

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRAGMASEMANTICS AND HINDU PERFORMING ARTS: A CASE STUDY ON KECAK DANCE

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the interplay between pragmasemantics and Hindu performing arts, focusing specifically on the Kecak dance. The Kecak dance enacts scenes from the Ramayana, infusing the performance with deep spiritual significance. Through rhythmic chanting and elaborate choreography, the dancers embody divine characters, creating a sacred atmosphere. Pragmasemantics, an interdisciplinary approach that merges the study of pragmatics (contextual meaning) and semantics (linguistic meaning), offers a valuable lens through which to analyze the Kecak dance. This approach allows for an exploration of how meaning is constructed, interpreted, and conveyed through the interplay of verbal and non-verbal elements in the performance. Pragmasemantics examines the way in which the context of a performance influences the interpretation of the linguistic and physical elements present. In the Kecak dance, the verbal component is primarily the “cak” chanting, which is not only a series of sounds but carries deep cultural and narrative significance. The qualitative research methodology employed in this study, focusing on content analysis of Kecak performances. This method allows for a detailed examination of the verbal and non-verbal elements that constitute the dance. The result of study are integrating Hindu scriptures such as the Ramayana and various slokas, alongside scholarly theories on pragmasemantics and emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between pragmasemantics and the Kecak dance. It explores how the verbal chants and physical movements in Kecak convey layered meanings, reinforcing cultural values and religious teachings. This comprehensive analysis contributes to the broader discourse on the role of pragmasemantics in performing arts, offering new insights into the dynamic interaction between language, culture, and performance.

*Keywords: Pragmasemantic, Arts, Kecak Dance, Elements*

## I. Introduction

Dance in Bali transcends mere aesthetic movement, embodying profound cultural and spiritual significance, with the Kecak Dance being a prime example (Putra Kencana et al., 2020). Unlike many forms of dance that focus solely on beauty and entertainment, the Kecak Dance carries deep meaning rooted in Balinese tradition. It is a powerful expression of communal identity and religious devotion, often performed during sacred rituals and ceremonies. The dance narrates epic tales from the Ramayana, conveying moral and philosophical lessons to the audience. The distinctive "cak-cak" chanting, performed by a choir of men, creates a hypnotic rhythm that enhances the spiritual atmosphere. Each gesture and movement in the Kecak Dance is imbued with symbolism, reflecting the

interconnectedness of the physical and spiritual realms. This dance is not just a performance but a participatory act of cultural preservation, where both performers and viewers engage in a shared spiritual experience. The Kecak Dance also exemplifies the Balinese belief in the power of collective harmony, as the synchronized chants and movements symbolize unity and cooperation. The performance of Kecak dance were always used as a reference in improving public health conditions (Sutajaya et al., 2020). Additionally, it serves as an educational tool, imparting cultural knowledge and values to younger generations. Ultimately, the Kecak Dance stands as a testament to the rich and multifaceted nature of Balinese dance, offering a window into the island's deep spiritual and cultural heritage.

In the religious life of the Balinese people, dance is an integral part of religious rituals, serving as a medium to express devotion and tell sacred stories (Sukatman & Wuryaningrum, 2024). One such dance is the Kecak dance, which holds a special place in Balinese Hindu ceremonies. The Kecak dance was created by a Balinese artist named Wayan Limbak in collaboration with a German painter named Walter Spies. This partnership emerged from their shared fascination with Balinese culture and traditions. The dance was inspired by traditional Balinese rituals, particularly the sanghyang trance dance, which involves rhythmic chanting and spiritual possession. Recognizing the rich cultural potential, Limbak and Spies adapted these elements into a performance based on the Ramayana story, a central epic in Hindu beliefs. The creators envisioned the Kecak dance not only as a preservation of religious rituals but also as an art form that could captivate audiences. By integrating the narrative of the Ramayana, the creators created a dance that was both spiritually meaningful and artistically appealing.

