

## **Parallelism and the Composition of Oral Narratives in Banda Eli**

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Roman Jakobson defines (1977 [1919]:25) parallelism as “le rapprochement de deux unités” (“the bringing together of two elements”; translation quoted in Fox 1988:3) so that they are perceived and interpreted in relation to one another. Parallelism is most obvious as a feature of formal, poetic style, and within this context it serves as a poetic function that projects the equivalence of two sound patterns or meanings from the axis of selection (“ladies,” “gentlemen,” “friends,” “colleagues,” “readers,” and so on) to the axis of combination (“Ladies and Gentlemen!” (Jakobson 1960:358). The resulting message stands out as an image of the kind of language and behavioral control required by such occasions as public address, funeral, or worship. In this sense parallelism and related poetic resources contribute to the holistic organization of discourse that signifies an appropriate register of interaction (Kataoka 2012:105). When parallelism is present in artistic, public, and ritual domains of language use, it reflects conscious, aesthetic categories of language practice; at the same time its use reflects the speakers’ ability to align their self-presentation and status with those categories. This begs the question, how is “naturally occurring speech” organized through parallelism and related devices? How do speakers deploy these resources when framing interactions and how do they embody participant roles in them?

These questions arise from my study of an Eastern Indonesian linguistic minority that is centered on two villages in the remote Kei Islands. The founders of these villages were exiled from the islands of Banda in Central Maluku when the Dutch East India Company conquered their ancestral home in 1621. For almost four centuries they have maintained a distinct language called *tur wandan*, or Bandanese, that presently has about 5000 speakers (Collins and Kaartinen 1998). The language’s survival is threatened by mass urbanization, but it is still valued by the geographically dispersed Banda community<sup>1</sup> as a medium of in-group communication. During my early fieldwork among this group in the 1990s (Kaartinen 2010 and 2013), I found that parallelism was prominent in artistic and eloquent speech by those who presented themselves as mediators between the inside and outside of this linguistic and social world. These speakers, most of whom were born before the Indonesian Independence in 1945, embodied the dialogic potential underpinned by the linguistic boundary between the Banda people and outsiders. Their use of parallelistic expressions objectified a sense of Bandanese as the language of authority and

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<sup>1</sup> With Banda community, I refer to people who self-consciously identify themselves as “people of Banda,” or *Wandan sio*.

wisdom that derived from personal and collective histories of long-distance maritime travel and of contacts with powerful outsiders. Urbanization and the increase in use of the national language of Indonesian in daily communication among the Bandanese have amounted to the collapse of the value-creating boundary between the village domain and what the Bandanese used to call the “world of trade.” An interesting question is how the use of Bandanese as an expression of personal wit and cultural competence resonates with the contemporary experience and predicament of people using it today.

John W. Du Bois (2014:363) has emphasized the particular role of parallelism in generating dialogic resonance that encourages speakers to engage with each other’s speech, adopting its structures even as they contest, subvert, or concur with its meaning. Whereas Bakhtin’s (1981:259-422 and 1986:60-102) notion of dialogue focuses on the “responsive understanding” of single utterances and literary works, Du Bois (2014:369) expands his analysis to higher-order dialogic constructions that reveal how speakers revitalize and innovate potential analogies that can be produced between sequences of linguistic form and meaning. Dialogic parallelism is significant for language learning because it enhances the speakers’ fluent use of particular words and structures (*ibid.*:380) and allows them to playfully subvert ethnic hierarchies and the social organization of speech (Cekaite and Aronsson 2005; León 2007:408). While parallelism always involves an element of repetition in that it unfolds through dialogic reiterations across turn-taking in conversation (León 2007:407), Du Bois (2014:376-402) argues that dialogic parallelism is never just “slavish” repetition or mimicry. On the contrary, a parallel choice of words or syntactic structure is a sign of the speakers’ engagement with the ongoing dialogic discourse. Deepening engagement coincides with the selective reproduction of elements from preceding discourse, as I will demonstrate with reference to Bandanese narrative discourse.

Similar arguments have been made about repetition itself in sound play, complex figures of speech, and various experiments in child discourse (Tannen 1987:577). While repetition serves various conversational functions such as evaluation, expansion, repair, and floor-holding (Haviland 1996:63; Kataoka 2012:105), it can also appear as a distinctly poetic device that frames interaction as performance (Hymes 1981:81-86) or builds up the intensity of a narrative figure before fully revealing its meaning (Herzfeld 1996:293). In the latter case, it is useful to think about repetition as a gesture that objectifies a particular point of view towards a narrative or message and encodes a potential location of the speaker’s or listener’s self inside or outside narrative events (Kataoka 2012:113-14).

