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Finding meaning in translation

A.L. Becker's "text coherence"

THOMAS M. HUNTER

ABSTRACT

In this article I look at two closely related examples of A.L. Becker's work on textual coherence and how they can be used as tools for finding meaning in translation. In the first example I draw on Becker and Oka's work on deixis in Old Javanese (1974) to elucidate the subtle shifts of spatial and temporal reference in "Sitā's Letter", an innovative episode in the *Old Javanese Rāmāyaṇa* (OJR 11.18-34). In the second example, I look at Becker's analysis of the role of Indonesian verbal markers in his essay "The figure a sentence makes; An interpretation of a Classical Malay sentence" (1979b). I take these suggestions as a starting point to examine how shifts in the choice of active or passive verbal form establish contrasts in perspective in an Indonesian short story. My aim is to illustrate Becker's dictum that we should look within languages and cultural systems for the elements of structure that give them coherence, rather than imposing theoretical models that may obscure rather than illuminate the objects of study.

KEYWORDS

Text coherence; deixis; Old Javanese language; symmetrical voice systems; Western Malay-Polynesian (WMP) languages; A.L. Becker; Richard McGinn.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to approach the question of "meaning in translation" using the tools of linguistics to uncover basic "elements of coherence" in the Old Javanese and Indonesian languages. There are two parts to the article that are united by the common theme of a "cline of person" that organizes the spatial and temporal axes of narrative in terms of the distance between first, second, and third persons. In two articles on the subject linguists A.L.

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Becker and I Gusti Ngurah Oka (1974) and Richard McGinn (1985) argued that for languages like Javanese, Old Javanese, and Malay the cline of person is as important to the organization of narrative as the “sequence of tense” in English. Becker and Oka applied this insight first to the study of the deictic, or demonstrative pronouns of the Old Javanese language. In a later article, Becker (1979b) looked at how the cline of person played out in shifts between active and passive form in a sentence from the Classical Malay *hikayat* literature that describes the passage of the lead character through a landscape of natural beauty. In an article that took a similar approach to the role of the cline of person in the underlying coherence of narratives, McGinn (1985) explored shifts of active-passive diathesis in modern Indonesian similar to those studied by Becker in his article (1979a) on “Text-building, epistemology, and aesthetics in Javanese shadow theatre”.

This article is thus divided into two parts. The first represents a response to the article of Becker and Oka (1974). In this article I focus on a passage in “Sitā’s letter” from the *Old Javanese Rāmāyaṇa* (OJR 11.22-3) using this to test the hypothesis of Becker and Oka and to suggest some possible revisions that might be of service to translators and students of the typology of Western Malayo-Polynesian languages (WMP). In the second part of the article, I trace the narrative development of an Indonesian short as the plot is moved towards a climactic moment in shifts between active and passive form. This part of the article responds to the articles of Becker (1979b) and McGinn (1985) on the relationship of shifts in active-passive diathesis with the cline of person.

TEXT COHERENCE IN WORKS OF BECKER (1979a), MILAR (1983), AND MCGINN (1985)

In his influential article of 1979 on “Text-building, epistemology, and aesthetics in Javanese shadow theatre”, A.L. Becker proposed the term “textual coherence” or “text coherence” as a guiding principle of what he thought of as the task of a modern philologist (Becker 1979a). In his view, any textual artefact should be viewed with reference to a set of four crucial relationships:¹

- “The relation of words, phrases, sentences, and larger units of a text to each other (that is the coherence of the text)”
- “The relation of this text to other texts,” the intertextual aspect of the text
- The relationship of authors and audiences in the social context of the text
- “The relation of units in the text to non-literary events (that is reference)²

¹ A.L. Becker (1979a) has been reprinted in A.L. Becker (1995); only sections in quotation marks are taken directly from Becker’s article; the remainder is paraphrase.

² There are striking parallels here with the approach taken more recently by Sheldon Pollock in his discussion of three types of textual meaning: “textual, contextual, and (modern) philological,” which, if I read Pollock correctly, can be understood as the meanings that are emergent to a reader taking the approach of what he terms “philosophical hermeneutics” (Pollock 2009: 956-957).

In the same essay Becker went on to say:

Textual coherence can be examined at a level of structure in the hierarchy of structures that make up the text. One might examine the structure and categories of words in a *wayang* [shadow play], isolating the special vocabulary and distinctive phonology of the language of the puppeteer [...]. At the level of sentences, and across sentences, there are kinds of coherence unexploited in Western languages, coherence based not on tenses (which is the basis of Western narrative coherence) but upon a system of person [...] elaborated far beyond similar systems in other languages.

Becker's 1979a article was influential well beyond the borders of literary criticism and linguistic anthropology, leading to articles like Susan Bolyar Millar's application of the methodology of textual coherence to social structure in the Bugis society of southern Sulawesi (Millar 1983). Here she explains her debt to Becker:

The Bugis do not talk of a "self" as an unconstructed creative centre of awareness that directs an individual's encounters with the world. If we want to invent a Bugis conception of person, it must be one that is articulated in terms of a different epistemology. How do Bugis talk about what we might refer to as personhood? What might we imagine to be the unconstructed condition of a person that informs his/her behaviour and language? In A. L. Becker's (1979: 216) terms, what "kinds of coherence," unexploited in our epistemological system, do they assume to be the ontological condition of things? (Millar 1983: 478-479).

In an article of the same period, linguist Richard McGinn (1985) drew attention to two of Becker's suggestions: first, that sequence of tense is the primary source of textual coherence in Western languages, and second that what Becker had termed a "cline of person" in a seminal article of 1974 is an important source of coherence in Indonesian languages. As McGinn noted:

[T]he Indonesian topic may be part of a larger deictic category of person, which may be related in discourse to orientation in space – both physical and social – of participants in the speech event (1985: 749).