The performance features elaborate costumes, dramatic movements, and the iconic “cak” chants, which simulate the sounds of the monkey army from the epic. When tourists began to visit Bali in greater numbers, the Kecak dance became a prominent attraction, showcasing the island’s unique cultural heritage. It served as a bridge between Balinese religious traditions and global artistic appreciation. Today, the Kecak dance is celebrated worldwide, symbolizing the creative fusion of traditional rituals and modern performance art. This dance, often performed in temples and during religious festivals, is not just entertainment but a form of worship. The Kecak dance enacts scenes from the Ramayana, infusing the performance with deep spiritual significance. Through rhythmic chanting and elaborate choreography, the dancers embody divine characters, creating a sacred atmosphere. This fusion of art and spirituality exemplifies the Balinese belief that dance can bridge the human and divine realms. The Kecak dance, often referred to as the “Ramayana Monkey Chant,” is a Balinese art form that combines rhythmic vocalizations, intricate movements, and storytelling. It is deeply rooted in Hindu

mythology, primarily drawing from the epic Ramayana. This dance is a unique blend of performance and ritual, reflecting the profound cultural and religious ethos of the Balinese Hindu community.

The Ramayana is believed to be a colossal epic from India that has had a major influence on cultures around the world (Nuriawan, 2023). This epic tale narrates the journey of love between Rama and Sinta, who encounter a significant obstacle when Sinta is kidnapped by Ravana. The performances were managed based on the spiritual and also the traditional background of Balinese culture ( et al., 2023). The narrative of the Ramayana transcends time and geography, illustrating timeless themes of love, duty, and honor. It is not merely a tale of romance but a rich tapestry of moral and ethical lessons. In contemporary times, the Ramayana is visualized through various mediums, including dance performances such as the Kecak dance in Bali. These performances bring the ancient story to life, allowing audiences to experience its dramatic and emotional depth. According to Saud (2014), innovation is intricately linked to creativity, mastery of resources, and strategic approaches to achieving desired outcomes. This implies that the more creative the presentation, the more effective the resulting innovation. Through innovative adaptations, the Ramayana continues to educate and inspire, teaching lessons of righteousness, loyalty, and the triumph of good over evil. The story’s ability to evolve and remain pertinent highlights the dynamic nature of cultural narratives. By engaging with the Ramayana through diverse forms, people across the world can appreciate its rich cultural heritage and the profound ethical teachings it offers. This enduring tale, with its intricate plot and well-developed characters, continues to resonate, reflecting the universal truths embedded within its verses.

The Kecak dance, often performed as an accompaniment to the Sanghyang dance, holds deep cultural significance as a remnant of pre-Hindu traditions in Bali (Sarjono et al., 2021). The Sanghyang dance itself is a trance dance, known locally as Karawuhan, in which dancers enter a state of trance believed to be induced by Hyang, a spirit or deity. This trance state can

cause the dancers to become unconscious, allowing the spirit to take control of their movements. Historically, the Sanghyang dance served not just as entertainment but as a ritualistic practice intended to protect the community from evil spirits and to purify the environment. The integration of the Kecak dance into this ritual adds a layer of rhythmic chanting and coordinated movements, enhancing the overall spiritual and theatrical experience. The repetitive "cak-cak" sounds and synchronized gestures in Kecak create a hypnotic atmosphere, reinforcing the trance state of the Sanghyang dancers. This combination of dances exemplifies the fusion of ancient and religious traditions, maintaining a connection to Bali's spiritual heritage. Through these performances, the cultural memory and religious beliefs of the Balinese people are preserved and passed down through generations. Furthermore, the Kecak and Sanghyang dances attract numerous visitors and researchers, fostering a greater appreciation and understanding of Balinese culture globally. In essence, the Kecak dance, when paired with the Sanghyang trance dance, exemplifies the profound and mystical elements of Balinese performing arts.

