverbal gestures that convey encoded meanings that go beyond what is seen. According to Dibia (2013), these gestures are performative cues rooted in codified traditions that aid in defining meaning, character, and mood. One example of what Schechner (2003) refers to as "restored behavior," in which tradition is embodied and reenacted in real time for collective witnessing, is the use of physical movement to convey interior sentiments like wrath, seduction, or devotion. Such embodiment works well for a variety of age groups, including young children who might not completely understand verbal nuance, because it enables the transfer of values without the need for explicit explanation.

Even though they don't always follow exact symbolic rules, costumes and color schemes nonetheless give the audience clues about the story. Kiss (2023) asserts that performance garments serve as semiotic tools that place characters in social and moral hierarchy. Even purposeful gender exaggeration in costumes, particularly in cross-gender roles, can serve as a teaching tool for perception, performance, and identity. Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical metaphor, in which identity is continuously acted and interpreted and social life is staged, is in line with Arja's dramaturgy in this regard.

Additionally, using the stage turns a space into a classroom. Freire's (1970) concept of dialogic pedagogy is supported by the separation of formal (main stage) and informal (audience area) areas, as well as the direct interaction between performers and spectators. Performers engage, challenge, and provoke the audience in the performance space, which turns into a place of co-constructed meaning. Accessibility is improved by the deliberate use of humor and audience movement, especially for people who might not be used to traditional forms or classical storylines.

When combined, these results highlight the fact that Arja Muani Akah Canging is more than just a kind of amusement. Leach (2008) used the phrase "living curriculum" to refer to cultural practices that use art and experience to casually impart values and information. In keeping with Eisner's (2002) idea of arts-based education as a place where emotion, cognition, and values come together, the dramatari incorporates civic, spiritual, and gender education into an artistic framework.

Therefore, the performance acts as a pedagogical artifact that teaches its audience in memorable and significant ways while also conserving Balinese tradition. Performances like Arja Muani Akah Canging provide an essential supplemental function in a setting where formal moral education may be limited teaching via humor, beauty, and embodied culture.

Conclusion

Both spoken and nonspoken forms of communication are used in the Arja Muani Akah Canging dramatari performance. While nonverbal communication is conveyed through stage motions, costumes, and spatial arrangements, verbal communication is conveyed through tembang, dialogue, songs, and musical engagement. The study comes to the conclusion that Arja Muani Akah Canging is a vibrant traditional art form that has been practiced since the early 1900s. It continuously adapts to the changing sociocultural scene by fusing external traditions with native Balinese aesthetics.

This dramatari's verbal communication combines Indonesian and Balinese, enabling viewers of different ages and backgrounds to understand the concepts that the actors are trying to portray. In a similar vein, the tembang uses both local and national languages to blend contemporary pop songs with traditional Macapat tunes. The actors' intention to make traditional art more approachable and relevant for audiences of all ages is reflected in the costume design, which blends traditional Balinese components with modern visual aesthetics. Nonverbal communication is thus equally adaptable.

Through an engaging and visually appealing medium, these communication techniques allow the dissemination of both explicit and implicit messages, ranging from cultural identification to moral principles.

Arja Muani Akah Canging can thus be acknowledged as an educational artifact with great potential in inclusive arts-based education and vocational tourist training, especially for students with disabilities, in addition to being a cultural performance. Its embodied communication style provides worthwhile chances to hone interpretative, expressive, and intercultural skills in an imaginative and captivating setting.

Acknowledgement

We would like to sincerely thank all of the artists, performers, and community members who took part in this research. Their knowledge, skills, and commitment have substantially improved our comprehension of the Arja Muani Akah Canging performance.

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