This recognition led McGinn to suggest that "the contrast between English and Indonesian coherence systems" may be found in the opposition between "sequence of tense" and a "cline of person." In the latter form of textual coherence temporal and spatial categories are configured in terms of relationships aligned with the three pronominal categories of first, second, and third person.

In responding to the theme of "finding meaning in translation" this paper is offered as a study of two examples of textual coherence that I have found useful in my work as a translator. These examples draw on McGinn's article (1985) and two works by A.L. Becker that each deal with a form of textual coherence, in the first instance a passage from the *Old Javanese Rāmāyaṇa*, in the

second an Indonesian language short story by the late Putu Arya Tirtawirya, a novelist and short story writer from the Balinese community of the island of Lombok.

SITĀ'S LETTER: OLD JAVANESE DEICTIC PRONOUNS IN TWO VERSES FROM THE *OLD JAVANESE RĀMĀYAṆA*³

In the first half of this essay we will look at the "cline of person" as it was first developed in an article entitled "Person in Kawi; Exploration of an elementary semantic dimension" (Becker and Oka 1974; Becker 1995). This essay was poorly received in the community of scholars of Old Javanese; yet a reassessment may be in order, for it is clear that the "deictic" or "demonstrative" pronouns of the Old Javanese language (OJ) represent a paradigm of great importance in interpreting both spatial and temporal dimensions of textual discourses. Since this is the case, it is crucial that students of the language gain a clear understanding of the issues at stake as part of learning to navigate in Old Javanese, a language whose Austronesian patterns of syntax and semantics are at a far remove from those of Western languages.

In this section of the essay I will draw on Becker and Oka's seminal work on deixis in Old Javanese to elucidate the subtle shifts of spatial and temporal reference in "Sitā's Letter", an innovative episode in the *Old Javanese Rāmāyaṇa* (OJR 11.18-34). This section of the OJR, which has been the subject of a sensitive study of Willem van der Molen, portrays Lord Rāma reading a letter composed by Sitā during her captivity in the kingdom of Lanka that she sends to him along with her signet ring.⁴

In the second half of the article I will draw on Becker's (1979b) article interpreting a Classical Malay sentence. In this essay Becker focussed on event-participant structures developed using the particles *pun* and *lah* to explore shifts in perspective linked to role-marking predicates of the symmetrical voice system of OJ. I then apply the analytical strategy developed by Becker to the study of Putu Arya Tirtawirya's short story (1974), "Menghadap Sang Hakim" (Facing the Judge).

In both of these efforts my aim is to illustrate Becker's dictum that we should look within languages and cultural systems for the elements of structure that are the sources of coherence. Today, as unprecedented advances are being made in the sciences of cognition, neuropsychology, and evolutionary biology, we are in more need than ever of approaches to linguistics and the social sciences that can unite the interpretive and scientific aspects of the human intellectual endeavour. It is thus an opportune time to look once again at the work of a linguist who was as deeply interested in the sciences of mind and the interpretive work of the social sciences as he was in the theoretical and

³ Some authors have more recently used the term *Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin* (RK), following Sanskrit word order, while others have preferred *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, which is indeed the name given to the work even today in Bali.

⁴ See Van der Molen (2003).

empirical work of the linguist, OJ demonstrative pronouns and Becker and Oka's "cline of person".

We begin with a brief summary of the system of deictic pronouns identified by Becker and Oka (1995: 120-28). These can also be thought of as demonstrative pronouns, but with the caveat that demonstrative pronouns of languages like English have only third person forms ("this", "that"), but we cannot make a difference between "this you" and "that you". As we will see the deictic pronouns of OJ are not limited to the third person.

Deixis, form from Greek *deikumi*, "point out", is a domain of linguistic enquiry that goes back to the Danish linguist Otto Jespersen, who used the term "shifters" to refer to functional words that index the location of speakers and interlocutors in the act of speaking (Jespersen 1924). Roman Jakobson used the same term to speak of deixis in his famous essay "Shifters, verbal categories, and the Russian verb" (1956), while Émile Benveniste following a similar line of enquiry spoke of the "deictic nature of personal pronouns" (Benveniste 1971). This first generation of linguists who explored "shifters" understood them in terms of the first and second person pronouns that shift the locus of speech between the self, the deictic centre, and an addressee, the axis of "person deixis". Jakobson (1956, 1971) extended the discussion by noting the shifts that occur in transitions between direct and indirect discourse. These shifts are between exchanges between ego and other, the realm of first and second person pronominal usage, and narrative, the third person mode of reporting on, or narrating, events.⁵ The main forms of deixis identified in contemporary accounts of deixis in English include:

- person deixis: (speaker-addressee, I-you);
- spatial deixis (adverbs "here-there" and demonstrative pronouns "this-that");
- temporal deixis (adverbs "now-then" and sequence of tense); and
- discourse deixis ("this-that" internal to a discourse: This is great food; that was a good movie).

P.J. Zoetmulder (1950: 32) was among the first to treat the basic set of three deictic pronouns of OJ, calling them *aanwijzende voornaamwoorden*, 'demonstrative (pointing) pronouns'. In Zoetmulder and Poedjawijatna (1992: 29) he termed them *kata ganti petunjuk*, 'pointing pronouns'. In both cases he noted that the basic set of three along with the two variants for each of the set. A translation from either source reads:

1. *iki* and *iké*, 'this, close to me'
2. *iku* and *iko*, 'that, close to you'
3. *ika* and *ikā*, 'that there, that close to him/her'

⁵ See also Monika Fludernik (1991) for a detailed review of Jespersen and Jakobson on "shifters".

Zoetmulder also pointed out that these demonstrative pronouns do not only refer to spatial distance, but can refer to temporal difference, noting that *iki* and *ike* can mean 'now' and *ikā* can mean 'earlier' or 'in the past'.