I explore the role of repetition and parallelism in maintaining language as an internally differentiated resource for communication, I attempt to show that both constitute resources for the dialogic reiteration and expansion of meaning (Tannen 1987:576). In the Bandanese context repetition and parallelism evidence subjective commitments to a language that embodies personal and collective memories. Verbatim repetitions of narrative figures and linguistic forms serve as memory aids for storytellers and also signifies the self-conscious history of performing a particular narrative (Siikala 1990:84). Bandanese singers and storytellers expect their audience to “remember” hidden and forgotten aspects of a personal past when they hear the narratives. The key to the song’s power to evoke such memories is reiterated words and phrases that index the nostalgia and anxiety of its participants. Repeated items are indexical in the sense that they point to the presence of similar feelings, perceptions, and experiences in the narrative characters, the

singer, and the audience (Stasch 2011:161). If dialogicality is fundamentally an “engagement with prior words and structures” (Du Bois 2014:372), such reiteration of narrative figures foregrounds a narrator’s deepening engagement with the narrative topic, even as he or she occasionally interrupts the performance with remarks about an acutely sick child or an absent, traveling relative to signal an affective concern that endures in the background. In Bandanese storytelling the reiteration of fragments from a previous discourse or performance by a well-known narrator is iconic of recovering the memory of distant events; as a result, this mode of repetition connects the currently unfolding discourse to an ancestral tradition imagined as a quasi-mental object (Silverstein and Urban 1996:2; Kataoka 2012:106).

Whereas repetition may incorporate the experience and interpretation of the present into larger historical frameworks, parallelism objectifies the coherence of meaning that emerges from analogies and contrasts drawn from different perceptual, semantic, and linguistic domains. Taken together, repetition and parallelism in Bandanese discourse functions as distinct modes of selective reproduction that maintain a differentiated communicative world and serve to counter the erasure or simplification of the field of linguistic practices (Kuipers 1998:19).

Since the early seventeenth century, the boundaries of Bandanese and its internal differentiation have been sustained by its peculiar language ecology. Its vocabulary and complex grammar differ starkly from Evav, the language spoken by the Kei Islands majority. Rather than assimilating with their neighbors, the Bandanese have nurtured a perception of themselves as members of an ancient trade aristocracy that spans throughout all of Eastern Indonesia. The *lingua franca* of the regional elite is Malay, a close cognate of the modern national language of Indonesian. Valued forms of Bandanese speech make use of interlingual parallelism and code-switching between Bandanese and Indonesian/Malay to suggest a historical affinity between them. Interlingual parallelism is absent from everyday Bandanese interactions and is connected to specific registers of authoritative or powerful speech.

The Bandanese themselves differentiate two kinds of public speech. The first involves communicating with people who are familiar with each other’s daily activities and relationships to the point that they are vulnerable to gossip. Open, sincere debate about offensive speech is known among participants whose shared honor forces them to take each other seriously as “speaking inside the house.” In this framework, speakers express their anger in unmixed Bandanese, but those who seek to appease them and resolve conflict index their authority with interlingual parallelism. *Lingua franca* in this context represents the internalized point of view of outsiders witnessing the emerging unity and shared honor of disputing parties.

Another framework, “speaking outside the house,” refers to the speech of a chiefly figure. In this kind of speech, the use of Indonesian and other outside languages indexes the chief’s recognition as an equal with state authorities and the chiefs of other communities. The difference between the two frameworks lies in the intended audience. Speaking “outside the house” is directed to actual or imaginary outsiders, and the role of other villagers is merely to witness it. The inverse is the audience structure “inside the house,” in which speech is addressed to fellow villagers and witnessed by outsiders. The rhetorical effects of inside and outside speech depend on poetic language that transcends the immediate context of communication. Paul Friedrich (1991:23) has drawn attention to the interaction of poetic figures and their expansion into what he calls macrotropes: different ways of elaborating a personal stance or experience into a more



In these examples, parallelism between lexical items sums up various evaluative statements. Each pair consists of syntagmatically related elements from a particular semantic domain—small-craft navigation, littoral sea creatures, and domestic animals. Each pair draws attention to familiar features of such domains, and combining the terms renders an evaluative judgment about the essence of the person or place to which they refer. This cultural scheme corresponds to what Calvert Watkins (1995:15) designates a *merism*, a pair of lexical items that together refer to the totality of a single, higher concept, which is a rhetorical figure found in the poetics of many Indo-European languages.