Pragmasemantics, an interdisciplinary approach that merges the study of pragmatics (contextual meaning) and semantics (linguistic meaning), offers a valuable lens through which to analyze the Kecak dance. This approach allows for an exploration of how meaning is constructed, interpreted, and conveyed through the interplay of verbal and non-verbal elements in the performance. Pragmasemantics examines the way in which the context of a performance influences the interpretation of the linguistic and physical elements present. In the Kecak dance, the verbal component is primarily the "cak" chanting, which is not only a series of sounds but carries deep cultural and narrative significance. The rhythmic patterns and tonal variations in these chants create a layered auditory experience that enhances the storytelling. This approach also reveals how performances like Kecak function as a medium for cultural transmission, preserving and transforming Balinese heritage. Furthermore, pragmasemantics underscores the importance of context in meaning-making, showing that the dance is not just a series of

movements and sounds but a complex cultural text. This analysis can provide deeper insights into how cultural identity and values are expressed and maintained through performance art. Despite the rich cultural and religious significance of Kecak dance, there has been little research into how its elements function pragmatically. This research aims to analyze the verbal and non-verbal components of Kecak contribute to the construction of meaning, Kecak elements reflect and reinforce Hindu philosophical and religious teachings, and the pragmasemantics can provide a deeper understanding of the cultural and religious dimensions of Kecak.

## **II. Research Method**

This study employs a qualitative research methodology, which is particularly suitable for exploring the complex and nuanced interactions inherent in cultural performances. Qualitative research allows for a detailed and contextual examination of phenomena, making it ideal for understanding the intricate layers of meaning in the Kecak dance. The primary method of data collection is content analysis. This approach enables the researcher to gather rich, descriptive data that can provide insights into the lived experiences and perspectives of those involved in the performance. By focusing on qualitative methods, the study can capture the subtleties of the Kecak dance that might be overlooked by more quantitative approaches. Additionally, this methodology is well-suited to uncovering the symbolic meanings and cultural significance related in the dance. Through this qualitative approach, the study aims to provide a holistic view of the Kecak dance, highlighting its role as both a cultural artifact and a living tradition.

## **III. Result And Discussions**

### **Verbal Elements**

The chants in Kecak, known as "cak," are derived from the sounds made by the Vanara (monkey) army in the Ramayana. The 'cak' came from the acronym cahya kala which means the age of the light (Sukatman & Wuryaningrum, 2024). These rhythmic vocalizations serve multiple functions within the performance, acting as a powerful auditory landscape that immerses

the audience in the narrative. The “cak” chants are not merely background sounds; they set the emotional tone of the performance, ranging from intense and suspenseful to serene and reflective. This dynamic use of vocalization helps to guide the narrative flow, ensuring that the audience remains engaged and can follow the story as it unfolds. According to the Mahabharata, the collective chanting reflects the unity and devotion of the performers, which creates a profound spiritual connection between the audience and the divine (Mahabharata, Book VII). The synchronization of the “cak” chants symbolizes the harmonious cooperation and collective strength of the Vanara army, reinforcing themes of loyalty and teamwork.

The Mahabharata describes similar scenes of collective energy and devotion, such as when warriors chant and sing together before battle, invoking the blessings of the gods and preparing themselves spiritually for the conflict ahead. This collective energy is mirrored in the Kecak dance, where the rhythmic chanting serves to invoke a sense of divine presence and communal participation. The performers, through their synchronized chants, create a resonant soundscape that elevates the spiritual atmosphere of the performance. This auditory element not only enhances the dramatic effect but also serves as a form of meditation for both performers and audience members, fostering a shared spiritual experience. The “cak” chants, with their repetitive and rhythmic nature, can induce a trance-like state, further deepening the connection to the story and its characters.