Becker and Oka observed that this three-part paradigm aligns with the personal pronouns in a systematic way, and theorized that there are two sets rather than a single set with three variations. This connection with the personal pronouns was crucial in Becker's analysis since it suggested a way of organizing the spatial and temporal coordinates of discourse, and was thus an important source of textual coherence in Old Javanese. As McGinn later affirmed (1985: 749), Becker had come to see this paradigmatic aspect of the deictic pronouns of OJ as playing a role in textual coherence as important as the sequence of tense in English.

Becker was interested in the micro-levels of linguistic analysis and this came out in his descriptions with Oka of the basic and derived sets. They described the basic set in some detail:

- iki* (i locative + k deictic formative + i first person)
'this, here, near speaker'
- iku* (i locative + k deictic formative + u second person)
'that, there, near hearer'
- ika* (i locative + k deictic formative + a third person)
'That yonder, over there near neither first nor second person'

There was nothing controversial here; this was simply a more fine-tuned description of the system that had been recognized earlier by Zoetmulder and others. What was revolutionary, and may still be controversial, was that they theorized that the second set noted by Zoetmulder (*ike-iko-ikana*) was organized along a double axis derived by adding the third person formative *-a* to the basic set, and that this had implications for interpretation. This was unexplored territory and required a hypothesis that could explain these perceived differences in meaning linked to the secondary set. They laid out their hypothesis under the heading "Time in deixis; The inflection of deictic forms" (Becker and Oka 1995: 119-120). As the heading indicates they proposed that the second set added a temporal aspect to deictic pronouns, so that they now reflected both spatial and temporal deixis in a given set of relationships. Here is the system they proposed:

- iki* (i locative + k deictic formative + i first person)
'this, here, near speaker'
- iku* (i locative + k deictic formative + u second person)
'that, there, near hearer'
- ika* (i locative + k deictic formative + a third person)
'That yonder, over there near neither first nor second person'

Becker and Oka then proposed that there is a secondary set of deictic articles built on an additive principle that takes the third person deictic *ika* as basic, with the derived formed by adding person-marking vowels *-i*, *-u*, and *-a*. The sandhi derivations ($a + i = e$) and ($a + u > o$) are quite regular at word boundary sandhi junctures. The addition of *-a* is slightly different, either resulting in *ikā*, which takes a regular sandhi coalescence ($a + a > ā$) or *ikana*, which uses an epenthetic *-n-* to set off the added person marker. The described the derivational processes as follows:

ika + i > ike
ika + u > iko
ika + a > ikā or ikana

For Becker and Oka (1995: 120) this derived set of deictic pronouns combine spatial and temporal deixis, stating their formula as follows:

ike (<*ika + i*) “that relating to speaker that happened in the past”
iko (<*ika + u*) “that relating to hearer that happened in the past”
ikana-ikā (*ika + a*) “that relating to neither speaker nor hearer which happened in the past”

This was a promising beginning to finding an explanation of the function of the derived set of deictics. This assumes that paradigmatic sets like the deictic pronouns must have a systematic application. The trick is to be able to tease out the system from the data, which as Zoetmulder noted (1993: 23-26) can often appear to have quite variable interpretation for the same deictic pronouns. Becker and Oka explored their hypothesis with reference to only one example (Becker 1995: 121-122) that unfortunately suffered from a number of philological lapses. These should not have discouraged further discussion, but the lack of a larger database was a daunting prospect and, in any event, there were no further attempts to appraise Becker and Oka’s hypothesis for several decades following the publication of their seminal article of 1974.

Here we turn to how all this bears on the question of translation, and finding meaning in translation. It is certainly not the case that translators must have a grounding in the linguistic sciences in order to produce first-rate translations. But translation requires many tools, and for a language as far distant from Indo-European norms as OJ, a systematic linguistic analysis may be well-nigh essential. We do, fortunately, have the late P.J. Zoetmulder’s excellent traditional grammar of OJ in both Dutch and Indonesian languages as an important guide to the language.⁶ But there have been significant advances in the study of the typology, syntax, and semantics of the Western-

⁶ More recently Willem van der Molen has contributed an excellent introduction to OJ that is also a very useful guide to the language (Van der Molen: 2017).

Malayo-Polynesian branch of Austronesian that includes the OJ language since Zoetmulder's time, and these can be applied selectively to the work of the translator.

For several periods of a year or more (1992-1993, 1996-1997, 2001) I had the good fortune to work with the late S. Supomo on a project to complete a reader on *Old Javanese kakawin* literature based on a manuscript prepared by the Romo Zoetmulder.⁷ As I worked through my notes and translations for the project I began to use the methodology of constituent analysis to help me sort out the puzzles that we frequently encountered. In the process I began to refine the terms I used for these analyses, eventually bringing them into conformity as much as possible with the system used in the analysis of Austronesian languages, especially as found in Sander Adelaar and Nikolaus P. Himmelmann (2005).⁸ At the same time I began to keep notes on the occurrence of deictic pronouns, and related forms like *iking*, *ikung*, *ikang* (which add the definite marker *-ng* to the set) and *ngkā/ngkana* 'there, at that place, then' (Zoetmulder and Robson 1982, *Old Javanese-English Dictionary/OJED*: 1212, 787).

I did not attempt to be systematic at this point, but by 2012 felt prepared enough to present a paper at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies that outlined my analysis of the verse from the OJR that I also focus on in this paper. In that paper I remembered Becker and Oka's designations for the derived deictic set incorrectly. However, this may have been fortuitous as it meant that I developed a relatively independent hypothesis that could be tested in the analysis of passages of particular interest. One of these passages was a crucial verse in "Sītā's Letter" from the *Old Javanese Rāmāyaṇa* (OJR).