Figurative expressions based on part-whole relationships also abound in oratorical speech, such as the opening address by the plaintiff during traditional court proceedings in 1992. At the culmination of his speech, the elder who represented the family of an eloped girl vented his anger by declaring that the shame he felt over the affair would fall on the whole village, including the family of the boy who had eloped with her:<sup>2</sup>

<i>Ak ta kormana feken te</i>	I will not say much more.
<i>Ak cakak limang futusa.</i>	I throw up my five and ten [fingers].
<i>Angu tukur muruka wa angu asal bangsa</i>	My little girl and my family honor
<i>Sanmasa Rumora kem fekensio</i>	The Sanmas, the Rumra, you all!

This passage contains three totalizing figures. In the second line, the word “five” (*lima*) combined with a first-person possessive ending (*-ng*) signifies one hand; “ten” (*futusa*) is used here in reference to both hands—a reference to the whole person, and figuratively to all hope. In the third line, the man’s female relative is likewise paired with his family honor. In the fourth line, the speaker refers to the opposing party by the names of two clans—conventionally paired together as “the Sanmas, the Rumra.” In each case the organizing trope is a synecdoche: the parallelism consists of paired images of the part and the whole.

The examples above are derived from highly evaluative discourse. The “two things that come together” in these figures of speech can be understood as two different points of view. The last example, drawn from the oratory of someone “speaking inside the house,” includes powerful rhetoric that totalizes the viewpoints of two parties in conflict. The small harm recognized by one party elicits complete, unbearable outrage and disgust in the other. Such rhetoric does not aim at proving that the other’s point of view is false, but rather at encompassing it within a more global viewpoint, as if appealing to an outside authority or witness as an objective judge of what is going on.

In the following narrative about a group of women planning to attend a volleyball match, parallelism is present in a different, more playful evaluation of behavior. The women in the narrative use parallel expressions to describe what the audience of the match will think about them, and probably shout aloud to tease the players (narrated to Kaartinen in 1995):

*Kam kutukul ta komokaik voli. Ya kam ta kutukul komokaik bal. Bal voli. Makayo nako komokot mencia rononton si romalik kami, liliani kam komokot mukan kafanin inbali wa kuar rarono. Kam*

<sup>2</sup>Recorded by Kaartinen in 1992; see also Collins and Kaartinen (1998:553-55).

*komokot mukan keleik wasa wa tasik. Ka t[ɨ]ada bal, ta komokaiko. Makayo kam kiliamami, ta andesa, katong kamasok wa lapangan. Fisa kumtet maka na komolo wa funuo, rumo raronu, i tobaing. Nake kamasok wa lapangan mukan ife kan paling gaga, toh. Makayo liliami, mesti okokon fe ka masok wa lapangan raronu, fisa si ralo kumtet kukuru maka. Makayo anjia sain fa liling kam komokot bal fe liliani, mbokot ta mbokaik weyo paksa maka, na mbokot maka. Kam kiliamami, ta andesa. Ta mungkin na ka minyak mbo na oskola langsung mbokaik baik, ya.*

We were arguing about not knowing how to play volley. Yes, we do not seem to know how to play ball. Volleyball. Thus when we play people watching will laugh, saying we play as if we were carrying *embal*<sup>3</sup> in a basket on our backs. We play as if we were lifting small fish with a net from the sea. If you do not have a ball, you can't know. Then we said, "it's no problem," we just enter the playing field. We shouldn't just stay in the village in the house, that's no good. Isn't it really great if we just enter the playing field like that? We said, "even if it's our first time in the field, let's not just stand in place like chickens." Then they see this thing, they see us playing ball, even if we don't know we just force ourselves to do it and just play. We'll say: "it's no problem. You cannot possibly know everything when you first begin to go to school."

Note the following interlinear parallelism:

*kam komokot mukan kafanin inbali wa kuar raronu*

We play as if we were carrying *embal* in a basket on our backs

*kam komokot mukan keleik wasa wa tasik*

We play as if we were lifting small fish with a net from the sea

The imagined calls from the audience use two parallel metaphors drawn from the domain of food-production. In the first metaphor the women compare their clumsy attempt to hit a ball over one's head with the typical posture of someone carrying a basket of food attached to her head. In the second metaphor they compare an inept attempt to raise a low ball with the movements of dropping and lifting a fishnet in the shallows. In both cases the women refer to routine bodily postures: as unseasoned players, they think that they will look more like peasants than athletes.