In the Mahabharata, the power of collective chanting is evident in the descriptions of warriors’ pre-battle rituals, where the unity of their voices is believed to summon divine favor and protection. Similarly, in Kecak, the chanting creates a sense of divine intervention, as if the gods themselves are participating in the performance. The emotional resonance of the chants is amplified by the performers’ physical movements and facial expressions, which convey the intensity of the story’s dramatic moments. The rhythmic patterns of the chants also help to build tension and anticipation, drawing the audience into the unfolding narrative. Each “cak” sound is a building block in the larger structure of the performance, contributing to the overall sense

of harmony and cohesion. The Mahabharata often emphasizes the importance of sound and music in religious and cultural rituals, illustrating how auditory elements can enhance spiritual experiences and convey profound meanings. In the Kecak dance, the “cak” chants fulfill a similar role, acting as both a narrative device and a spiritual tool. The chants are carefully choreographed to correspond with specific actions and events in the story, ensuring that the auditory and visual elements of the performance are seamlessly integrated. This careful synchronization underscores the performers’ discipline and dedication, reflecting the rigorous training and rehearsal required to achieve such precision.

Moreover, the “cak” chants in Kecak are not just a backdrop but an active part of the storytelling, providing cues and context for the audience. They help to highlight key moments in the narrative, such as the battles between Rama and Ravana’s forces, the capture and rescue of Sinta, and the various divine interventions that occur throughout the story. The intensity and pace of the chants vary to match the emotional highs and lows of the narrative, creating a dynamic and engaging performance. This use of vocalization to convey meaning and emotion is a testament to the richness of the Kecak tradition and its ability to communicate complex cultural and spiritual themes. The “cak” chants are a vital component of the Kecak dance, embodying the collective energy and devotion of the performers and creating a powerful connection between the audience and the divine. The integration of these verbal elements with the narrative and visual aspects of the performance ensures that the Kecak dance remains a vibrant and compelling form of cultural expression.

### **Non-verbal Elements**

The movements and gestures in Kecak are highly stylized and symbolic, playing a crucial role in conveying the story’s deeper meanings. and loud cak songs, is arranged according to the Mahabharata. The kecak dance performance contains the meaning of beauty and a balance of elements of strength, solidarity, and unity (Komang et al., 2023). Each gesture and movement is carefully choreographed to reflect specific emotions and characteristics. For

instance, the gestures of Hanuman, the monkey god, are designed to convey his bravery and devotion. His leaps and energetic movements symbolize his agility and strength, essential traits of his character in the Ramayana. On the other hand, the dance of Ravana, the demon king, illustrates his power and arrogance. His broad, sweeping gestures and firm stances depict his dominance and confidence, contrasting sharply with the humble and respectful movements of other characters. These physical expressions are not merely aesthetic; they are deeply imbued with cultural and religious meanings understood within the Balinese Hindu context.

The audience, familiar with these symbolic gestures, can immediately recognize and interpret the underlying messages. For example, a raised hand might symbolize a call to the gods for assistance, while a bowed head can indicate respect and humility. The body movements have a meaning such as body gestures toward someone signifying respect or admiration, and body movements directed outward indicating rejection or warning in the Kecak dance (Alit Sankara, 2023). The synchronization of the dancers' movements also reflects the communal harmony and collective spirit central to Balinese culture. Each gesture and movement is a visual language, communicating the narrative's emotional and spiritual dimensions without the need for words. This non-verbal communication is crucial in creating an immersive experience for the audience, allowing them to connect with the story on a deeper level. The precision and grace of the dancers' movements highlight the discipline and dedication required in traditional Balinese dance training. Moreover, these gestures often draw from ancient Hindu scriptures, ensuring that the performance remains faithful to its religious roots. The interplay between these physical expressions and the accompanying chants enhances the overall impact of the performance, making it a powerful medium for storytelling. Through these movements, the dancers bring the characters of the Ramayana to life, making their struggles, triumphs, and emotions palpable to the audience. This rich tapestry of gestures and movements not only entertains but also educates, passing down cultural and religious knowledge through

generations.