TWO VERSES FROM SĪTĀ'S LETTER; TESTING THE HYPOTHESIS

"Sītā's Letter" is a section of the eleventh canto of the *Old Javanese Rāmāyaṇa* (OJR 11.22-32) that stands out as an innovative addition to the work. The eleventh canto otherwise is composed of verses translated from the tenth canto of *The Slaying of Rāvaṇa* that exemplify the main figures of speech of the Indian tradition as known to Bhaṭṭi, who composed his remarkable work to exemplify the systematic grammatical system of Pāṇini's *Eighty Chapters*.⁹

If there are places in the corpus of OJ literature where the full set of deictic pronouns of OJ might come into play one of those must surely be the verse of Sītā's letter as it is read by Rāma. After seeking Sītā in her place of captivity in Lanka, the monkey general Hanumān returns to Rāma's encampment, bringing with him Sītā's "crest jewel", her letter to Rāma, and the signet ring that he had given her before she was abducted by the demon-king Rāvaṇa.

The crucial passage in the letter is OJR 11.22. Here the authors of the OJR use a series of deictic pronouns to bring out shifts of perspective between

⁷ I use the term *Romo* here, as this title referring to a Catholic priest, is a regular part of how the late professor is remembered by his many admirers.

⁸ See especially Himmelmann (2005: 110-181).

⁹ For a recent translation of the OJR see S.O. Robson 2015.

the point of view of Sītā – alternatively “here” and “there” in Lanka – and of Rāma, alternatively “here” and “there” in his encampment in the Vindhya mountains. The virtuosity of the poetic performance in OJR 11.22 is evident, and is further enhanced by the way that the deictic pronouns are placed within the metre Śardūlavikrīḍita. This metre requires a caesura (*yati*) or break between syntactic cola immediately following the “heavy” twelfth syllable.¹⁰ This makes this a point of maximum prominence within the line. It is no doubt significant, and makes for a very dramatic presentation in the verse, that one of the derived deictic pronouns occurs at the twelfth syllable in three out of four lines of the verse.

We will begin with a prosaic rendering of the verses, using bold face type to mark the deictic pronouns, as well as the preposition *i* that occurs at the twelfth syllable of the first hemistich. Note that there are three cases of vowel coalescence that initially obscure the presence of the deictic pronouns. These follow the regular rules of euphonic juncture *sandhi* for OJ. *Tĕkĕ* in the first line joins the simple intransitive verb *tĕka* ‘arrive’ with the basic preposition *i*, which here can be translated ‘at’. In the second line we find a combination of the interjection *nya* (‘look! here!’) with the first-person deictic pronoun *iki* and definite marker *ng*. Then in the fourth line we find *tĕkāk-hiḍĕp*, which combines a marker of discourse prominence and syntactic boundaries (*ta*) with the third person deictic *ika*. Note especially the occurrence of three of the derived deictic pronouns at the “heavy” twelfth syllable of the meter:

Old Javanese Rāmāyaṇa 11.22

Sĕmbah ni ṅhulun āryaputra ya tĕkĕ | paḍadwayanta prabhu |
nyekiṅ rekha wacān uniya ya **iko** | cihna ny unĕṅ ni ṅhulun |
 mwan cūḍāmaṅi tulya ni ṅhulun **ike** | maṅsö sumĕmbah kita |
 nya ṅ simsim pakirim narendra ya **ikā** | sparsanta **tĕkāk-hiḍĕp** || OJR 11.22 ||

‘My bow of homage, oh nobly born, arrives **at** the two feet of my lord,
 Behold **this** letter whose contents are to be read – **that** will be the sign of
 my longing for you,¹¹
 And here is the crest-jewel **that** is my likeness **that** I bring to you, offering
 it to you with reverently folded hands,
 And look, here is the ring that you sent to me **that** I have imagined there to
 be your touch’.

¹⁰ The principle of *yati*, regarded as a “break in recitation” in the Indian tradition can be compared to caesura in the quantitative metres of Greek and Latin. However, in a principled study of the subject that draws on the *Yatyupadeśopaniṣad* of the poetician Daṇḍin, Pollock (1977) has demonstrated that the role of *yati* is to define syntactic cola and that mastery of their use went through a long evolution that can be traced in the works of the great poets of the *kāvya* tradition. See Hunter (2009) for a study applying Pollock’s methodology to the Indic and Indo-Javanese metres of Old Javanese.

¹¹ An argument can be made that *wacan* in RK 11.22b should be translated simply as ‘letter’. I base my translation on the following assumptions: *rekha* is understood in OJ (as it is in Sanskrit) to refer to the physical shapes or outlines of something written or drawn; *wacan* can be interpreted as a “passive irrealis” form of *waca* ‘read’ via the derivation *w-+maca-ĕn*, ‘to be

Hunter (2012) proposed a different explanation for the derived deictic set, assuming that what are at stake may be shifters that involved a “differential” perspective on distance from the interlocutor or address. Using the typological terms “proximal”, “medial”, and “distal” to refer to three steps of distance I proposed the following analysis of the derived set. I assume here that we can use the terms proximal, medial, and distal to refer to the person-marking formatives and so schematize a set of differential relationships for the First and Second person pronouns and an additive relationship in the case of the third member of the set:

<i>ika</i> [distal] + <i>-i</i> [proximal]	>	<i>ike</i> [distal + proximal]
<i>ika</i> [distal] + <i>-u</i> [medial]	>	<i>iko</i> [distal + medial]
<i>ika</i> [distal] + <i>-a</i> [distal]	>	<i>ikā/ikana</i> [distal + distal]

Based partly on observation of OJR 11.22, I proposed that these internal contrasts of distance can be interpreted as follows:

<i>ike</i> [distal + proximal]	=	close to speaker, (ego) compared to distant from interlocutor
<i>iko</i> [distal + medial]	=	close to interlocutor, compared to distant from ego
<i>ikā/ikana</i> [distal + distal]	=	greater degree of distance from either ego or interlocutor

If these values are applied to OJR 11.22 we can see that they bring out a set of differential coordinates that appear to be an important part of the coherence of the text. I have retained the marking /y/ to indicate the internal *yati* of the lines and shows how the syntactic cola of the verse are aligned with the constraints of the metrical structure:

Sēmbah ni n̄hulun āryaputra ya tēkê | paḍadwayanta prabhu |
n̄yekiṅ [proximal] rekha wacān uniya ya iko [distal + medial] /y/ cihna ny unēn̄ ni
n̄hulun |
mwaṅ cūḍāmaṅi tulya ni n̄hulun ike [distal + proximal] /y/ maṅsö sumēmbah kita |
n̄ya ṅ simsim pakirim narendra ya ikā [distal + distal] /y/ sparśanta tēkāk-hiḍḍep
[distal + distal] | |

read’; and, *uniya* is an irrealis form of *uni* ‘sound’, here the sound of something read aloud, hence meaning ‘to be sounded out’.