It is not obvious what motivates the choice of these metaphors. Probably the most significant factor is that they describe situations in which the women often observe each other. Garden work as well as littoral fishing are the kinds of work that most commonly allow women to spend time with their female neighbors. Sports are the equivalent of such activities in the less familiar domain of "leisure." Even as the playful language *reveals* the analogy between sport and work, it brings to mind other possible analogies drawn from the speakers' experience of joint labor. The repeated phrase, *kam komokot mukan k-*, creates the affordance, or a contingent opportunity, for responding to one image with another.

Another generative schema behind this example is the sea-land axis, one of the principal coordinates of social space and a classification known throughout the Austronesian world. The

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<sup>3</sup>"Bitter cassava roots."

narrator pairs the image of walking in the interior of the island with another of wading in the sea. Much of the power of parallelism that organizes this type of discourse is derived from the speakers' habitus, their embodied inclination to evaluate and act on the world in typical ways (Hanks 1996:239).

### Repetition and the Organization of Discourse

I have suggested that Bandanese speakers use semantic parallelism as a device for organizing images and concepts into tropes. The way in which parallel expressions are used to draw items from a specific paradigm of classification and place them on the syntagmatic axis is perhaps most obvious in the highly conventional, short evaluations of persons, places, and groups. In the case of the narrative that I have just described, there is no clear source paradigm for the paired items: the relevant classifications are implicit in the speakers' past experience and their habitual perceptions and practices.

Kuniyoshi Kataoka (2012:105) argues that repetition is not so much about the organization of discourse as it is about diction: distinctive styles of speaking that mark the ethos of an ongoing interaction. But in order to achieve this, the style of speaking must connect the present with classifications and habits that participants can recognize from their previous experiences. In addition to conversational functions, repetition in Bandanese speech draws attention to the requests, affects, and "quests" of narrative characters, overlaying the indexical ground constructed by the narrative on the here-and-now. A repeated request, which could be constructed as a nuisance, appears as compelling politeness when it is reiterated as a sequence in a narrative. Consider this short letter of introduction carried by James T. Collins on his visit to Banda Eli in 1977 (Collins and Kaartinen 1998:547):

<i>Meme Saibetu.—</i>	Uncle Saibetu—
<i>Mbomlango Mito Macia</i>	Take care of and look after the person
<i>Nganin Surat ini ngong kana</i>	bearing this letter; when he arrives
<i>Ngin War Tosa Wa Rumo.—</i>	[Give] him a little water to drink at your house.—
<i>Biar War Rindidino.—</i>	Allow some cool water for him.—
<i>Tolong mimitoi.</i>	Please look after him

The reiteration of the request at the end of the letter is obvious parallelism. It is worth noting, however, that the two lines insist that the request is only for a glass of water when the writer in fact asks for a major act of hospitality. If the word *war* ("water") were not repeated, it would only appear as part of an instruction—not as a poetic figure.

It is more difficult to recognize repetition as a poetic device when it occurs in informal narratives. In this context repetition is obviously a means of floor-holding and signals to a listener that a speaker intends to continue his or her performance. This floor-holding repetition also creates an overlay between two referential grounds: the time of narrative actions and the

time of narrating them. Several instances of these overlapping times can be observed in a narrative about a child fetching a brush from a neighbor who had borrowed it:<sup>4</sup>

*Ica lian, Airoko, ak na kok bacuci, ak liang, mbo mala kito na sikat wa Rozita. Makayo i ngombeik ngo ngala. Rozita lian, wa laman ak ko kala ko wa atei Mboitiki i mbertiko.*

- Mboitiki Sanmas?

*- Mboitiki Sanmas, na fam Sanmas. Makayo i ngombaito ngo ngala. Sain ka mboloman ak ko kala. Wa Atei Mboitiki ku. Ngombait ngo ngala wa Atei Mboitiki, Atei Mboitiki lian, i ngala tapi e mbeifino sa loko ngala lok wa i loko tapi i ta mbokaik mensia ino. Nalaino ta mbokaik mensia nalan se naino. Makayo Rozita ngombeiko, ndaut wa inano. Ai, ka motok, mbaso sikat sa. Na kantiko. Na kantiko. Muntei Nyora nala sikat. Makayo inan fe roko, na katatsa, inan fe roko ormana sa, ife i na ormana ruo telu te, na ormana ruo telu inan te, makayo inan na pusing. Inan na pusing, nala kai sa, makayo ndukul molo uluno. Tarus, ulun raran . . . ulun ndatafak tarus raran keluar.*

*Raran keluar, tarus i ndaut, mbanting aino, i ndaut nyakak aino fa mulut ke liar.*

- Ica said, "Auntie, I'm going to wash the laundry." I said: "Go and get our brush from Rozita's." Thus she went there to take it. Rozita said, "Wait a minute, I'll go to get it from Grandma Mboitiki who borrowed it."