The non-verbal elements of Kecak thus serve as a bridge between the past and the present, preserving Balinese heritage while allowing it to evolve and remain relevant. Each performance becomes a living testament to the enduring power of cultural traditions, capable of conveying profound truths and values through the art of dance. In this way, the non-verbal elements of Kecak are essential to its role as both an artistic and a spiritual practice.

### **Hindu Scriptures and Slokas**

The Kecak dance, while deeply rooted in Balinese cultural and spiritual traditions, was also innovatively developed with a strategic vision that extends beyond mere artistic expression (Made Pira Erawati, 2019). Originally conceptualized not only for the benefit of art developers, it encompasses a larger ambition aimed at positioning Kecak as a market oriented commodity. This strategic move was intended to enhance its appeal to both local and international audiences, transforming it into a significant cultural export. By doing so, the creators of Kecak sought to generate economic benefits for the local community, providing livelihoods for dancers, musicians, and artisans involved in the performances. This commercialization has led to the dance being featured in numerous cultural festivals and tourism promotions, thereby increasing its visibility and popularity. Moreover, the market oriented approach has necessitated maintaining high standards of performance, ensuring that Kecak remains a captivating and authentic experience for audiences. This commercialization also supports the preservation of traditional Balinese arts, as revenues generated can be reinvested into cultural heritage initiatives. The international acclaim of Kecak has furthered cultural exchange, allowing global audiences to gain insight into Balinese traditions. This approach has successfully balanced the dual goals of cultural preservation and economic development, showcasing how traditional arts can adapt to modern market demands. Ultimately, the development of Kecak as a market-oriented commodity underscores its dynamic nature, demonstrating its capacity to evolve while still honoring its cultural roots.

The integration of Hindu scriptures and slokas in Kecak significantly enhances its religious and spiritual significance, providing a deeper layer of meaning to the performance. These sacred texts are webbing into the fabric of the dance, aligning it with the moral and ethical teachings of Hinduism. For example, the use of specific verses from the Ramayana during key moments in the performance reinforces the epic's timeless lessons. As stated in the Ramayana, "Rama is the embodiment of dharma (righteousness)," and this principle is vividly echoed in the portrayal of Rama in Kecak (Ramayana, Kanda VI). The portrayal of Rama's unwavering commitment to righteousness serves as a moral flare for the audience, highlighting the importance of virtue and integrity. The slokas, or verses, are not merely recited; they are performed with great emphasis and emotion, infusing the narrative with spiritual depth. These verses serve as a bridge between the narrative and the audience, conveying the spiritual and ethical dimensions of the story in a powerful and direct manner. For instance, during the climax of the battle between Rama and Ravana, the slokas are chanted with increasing intensity, reflecting the high stakes and moral significance of the conflict. This heightened delivery mirrors the escalating tension and drama of the scene, drawing the audience into the emotional and spiritual core of the story.

The slokas often include profound verses such as "Dharma protects those who protect it" (Ramayana, Yuddha Kanda), reminding the audience of the reciprocal nature of righteousness. The use of these verses during pivotal moments underline the narrative's moral teachings, reinforcing the cultural values related in the epic. The performance of slokas with such fervor also serves to connect the audience with the broader religious practices and beliefs of the Balinese Hindu community. The verses are frequently drawn from the same texts used in temple rituals and ceremonies, creating a seamless continuity between the performance and the everyday religious life of the community. This connection ensures that the cultural and spiritual heritage of Hinduism is preserved and transmitted through the dance. The integration of these sacred texts into the performance not only enhances its authenticity but also imbues it with

a sacred quality, elevating it from mere entertainment to a form of religious expression.