'My bow of homage, oh nobly born, arrives [here] **at** /y/ the two feet of my lord |
Behold, **this** [near me] is my letter – whose contents are to be read – **that** [close to you/far from me] /y/ will be the visible sign of my longing |¹²
And the crest-jewel which is a likeness of me – **that** [far from me, close to you] /y/ I offer to you, approaching with reverently folded hands,
And behold, the ring that you sent to me – **that** [far from you] /y/ was what I imagined to be your touch – **there/then** [far from you; back then (in Lanka)]'.

While it may be very difficult to capture the information provided by the deictic sets in an English translation, this is precisely because deictic contrasts organized in parallel with the personal pronouns are not a source of coherence in English language texts, but are decidedly so in OJ.

Lest it seem that I am drawing distinctions between the deictics “out of thin air” we can look at a phrase from OJR 11.22 that is repeated with a different set of deictic coordinates in OJR 11.30. Here we will see a shift from *iko* of OJR 11.22b to *ike* in OJR 11.30d that clearly has implications for interpretation based on the shift in deictic usage.

*Yadyan prāpta narendra ring hulun apā /y/ tekī [proximal] n anuñ paṅguhēn |
kāsy-asiḥku haneñ musuh kapilañö /y/ hetunya tag wuruh hurwus |
ñhiñ kiñkiñ pasajiñku tan hana waneh /y/ kālīh putēk niñ hati |
lāwan luh juga timtimēn nahan ike [distal + proximal] /y/ cihnā ny unēñ niñ
hulun |*

'If you reach me my lord, what is it **that** [close to me] you might expect to find?

My state is pitiful here among the enemy, driven to distraction from not knowing what will become of me,

My only guest-offerings will be nothing other than the stored-up tears **that** are the sign of my longing for you.

Along with the tears **that** [far from you, close to me] I have stored up as the sign of my longing for you'.

Now let us compare how the phrase “the sign of my longing for you” (*cihnā ny unēñ niñ hulun*) is used in the two verses:

¹² Andrew Ollett (personal communication, 11-3-2020) has suggested that this line can be read as a “quasi-split” construction given the referentiality of *ya* in the clause, giving the reading: “as for this letter [which I have now] whose contents are to be read, it is that [when you have it] that will be a sign of my longing for you”. He further notes: “[s]uch sentences remind me of the ‘so ‘yam’ construction in Sanskrit, ‘that [distal, a person or thing known in the past] is this [proximate: a person or thing right in front of me]’, a form of sentence that some authors call a ‘recognition’ (*pratyabhijñā*)”.

OJR 11.22b: *nyekin rekha wacān uniya ya iko / cihna ny unēn ni ūhulun*
 ‘Behold, this [near me] is my letter, its contents to be read – **that** [close to you, far from me] / is the sign of my longing’.

OJR 11.30d: *lāwan luh juga timtimēn nahan ike / cihnā ny unēn ni ūhulun*
 ‘Along with the tears **that** [far from you, close to me] I have stored up / as the sign of my longing’.

I do not think we can find a much clearer case of the contrasting use of two of the extended deictic pronouns. In the first case (OJR 11.22a) Sītā speaks of the words of her letter, which will now be read by Rāma, as “far from me” but “close to you” and describes them as “the sign of my longing”. In the second case (OJR 11.30d) Sītā speaks of the tears that she has stored up as being “close to me” but “far from you” that, she will now make part of the “guest offering” that she has prepared to send to Rāma.

A wider corpus of examples needs now to be examined in order to determine whether the findings based on an analysis of OJR 11.22 and 11.30 have a wider application, and that the parameters of the model have a general applicability. An in-depth study of this subject is not possible within the constraints of this paper. However, a review of uses of *ike* in the OJR gives immediate evidence that suggests further refinements to the model are necessary. In the first example from that review (OJR 3.81) we find a use of *ike* in a passage where Rāma advises his brother Bhārata on the practice of kingship:

ike śatrunta d don sahana pakēna mwanng kira-kira (Van der Molen 2015: 47).

Those enemies of yours you should attack with every means and plan.
 (Robson 2015: 77).

Here we can see a differential element in the use of *ike*, but not one that contrasts a proximal, first person (I, me) with a distal participant in the discourse (Rāma in “Sītā’s Letter”). We see rather that the proximal element [i] refers to the interlocutor, not to the speaker. If we draw from this example the conclusion that [i] marks proximity in a more general way then we can understand that Rāma’s use of *ike* draws attention to the proximity of the enemies as his-Bhārata’s immediate concern (the proximal element) and to their independent existence “out there” in the world of political struggle (the distal element).

In another example (OJR 6.194) we find the use of *ike* in contrast to two uses of *iki* in a passage where Bālī makes a deathbed confession of his faults to Rāma:

ike ulahkw āri salah tēmèn ya / ndatan sade yā makadeya-deya / ukur Bhaṭareki tukarkw asānak / tāde apān dewawiddhīki mangde (Van der molen 2015: 128).

Those [*ike*, close to me, far from you] actions of mine were indeed wrong, brother.

It was not deliberate action that was the cause of it –

It cannot be helped, as it was divine providence **that** [*iki*, that, close to me] brought it about. (Robson 2015: 155).