- Mboitiki Sanmas?

- Mboitiki Sanmas, from the Sanmas clan. Then she went there to get it. "Wait with this and I'll go get it. At Grandma Mboitiki's." She went to get it from Grandma Mboitiki, and Grandma Mboitiki said she had had it, but another girl had also come there to take it, but she did not know her. Her name, she did not know the name of the person who had it. Then Rozita came back crying for her mother. "Mother, quickly, buy a brush. I [have to] replace it. I [have to] replace it. Grandma Nyora's brush." Then her mother went out, and she was angry. Her mother went out to talk to one person, then to another and a third, she had talked to two or three people, and then her mother was upset. Her mother was upset, she took a log like this and hit her child's head. Then, there was blood on her head . . . the head had a wound and blood came out.

Blood came out, and she cried, stamping her foot. She cried stamping her feet and yelled.

This narrative follows the trajectory of a lost brush searched for by people who had borrowed it from one another. The language that describes the sequence of borrowing in the first underlined clause re-iterates three times the word *loko* ("again"); the next sentence echoes this pattern by repeating the syllable *na* thrice. The first instance of repetition is simply an index of narrative time. Together, the two instances make up a parallel expression; this, however, is not a semantic parallelism but only repeats and modulates a pattern of sound. Thus the narrator foregrounds repetition itself, creating a comical image of actions that happen in sequence. The repeated pattern signifies rushing from door to door in order to find the brush.

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<sup>4</sup>The repetitions that will be discussed below are underlined. The opening of this narrative is discussed in Collins and Kaartinen (1998:552).

The next case is the phrase *na kantiko* (“I [have to] replace it”) that is said by the anxious child to her mother. Taken as such, repeating the child’s quoted speech simply appears as a device for animating her voice. Again, however, it is echoed by another repetition in the dramatic sequence in which the mother, upset by the argument about the brush, hits her child on the head; the child begins to bleed:

<i>Inan na pusing, nala kai sa,</i>	His mother was upset and took a log,
<i>makayo ndukul molo uluno.</i>	and then she hit her on her head.
<i>Tarus ulun raran . . .</i>	Then there was blood on her head . . .
<i>ulun ndatafak tarus raran kaluar.</i>	the head had a wound and <u>blood came out</u> .
<i>Raran kaluar; tarus i ndaut [ . . . ]</i>	<u>Blood came out</u> , and she cried [ . . . ]

If poetics is understood as figurative language that *makes present* the subject of talk and thus primes a possible, dialogic response to it, then repetition counts as a poetic device. In the examples discussed above, repetition occurs in a context in which personal names provide an index of immediacy and familiarity. An evaluative phrase or punchline that underlines a scandalous or upsetting turn of events de-centers the narrative from this indexical context and finalizes it with reference to the expectations of gossip or some other distinct genre. Repeating the phrase allows the storyteller to engage with the genre perspective he or she has just evoked with a new point of view that involves an element of sympathy or understanding. In this sense, repetition can amount to a dialogic engagement between different, narrative points of view—creating new interpretive possibilities or “affordances” in the same sense as DuBois argues for parallelism.

### The Composition of Oral Narratives

There is no clean analytic boundary between parallelism and repetition. Nevertheless my recordings and discussions of Bandanese oral poetry in the 1990s revealed that performers and audiences had a different aesthetic preference for the two. A typical performance of a traditional song progressed by introducing a short phrase that was repeated and expanded when a singer performed the next line. I (Kaartinen 2013:393) have suggested elsewhere that it is a variety of *anadiplosis*, a repetitive phrase that connects two segments of a poem and creates a measured pattern:<sup>5</sup>

*fa muruka Sambalain jaga m raut*  
*fa muruka Sambalain jaga m raut fa munjia raron sini*

The little Sambalain keeps crying  
 The little Sambalain keeps crying because it is dark

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<sup>5</sup> See Kaartinen (2013:304-06) for a full analysis of this song.