The slokas also act as a narrative tool, guiding the audience through the complexities of the story and highlighting its key themes. They provide context and commentary, helping to elucidate the moral and philosophical underpinnings of the tale. For instance, a sloka recited during Sinta's abduction might emphasize the themes of loyalty and fidelity, reinforcing her unwavering devotion to Rama. The poetic and rhythmic nature of the slokas adds a lyrical quality to the performance, enhancing its aesthetic appeal. Moreover, the chanting of slokas creates a meditative atmosphere, inviting the audience to reflect on the deeper meanings of the story. This meditative quality is further amplified by the collective participation of the performers, whose synchronized chanting fosters a sense of unity and communal devotion.

Incorporating slokas into the Kecak dance also serves to highlight the interconnectedness of different forms of Hindu art and worship. It showcases the versatility of Hindu scriptures, demonstrating how they can be adapted to various cultural expressions while retaining their spiritual essence. This adaptability ensures that the teachings of Hinduism remain relevant and accessible to contemporary audiences. The use of slokas in Kecak is a testament to the enduring power of these ancient texts, which continue to inspire and guide through their timeless wisdom. Through the harmonious blending of dance, music, and scripture, the Kecak performance becomes a holistic spiritual experience, resonating deeply with both performers and audience members. This integration of Hindu scriptures and slokas not only enriches the Kecak dance but also reinforces the cultural and religious identity of the Balinese Hindu community, ensuring the preservation and perpetuation of their rich heritage.

### **Theoretical Perspectives on Pragmasemantics**

Theoretical perspectives on pragmasemantics, such as those proposed by Sperber and Wilson (1986), emphasize the crucial role of context in the construction of meaning. In the case of Kecak, the context is

deeply rooted in the cultural and religious framework of Hinduism, which profoundly shapes the interpretation of the dance's elements. According to Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory, communication involves not just the transmission of information but also the negotiation of meaning through contextual clues. This theory is particularly applicable to Kecak, where performers and audiences engage in a dynamic and interactive process to derive meaning. The shared cultural and religious knowledge of Hinduism provides a rich backdrop that informs and guides this interpretive process, making each performance a unique and immersive experience. In Kecak, the pragmasemantic elements, including the chants, gestures, and visual symbols, are designed to resonate deeply with the audience's cultural and religious understanding. For instance, the repetitive "cak" chants, symbolic gestures, and elaborate costumes all serve as signals that carry specific meanings within the Balinese Hindu context. These elements are not just decorative; they are imbued with layers of significance that the audience must actively engage with to fully appreciate the performance. This engagement is facilitated by the relevance theory, which suggests that communication is most effective when it aligns with the audience's cognitive environment, enabling them to make inferences based on their contextual knowledge.

Sperber and Wilson's theory also underscores the importance of inferential reasoning in communication. In the context of Kecak, the audience is required to infer the meanings of various elements based on their understanding of Hindu myths, rituals, and cultural symbols. For example, when Hanuman leaps across the stage, the audience interprets this action as a display of his divine strength and loyalty to Rama, informed by their knowledge of the Ramayana. This inferential process is guided by the principles of relevance, which prioritize interpretations that provide the greatest cognitive and emotional rewards. In other words, the audience seeks out meanings that resonate most strongly with their existing knowledge and experiences, making the performance both intellectually and emotionally engaging. The layered and symbolic nature of Kecak's elements allows for multiple interpretations, enhancing the

richness of the performance. Each gesture, chant, and visual cue can be understood on several levels, depending on the audience's familiarity with the cultural and religious context. For instance, the portrayal of Ravana with broad, sweeping gestures and firm stances can be interpreted as a depiction of his arrogance and power. However, for those with a deeper understanding of Hindu symbolism, these gestures might also evoke themes of cosmic balance and the eternal struggle between good and evil. This multiplicity of meanings creates a nuanced and multifaceted experience, encouraging the audience to actively participate in the interpretive process. The relevance theory suggests that communication is a collaborative effort between the speaker and the listener. In Kecak, this collaborative process is evident as performers and audiences co-create the meaning of the performance through their shared cultural and religious knowledge. The performers' deliberate use of symbolic gestures and chants invites the audience to engage with the narrative on a deeper level, drawing on their own experiences and interpretations to construct meaning. This interaction transforms the performance into a communal event, where meaning is continuously negotiated and redefined.