Here the pattern follows closely the model based on analysis of OJR 11.22 and 11.30. Bālī refers to the faults that lie with himself by using the differential form *ike*, implying that they are close to him, but far from Rāma, the model of upright behaviour. He then shifts to two uses of the simple, proximal form *iki* to refer to the immediate effects of the actions of the gods that have effects only on him.

Another example shows a shift of perspective that is worked out through the contrast of the “compound distal” form *ikana* with *ike*. Here Hanumān is observing the demonesses who are tormenting Sītā from his hiding place in the Ashoka garden (OJR 8.109):

umulat sirekanang agupyan angdëlö / mawisik-wisik mrisakiti ng wiyoga weh / i lukān ike tan anumāna durjana / ya ta ling nirojar-ujar ing dalèm hati (Van der Molen 2015: 175).

He observed **them** (*ikanang*) nudging each other and watching her / Whispering in order to torment Sītā in her separation / Oh, **this** (*ike*) is too much. They have no consideration and are malicious / He said, talking it over to himself. (Robson 2015: 210).

Here the “compound distal” form *ikana* has been combined with the definitizing morpheme [*ng*] to form a deictic pronoun that establishes the distant, narrative perspective of Hanumān, as he observes the demonesses tormenting Sītā. Then when referring to his own feelings about what they are doing he uses differential *ike*. Here the proximal element is Hanumān himself, while the distal element has narrative reference to the demonesses he is observing.

Other examples reinforce the proposal that the distal element of *ike* can signal reference to an element of the discourse or speech act. This comes out in Sītā’s use of *ike* and *irika* in a lament to Trijatā (OJR 24.166):

Trijatāri hāh wulati tāku atisaya ng abhāgya kaśmala / dū harah apa ta kalīngan ike / kita kewala wruh irikey (irika i) ulahkw ari (Van der Molen 2015: 552).

Trijatā, my dear! Ah, look at me! My misfortune is extreme, how unclean I am! / Oh see, what is the meaning of **this**? Only you know **what** my actions **have been**. (Robson 2015: 673).

Here Sītā uses *ike* to refer to the misfortune (external, distal) that befalls her (internal, proximal). She then uses the compound prepositional-deictic form

irika to refer to her past actions (*ika*) to which only Trijatā can bear witness.

A final example underscores that fact that *ike* can be used with Second person reference, where the proximal element applies to the interlocutor vis-à-vis another participant in the discourse (OJR 22.65c-d):

yatna sang nātha haywa nātha huměňěng bişama tēměň ike / byakta ng wānara hěntyā denyā yadiyan hěňěngakena ike (Van der Molen 2015: 20).

Beware, oh king! Do not stand idly by as **this** is truly perilous. / Truly the monkeys will be wiped out by him if you allow **this** to go on. (Robson 2015: 591-592).

Here Vibhīṣaṇa is advising Rāma that he must press the attack against Kumbhakarna. In both uses of *ike* he refers to the threat of attack as the primary, distal reference, but combined with the proximal element to underscore the direct threat to Rāma himself, the interlocutor in the speech act.

These examples suggest that a new hypothesis should account for uses of *ike* with both first and second person reference. A revised schemata is suggested here:

ika [distal + proximal] close to ego or interlocutor + speech act or participant at a distance

ika [distal + medial] close to interlocutor; separate/distant from ego

ikā/ikana [distal + distal] greater degree of narrative distance

A few additional comments are in order. First, the compound second person forms *iku* and *iko* are found less frequently attested than *ike* and *ikana*, with only four examples of *iko* given in the corpus section of the OJED online, versus 145 uses for *ike*.¹³ In addition there are no uses of *iku* in the OJR. The lower numbers for the second person forms may be linked to the sociolinguistic fact of avoidance of direct, second person reference that is a marked feature of many WMP languages, and certainly of OJ, Javanese, Sundanese, and Balinese.

We should also refine the terminology of the schemata to reflect an essential difference between the first and second person forms, which align with the realm of social interaction, and the third person forms, which are linked to narrative contexts. In the case of the first and second person forms the complex deictics might be described as “differential” in their effects, while the complex third person forms (*ikā*, *ikana*) should then be described as “additive” in the sense that they increase narrative distance in either a spatial or temporal domain, or a combination of both.

The study of the deictic pronouns of OJ should take into account the dimension of sound symbolism.¹⁴ The American linguist Morris Swadesh

¹³ The OJED online is a project of the SEALang Library series that is based on the *Old Javanese-English Dictionary* (OJED) of P.J. Zoetmulder with S.O. Robson (Leiden, 1982) and used with the permission of the KITLV (Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde).

¹⁴ See Rabaglia et al. (2016) for an illuminating clinical study of the relationship of vowels and

(1972) may have been among the first to draw attention to the association of high, front vowels with “closeness” and low back vowels with “distance”, a feature that is common in many demonstrative and deictic pronominal sets of the world’s languages. In Indonesian we find the word-final contrast of /i/ and /u/ in *ini, itu*, (this-that), while in Tami the contrast is between word-initial /i/ and /a/ in *itu, atu*. The /ɪ/-/æ/ contrast of English *this* and *that* is another example. It is clear that these elemental phonological contrasts are involved in the simple and derived deictic pronominal sets of OJ and should be further investigated.

While there is still much work to be done to clarify the role and uses of deixis in OJ, a re-examination of the “cline of person” of Becker and Oka (1974) has shown that tracing a linguistic phenomenon that operates at the micro-levels of analysis can be a fruitful way of applying the principle of text coherence to the study of finding meaning in translation.