Another example of *anadiplosis* is the repeated mention of the child's bleeding head in the previous example. In that case the theme of one passage is repeated to introduce the theme of the next passage. Repetition directs the audience's attention and fixes it to a narrative topic, and it is also iconic of the singer's effort to recall the memory of events in the deep past.

A different aesthetic preference emerged when I transcribed songs with people who had an extensive knowledge of these songs. They did not evaluate my tape recordings as reproductions of live performance, but assumed a critical attitude towards the knowledge and the quality of language in the transcript. They insisted that passages that appeared as interlinear repetition in the original performance should be rendered as parallel expressions:<sup>6</sup>

<i>ombak safur-safur-safuro</i>	waves surf-surf-surf
<i>ma kuliling sakuntar alami</i>	let us circumnavigate the world
<i>ma kuliling sakuntar alamiyo</i>	let us circumnavigate the world

In this original performance the repeated line is modified by adding a final syllable that marks the end of the preceding passage of the song. The improved version that others proposed to me after hearing the tape achieves the same punctuating effect, but with parallelism:

<i>ombak safur-safuro</i>	waves surf-surf
<i>kuliling fonuo co</i>	we go around the village
<i>wa kuliling sakuntar alami</i>	and we circumambulate the world

One might explain this difference by a model of the Bandanese language that stresses parallelism as a sign of the supposed aesthetic perfection of textual products, as against the more spontaneous oral forms. But this begs the question: what makes parallelism superior to repetition? The key may be the different ways in which parallelism and repetition evoke linguistic and cultural classifications. The examples cited above suggest that repetition makes use of a wide range of the creative possibilities of language itself, whereas those expressions that we readily recognize as parallelism are connected to fairly stable cultural and linguistic classifications. As I have pointed out, the distinction between speaking "inside" and "outside" the house is built on the opposition of inside and outside audiences. Discursive strategies in these two frameworks rely on parallel expressions that either "translate" between Bandanese and Indonesian or express the speaker's knowledge of conventional Bandanese tropes. Such discursive strategies are underpinned by the aesthetic value of parallelism for eloquent public discourse in Bandanese, including textual representations of traditional knowledge.

Narratives that represent traditional technical knowledge evidence a preference for parallelism. The next example focuses on pottery-making, one of the cultural practices that the Bandanese associate with their ancestry in Central Maluku. The first part of the narrative, told by a senior man in his 50s, uses clever metaphors with which men justify to women why they are sailing away to trade:<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See Kaartinen (2010) for a full analysis of this song; these examples are quoted from pp. 128-29.

<sup>7</sup> For the full story see Collins and Kaartinen (1998:560-63).

*na rafasok nirobingan rafasok nirosombolo rafasok nirorafit  
yo mborna sio rufuno rira ra'  
fa nikanda sombotsi tamtambil feken ra te*

they will buy plates, buy sarongs, buy shirts  
since the men have worked so hard in the gardens  
that their trousers and sarongs are covered with a lot of patches

The narrative becomes more personal as the speaker continues, and he uses his own voice to pose a rhetorical question: how do they make pottery? The technical account of pottery-making that follows is punctuated by lexical and phrasal repetition:

*roko rala raro  
roko rala raro feyo ngkana rataro  
roko rulum nanaino  
rulom nanaino na bek feyo resirak raro*

they go to take clay  
they go to take clay and come back and put it down  
they go to take sand  
they take sand in buckets and mix it with clay

...

*rafaluk umba  
rafaluk langga  
rafaluk umba rara*

they form pots  
they form vases  
they make very large pots

The passage about mixing sand and clay follows the pattern of expanding an initial phrase after repeating it in the second line. The second passage is another example of *merism* in which the paired lexical items refer to a more encompassing category.

While parallelism is preferred in oral storytelling, repetition is a central structuring device of traditional songs. The Bandanese peoples' most prestigious genre is *onotani*, narrative songs about the travels of seagoing ancestors. Because I have described them elsewhere (Kaartinen 2010 and 2013), I focus on the use of parallelism and repetition in the structure of these songs here. The following three examples are drawn from a long *onotani* performed on September 24,

1995 by Mrs. Salama Latar, then in her 60s. Her song performance lasted more than one-half hour, parallelism occurs within lines and between lines in the following passage:<sup>8</sup>

<i>kito rifinbeino harinbeino</i>	when, on what day
<i>berangkat kamu diri</i>	“get on your way!”
<i>kito sio, o budi mustika sine</i>	we, pearls of wisdom,
<i>ni buah pala matasih</i>	fruits of nutmeg are dead

Within a line, it is often linguistic parallelism between Bandanese and Malay words. The phrase *rifinbeino, harinbeino* uses the Bandanese word *rifilo* (“when”) and the Malay *hari* (“day”), adding to each the Bandanese particles *inbe* (“how”) and *ino*, which indicates that its referent has appeared earlier in the discourse.