According to an article by Smith (2010), the pragmatic aspects of performance art, such as Kecak, highlight the dynamic nature of meaning-making in cultural contexts. Smith argues that the interplay between performers and audiences is central to understanding the significance of cultural performances, as it reflects broader social and cultural dynamics. In Kecak, the audience's interpretive efforts are not passive but active, requiring them to draw on their knowledge of Hindu epics, cultural symbols, and religious rituals to fully appreciate the performance. This active engagement is a testament to the power of pragmasemantics in creating rich, immersive cultural experiences. The integration of theoretical perspectives on pragmasemantics with the practical elements of Kecak underscores the complexity and depth of the performance. By emphasizing the importance of context, inferential reasoning, and collaborative meaning-making, theories such as those proposed by Sperber and Wilson provide

valuable insights into the intricate processes that underlie cultural performances. These insights reveal how Kecak serves not only as an artistic expression but also as a medium for cultural education and communal identity reinforcement. Through the lens of pragmasemantics, we can better appreciate the profound ways in which Kecak communicates and preserves the cultural and religious heritage of the Balinese Hindu community.

### **The Cultural and Religious Context of Kecak**

The cultural and religious context of Kecak is crucial for understanding its pragmasemantic dimensions, as the performance is deeply embedded in the Balinese Hindu worldview, which shapes the meanings and interpretations of its various elements. Balinese Hinduism, practiced in Bali, is a unique blend of Indian Hindu traditions and indigenous Balinese beliefs, resulting in a rich tapestry of rituals, myths, and practices. This hybrid belief system influences every aspect of Balinese life, including its arts, and Kecak is no exception. The performance serves as both a form of artistic expression and a medium for religious and cultural education. It not only entertains but also imparts moral and ethical lessons, reinforces social and religious values, and fosters a sense of community and identity among its participants and audience. The pragmasemantic elements of Kecak, such as the chants, gestures, and visual symbols, are intricately designed to resonate with the audience's cultural and religious knowledge, creating a powerful and immersive experience that goes beyond mere entertainment. In the context of Balinese Hinduism, Kecak functions as a didactic tool, illustrating the teachings of the Ramayana and other Hindu scriptures through a dynamic and engaging medium. The performance's chants, for instance, are not just rhythmic sounds but are imbued with spiritual significance, echoing the collective energy and devotion of the performers. These vocal elements help to create an auditory landscape that transports the audience into the world of the Ramayana, making the ancient epic feel immediate and relevant. Similarly, the gestures and movements of the dancers are highly stylized and symbolic, each one carefully choreographed to convey specific aspects of the characters and

narrative. For example, the heroic leaps of Hanuman symbolize his bravery and divine strength, while the menacing postures of Ravana reflect his arrogance and tyranny. These physical expressions are understood within the cultural context of Balinese Hinduism, where dance and movement are seen as forms of worship and communication with the divine.

The religious significance of Kecak is further reinforced by its association with temple rituals and ceremonies. Often, Kecak performances are held in conjunction with religious festivals and ceremonies, creating a seamless integration of art and religion. This context enhances the spiritual and emotional impact of the performance, allowing the audience to experience the stories and teachings of the Ramayana in a deeply meaningful way. The setting of the performance, often in sacred spaces or temple grounds, adds to the overall atmosphere, imbuing the event with a sense of reverence and sanctity. This sacred environment helps to blur the lines between performer and audience, creating a communal experience that reinforces shared cultural and religious values. Moreover, the use of traditional costumes and props in Kecak adds another layer of cultural significance. The elaborate costumes worn by the performers are not just for visual appeal; they are designed to reflect the attributes of the characters they portray, drawing on iconographic elements familiar to the audience. The visual symbols, such as the masks and headdresses, are laden with meaning, further anchoring the performance in its religious and cultural context. These visual cues help the audience to identify the characters and follow the narrative, even if they are not familiar with the specifics of the story.