“SEQUENCE OF TOPIC” IN A SHORT STORY BY PUTU ARYA TIRTAWIRYA

This section of the present paper responds to another thought-provoking essay by A.L Becker. In this paper, entitled “The figure a sentence makes” (1979b), Becker looked at textual coherence in an example drawn from literary, Classical Malay. Like Old Javanese, Classical Malay has come to be understood as language whose verbal syntax puts it in the large group of Western-Malayo-Polynesian languages that are characterized as “symmetrical voice systems”.¹⁵ As we will see in the reading shifts between two “voices” are an important part of textual coherence in these languages. These can be likened to the contrast of “active” and “passive” voice in English, with the caveat that the two possibilities are given equal weight, unlike English and many other Indo-European languages, where the “active” form is basic and the “passive” a derived form. (In case we ever forget this fact the MSWord spell-checker will always faithfully remind us to choose the active form when we’ve used a passive in composition.)

In a close reading of a Classical Malay, sentence Becker was able to draw out a trio of communicative relationships from single Classical Malay sentence. One of these handled plot-level relationships at the level of discourse; one handled “topic-event” relationships marked with functional words *pun* and *lah*; and one handled “referential coherence by way of role-focus relations within transitive and intransitive clauses”.¹⁶ In elucidating these communicative relationships he emphasized the importance in Classical Malay of making a difference between the discourse level of sentences and the syntactic level of

distance that also contains a useful list of recent publications on iconicity and sound symbolism in language.

¹⁵ See Himmelmänn (2015).

¹⁶ As Becker noted (1995: 266-267) the topic-event structures of Classical Malay *pun lah* sequences should not be confused with subject-predicate relations. These are handled in Malay by the role-marking features of verbs marked for “focus”, a term developed for Philippine languages that has been largely replaced by “voice” in today’s literature on the typology of Austronesian (AN) languages.

clauses. Here is an abbreviated summary of Becker's analysis of the target sentence of his study that shows how he divides the territory between sentence and clause level aspects of the sentence:

- Sentence level 1: Pre-core [introduces a new stretch of discourse with a series of "conjunctions"]
 Clause level 1: \emptyset
Setelah demikian maka
 (roughly) 'and after that'
- Sentence level 2: Core [topical NP *pun* + VP-*lah*]
 Clause level 2: Core [Subject NP + intransitive VP]¹⁷
Sang Bimanyu pun berjalan-lah
 'Sang Bimanyu walked'
- Sentence level 3: Elaboration [NP-VP sequences continuing reference to (prior) topical NP marked with *pun*]
 Clause level 3: [intransitive or voice-marked NP-VP sequences]
sambil mencium bau bunga-bungan menghiburkan hati-nya
 while AV-sniff fragrance (of) flowers AV-bring cheer (to) his heart
itu
 [demonstrative pronoun-distal]
naik bukit turun bukit beberapa gunung di-lalu-i
 climb hill descend hill several mountain(s) UV-pass by
 [Putting it all together in translation:] 'And going on Sang Bimanyu walked on, while sniffing the fragrance of many flowers, bringing cheer to his heart there, climbing hills and descending hills, several mountains were (thus) passed by'.

This section of the paper looks mainly at how shifts between intransitive or voice-marked VPs affect interpretation, and can be used to highlight contrasts of perspective in texts or speech acts. I will be looking at how this works in "Facing the judge", a short story by Putu Arya Tirtawirya, written in Indonesian.¹⁸

Here we should take a moment to recall McGinn's comments on the importance of a "cline of person" that is as important in the internal coherence of WMP languages as "sequence of tense" in Indo-European languages. We should add here that McGinn took on board Becker's claim (1979b) that sentence cohesion in Indonesian (or Malay) is based on a "bond between grammatical and discourse topic" and explored what he called a "'sequence of topics' rule, which stipulates that one and only one topic may be chosen

¹⁷ In many other cases the VP of the core will be a verb marked for either "active" or "passive" diathesis, or in typological terms for a VP in either Actor Voice (AV) or Undergoer Voice (UV) form.

¹⁸ Originally published as "Menghadap Sang Hakim". Translation of the author, from Putu Arya Tirtawirya (1974, *Malam pengantin (The night of the bride)*, Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya).

for each verb” (McGinn 1985: 748). MacGinn (1985: 747) illustrated this with two informative examples, reproduced below:

- violation of the English “sequence of tense” rule

*I **left** when he **writes** the letter.

- violation of the Indonesian “sequence of topics” rule

**Saya tidak ada buku untuk Ø mem-baca Ø*
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7-8 9

*I don't have a book to Ø read
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7-8

The Indonesian example is ungrammatical because the core of the sentence – I don't have a book – assigns the Subject role to an (intransitive) Actor, “I” while the verb form *mem-baca* is marked as being in Actor Voice so can only apply – illogically – to the book. As McGinn pointed out the Indonesian example can be salvaged, and made grammatical by selecting “a sentence-type in which only one possible topic is available.” In Indonesian this sentence-type will be in Undergoer Voice form:¹⁹

Saya tidak ada buku untuk Ø di-baca
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7-8

I don't have a book to Ø be-read
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7-8

In this sentence there is no shift of topic; it remains *saya* throughout, while the infinitive phrase in UV form simply provides further information on the book using a sanctioned verbal strategy. McGinn drew two conclusions from his examples that have a bearing on this paper:

- [I]n Indonesian the active pattern [of the English active voice] cannot be regarded as the “basic” sentence from which the passives are derived by transformations.
- [T]he Indonesian topic may be part of a larger deictic category of person, which may be related in discourse to orientation in space – both physical and social – of participants in the speech event.

¹⁹ The study of AN voice system grew out of studies of Philippine languages, which spoke of verb phrases as marked for Focus on clause-level participants in terms of their semantic role. We thus find reference to Actor Focus verbs and to Goal Focus verbs. As studies of the typology of WMP languages progressed most analysts began to use the more conventional term “voice” to replace the older use of “focus”. We do find uses of the terms Patient Voice and Goal Voice, but the general tendency has been to use Undergoer Voice. The word “undergoer” has the advantage of referring to a number of different types of Object arguments internally differentiated by semantic role. These include patient, theme, recipient, and benefactee.