Several essays in this special issue discuss vocabulary adapted from other languages for use in poetic parallelism. David Holm (this volume) shows that such adaptations can be conceptually quite complex in the case of Chinese terms found in Zhuang epic. Here, however, I should note that performers and audiences represent the language of the song as being Bandanese. The use of Malay and Indonesian vocabulary is not limited to parallel expressions: Indonesian words that the singer utters in an altered form abound. Bandanese-speakers are highly conscious of the phonemic differences between Indonesian and their own language, and they systematically change the vowels of Indonesian loanwords into Bandanese ones.<sup>9</sup> This substituting is manifested in rendering the Indonesian *c̄arita* as *culita* (“story”) and *k̄aliling* as *kuliling* (“around”) in the next example. The performer was born in the 1930s, a few years after her village became the site of a Malay-language elementary school. While she speaks fluent Indonesian, it is likely that singers in her mother’s generation knew little or no Indonesian or Malay; their use of Malay words in oral composition would have relied on hearing other people speak the language. Eastern Indonesian oral traditions have frequently drawn from the language of their ethnic neighbors to create expressions that sound obscure to the local audience in order to represent the language spoken by foreigners or in the land of the dead.<sup>10</sup> Remarkably, however, performers of *onotani* avoid words from Evav—the language of their immediate neighbors in Kei. Older generations of Bandanese women had little first-hand experience of those distant lands visited by their male relatives, but they claimed to be able to access visions of them by falling into trance. The implied cosmology, in which women and men move in the world in profoundly different ways, resonates with the use of obscure Malay words in traditional songs that are normally performed by women:

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<sup>8</sup>This and subsequent examples have been drawn from a song discussed in Kaartinen (2010:109-30).

<sup>9</sup>Geurtjens (1924:73, 119); see also Eila Stepanova’s (this volume) discussion about vocabulary from Russian that was subordinated to the special register of Karelian laments.

<sup>10</sup> See also Kerry Hull’s (this volume) discussion of Spanish vocabulary adapted into ritual Ch’orti’ Maya discourse.

<i>i fa culita</i>	that is the story:
<i>ombak safur-safur-safuro</i>	waves break in surf-surf-surf
<i>ma kuliling sakuntar alami</i>	let us circumambulate the world
<i>ma kulilingo sakuntar alamiyo</i>	let us circumambulate the world
<i>anin pancaruba mongonanding kito sie</i>	gusting wind faces our people
<i>i fancaruba anin kayo betang anyur ke lau</i>	that gust of wind, log of wood drifting in the sea
<i>fancarupa anin kayo mbetan anyur ke lau</i>	gust of wind, log of wood drifting in the sea
<i>i fa tusingga ila polo kur tutuno ima i</i>	there we land on the island Kur up there
<i>i la polo kur tutuno i mangi</i>	there, island of Kur up in the sky

Here, as in my earlier examples, parallelism appears in totalizing statements about lost ancestral homelands. Instead of pointing to the common referential ground of speakers and listeners, it addresses an undifferentiated past society. It is only possible to speak about the mythical past in a totalizing way; hence there is a certain rhetorical necessity for parallelism in the song's opening.

The passage contains several figures that describe a sea voyage of ancestors who "drift" along the sea and arrive at a chain of islands between Central Maluku and the Kei Islands. The parallelistic couplet that describes two images associated with drifting, *anin pancarupa* ("gusting wind") and *kayo batang anyur ke lau* ("a log of wood drifting in the sea") recurs throughout these travel passages. It anticipates their arrival on an island (and listeners pay attention to whether the singer gets the order of the islands right).

The next example, drawn from the performance of Salama Latar in 1995, shows that repetition is also used to punctuate the song each time the singer introduces a new passage. Each time the travelers arrive at a new island, their location is named twice:

<i>i fa tusingga wa ila wai</i>	thus we land out there, and we are here
<i>i fa ito war e minaar ambano ika</i>	there, in front of War Minahaar out there
<i>i fa ito war e minaar ambano ika</i>	there, in front of War Minahaar out there

In a model followed throughout the song, the repeated line introduces a new section. In this case the ancestors arrive at their final destination, the site of the contemporary village.