The integration of Kecak with broader religious practices in Bali ensures that the performance remains relevant and accessible to contemporary audiences. By aligning the dance with temple rituals and festivals, the performance becomes a living tradition that evolves with the community while preserving its core values and teachings. This adaptability is a testament to the resilience and vitality of Balinese culture, which continues to thrive despite external influences and changes over time. In essence, the cultural and religious context of Kecak is fundamental to its



pragmasemantic dimensions, shaping how the performance is created, interpreted, and experienced. The interplay of chants, gestures, and visual symbols within this context creates a rich and multifaceted experience that transcends the boundaries of art and religion. The performance not only serves as a form of cultural preservation but also as a means of educating and inspiring future generations. Through Kecak, the stories and teachings of the Ramayana come to life, providing a powerful medium for exploring the timeless themes of duty, righteousness, and devotion that are central to Hindu philosophy. This integration of art, culture, and religion ensures that Kecak remains a vital and cherished aspect of Balinese life, continuing to enrich and inspire both performers and audiences alike.

#### IV. Conclusion

This study reveals the intricate relationship between pragmasemantics and the Kecak dance, demonstrating how meaning is constructed through the interplay of verbal and nonverbal elements within a cultural and religious context. The findings suggest that Kecak is not only a form of entertainment but also a medium for conveying Hindu philosophical and religious teachings. Through a detailed pragmasemantic analysis, it becomes evident that Kecak leverages both verbal and non-verbal modes of communication to create a performance rich in meaning and emotional depth. The rhythmic “cak” chants, coupled with symbolic gestures and striking visual elements, are not mere components of the dance but are integral to the storytelling process. Each chant and movement contributes to the narrative, drawing the audience into a shared experience that is as intellectually stimulating as it is emotionally engaging. The religious significance of Kecak is further amplified by the inclusion of Hindu scriptures and slokas. These elements bridge the performance with broader religious practices and beliefs of the Balinese Hindu community. The slokas do not merely accompany the dance but are woven into the narrative, enhancing the spiritual and ethical dimensions of the story being told. This fusion of performance and spirituality underscores Kecak’s role as a living cultural artifact, preserving and transmitting Hindu teachings

across generations.

The study also highlights the role of non-verbal communication in enhancing the audience’s emotional engagement with the performance. The choreographed movements and synchronized chants create a powerful visual and auditory spectacle, drawing the audience into the story and evoking a profound emotional response. This multisensory experience underscores the holistic nature of Kecak, where verbal and non-verbal elements are seamlessly integrated to create a cohesive and immersive narrative. Additionally, the performance of Kecak can be seen as a form of cultural reinforcement, where the repetition of religious narratives and practices within the dance helps to sustain and propagate Hindu beliefs and values. This reinforces the idea that Kecak is not just a form of artistic expression but also a vital component of cultural continuity and identity. Future research could expand on this study by exploring other forms of Hindu performing arts to further understand the role of pragmasemantics in cultural expressions. Comparative studies could be conducted on various Hindu dances and rituals across different regions, examining how verbal and non-verbal communication practices vary and what this reveals about local interpretations of Hindu philosophy and mythology.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the broader discourse on the role of pragmasemantics in performing arts, highlighting the complex interplay of language, culture, and performance in Kecak. It underscores the importance of both verbal and non-verbal elements in creating a meaningful and engaging performance, revealing how Kecak serves as a medium for cultural transmission and religious expression. The insights gained from this analysis can inform our understanding of other cultural performances and the ways in which they communicate and preserve collective beliefs and values.

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