### Concluding Remarks

Unlike the linguistic repertoires of societies in the Lesser Sunda Islands, Bandanese does not have a distinct register of ritual speech that mandates the use of canonical parallelism. My first examples show, however, that many of its conventional poetic figures pair two or more linguistic items that refer to semantically parallel topics (Fox 1977:78). Another prominent source of parallelism is the contrast between Bandanese and the regional or national dialect of Malay. Similar hierarchies between local and national languages have recently received attention in linguistic anthropology (Kuipers 1998; Kulick 1992). A local language that is reduced to a vehicle of intimate communication is likely to undergo language shift, eventually losing its capacity to convey authority and culturally specific meanings (Keane 1997). The examples given

in this essay suggest that the Bandanese, during the period of my 1990s fieldwork, retained some genres of artistic and authoritative speech, and parallelism and repetition are important elements found of those genres.

The aim of this essay has been to explore how parallelism and repetition operate across a range of discourse registers and genres: proverbs, public oratory, informal narrative, and traditional sung poetry. It is far from an exhaustive account of the different forms these phenomena manifest in Bandanese. Though more could be said about the use of grammatical particles, acoustic gestures, and word order, as well as about the presence of parallel stories or other larger discursive units in constructing them I have explored how people use parallelism and repetition to articulate and organize different domains of their experience. While oral narratives are a prominent resource for doing this, the use figurative speech in proverbs and public oratory serves the same purpose by emphasizing the temporal framework in which people can recognize and evaluate the structures of everyday life. An equally important topic is the structuring effects of parallelism and repetition on discourse. I have argued that the Bandanese-speakers' seemingly spontaneous ability to compose various types of narratives and tropes relies on the peculiar relationship between Bandanese and the national language; the awareness of a boundary between the two gives them a dialogical impulse to reproduce a contrast between different points of view and to give voice to each. For this reason, parallelism in Bandanese is not limited to conventional expressions, but also encourages innovative uses of the language. This point becomes more salient when we consider Bandanese speakers' uses of repetition as a means for representing and engaging with a multiplicity of voices and points of view in their narrative discourse.

My discussion began with the semantic reconstruction of parallelistic tropes found in conventional parables and spontaneous narratives. These forms of discourse show reflexive awareness about habitual patterns of classifying objects and actions. In this sense, parallelism articulates a consciousness of culture—a term that anthropologists use cautiously because of its implications of homogeneity and unity. Repetition shows that culture, as it appears through tropes, does not constrain people within unified forms of thought. While repetition in Bandanese mainly generates local tropes—ones that foreground an image of a personal emotion or state of mind—parallelism that builds on repetition can situate the local trope in a larger field of tropes, for instance what the Bandanese call speaking “inside” and “outside” the house. These folk categories refer to the orientation that a public speaker adopts when addressing an audience. I have argued that such positioning points to a linguistic boundary that designates Bandanese as a privileged medium that enacts recognized kinds of social status the community, and objectifies the experiences of loneliness, insecurity, and self-discovery that are associated with urban life and long-distance travel. Especially for those who have lived most of their lives in urban centers, knowledge of the Bandanese language affords the opportunity to locate the self “inside” Bandanese society, even when this consciousness is no longer sustained by the society's spatial organization.

Exploring the poetic resources of Bandanese is of particular interest for recognizing the possibilities of maintaining and revitalizing the language in an era marked by urban migration, language shift, and the passing of the last generation that was able to perform Bandanese verbal arts. Language learning takes place through the interaction between old and young people, and therefore I have sought to juxtapose examples of younger people's everyday storytelling with

performances by older people who are conscious of their traditional authority. It is not inevitable that the dissipation of valued, artistic genres leads to the loss of more modest kinds of figurative language. Although my oldest informants—those in their 60s and older in the 1990s—represented parallelism as a central element of refined, poetic language, their technique of oral composition relied on the repetition of sound patterns and images for performing large-scale traditional texts and for drawing the audience into an affective engagement with their characters and motifs. Younger generations may not hold equally high aesthetic standards for oral composition. However, as I have sought to demonstrate with the stories about the volleyball game and the lost brush, younger narrators also use the repetition of sound patterns and phrases as a device for turning an item of chatter and gossip into an engaging narrative which sometimes builds up into full-blown parallel expressions. If such playful interest in language continues, it can be the source of new, innovative speech forms that resonate with contemporary possibilities.

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