In reading through “Facing the Judge” we will be observing how shifts in the choice of verbal marking for Actor vs. Undergoer voice are linked to changing perspectives in space (or time) and can be used by a literary stylist to create moments of tension and release in a narrative.

SEQUENCE OF TOPIC IN PUTU ARYA TIRTAWIRYA’S “FACING THE JUDGE”

Before moving on to a review of “Facing the Judge” we should pause to look back at Becker’s analysis of a Classical Malay sentence. One of the most salient of his observations for the present effort at analysis is his description of how the choices of verbal form in the Malay sentence represent a movement “from individual event-focused events [*berjalan, mencium, naik, turun*] to location-focused events (marked by the *di-* prefix and *-i* suffix of the final verb” [*di-lalu-i*]). He links this movement in a very interesting way to the concept of a “cline of person” that he developed with I Gusti Ngurah Oka (1974) as well as to the “referentiality hierarchy” of William Foley (1976), the “natural topic hierarchy” and the “lexical content hierarchy” of Michael Silverstein (1976). Giving a summary of this hierarchy of topicality in discourse, Becker (1995: 270) gives us a schema that summarizes a movement from self to location that is very closely mirrored in the Classical Malay sentence chosen for his analysis:

speaker > hearer > human proper > human common > animate > non-
animate (> location)

Becker made an important innovation here by adding “location” as a member of the hierarchy that plays an important role in Malay and Indonesian languages. As he notes in a footnote (1995: 278, note 20), he “added *location* as the pole opposite *person*, so that the progression is from figure to ground”. Becker was very interested in how the the terms figure and ground, originally developed as part of Gestalt psychology, have been applied to the study of visual art. He often spoke enthusiastically of the work of Rudolf Arnheim, his colleague at the University of Michigan, whose work on “art and visual perception” has been reprinted many times since first appearing in 1984. Taking a cue from Arnheim, Becker applied similar gestalt principles in analysing the movement from self to location in the Classical Malay sentence. As we will see, both Tirtawirya’s style and the plot of “Facing the Judge”, involve shifts in choice of voice marking that reflect similar shifts from figure to ground.

READING THROUGH “FACING THE JUDGE”

The plot of the story is quite simple, but the relationship of the several persons in the story is more complex. Pan Kelodan, a Balinese farmer, has borrowed money from a relative named Pan Kanganin by giving him the deed (*pipil*) to his farmland as collateral. Realizing that this may not have been a wise move he has borrowed money from a friend named Pan Barakan, and has decided, with the agreement of his wife, Men Cangkring, that he should sell one of

their water buffalo to repay Pan Barakan and get enough extra cash to buy back his *pipil*. But Pan Kangingan has been avoiding Pan Kelodan and clearly does not want to give up the *pipil*, so Pan Kelodan will have to seek the help of the local judge. The entire story takes the form of Pan Kelodan's long walk through rural Lombok to the house of the judge. The narration of the walk is interspersed with "flashbacks" triggered by Pan Kelodan's doubts and fears as he gets closer and closer to his meeting with the judge, whom he fears and refers to with the highfaluting title *Sang Hakim*, "his honour, the judge".

It is mark of Tirtawirya's style that he often uses shifts between AV and UV forms to produce almost cinematographic, shifts of perspective that in English would require a careful structuring of tenses to establish a consistent sequence of events with similar shifts of perspective. This comes out most in a series of flashbacks that are introduced by shifts in voice-marking, with all that implies for the participants in the speech act and the category of person. While temporal adverbs and conjunctions normally play a large role in establishing the sequence of events in modern Indonesian narratives, Tirtawirya's use of shifts in verbal form for this purpose is innovative.

In the first introduction of a flashback a passive verb marked with *di-* is used to shift perspective from Pan Kelodan's musings as he walks to the home of the judge to Pan Kelodan's physical act of filling his customer's glass of toddy (*tuak*).

In the passage following I have highlighted the passive verb *e* that is the sole indication of the shift from Pan Kelodan's worried thoughts about his visit to the judge to a flashback and the scene of his serving drinks. Note that in the English translation of the UV/passive verb *dituangi* 'be filled' we are forced to provide a past perfect verb form ('had filled') in order to establish the "correct" sequence of events and will almost certainly convert the passive form to an active one in English to make it intelligible in an English language context:

If Pan Kelodan wanted to win, he would have to go to the judge's house. Now. Otherwise, there was no hope of winning his case. Pan Kangingan was a clever man, but his pockets were empty. The damned gambler! How could he find the heart to sue over such a small stretch of land? Pan Kelodan **had filled** (*dituanginya*) Pan Barakan's bamboo glass again with palm wine As Pan Barakan said, where was he going to find money like that?²⁰

The second flashback introduces an even more startling use of shifts in verbal form designed to focus on the movement of Pan Kelodan's arm as he serves *tuak*, and on the bottle of *tuak* itself, which becomes – very unusually – the subject of its own movement! These deformations of normal sentence patterns

²⁰ Kalau mau menang Pan Kelodan mesti pergi ke rumah pak hakim. Jaman sekarang. Kalau tidak, jangan harap Pan Kelodan bisa menang dalam perkara ini. Pan Kangingan orang pintar, tapi kantongnya kosong. Dasar penjudi – masa, sampai hati menggugat tanah sejengkal. Dituanginya lagi gelas bambu Pan Barakan. Tapi di mana dia bakal cari uang sebanyak itu? Dalam hal ini Pan Kelodan mesti berani korban.

provide an almost disembodied perspective to Pan Kelodan's memory of events that suggests the vividness of the memory, its placement in a remembered event and the distance from Pan Kelodan's currently distracted thoughts.

And it's lucky too that Pan Barakan was there when Pan Kanginan took (*mengambil*) the money – at least there's a witness in the case. Pan Barakan's bamboo glass was empty again. Two bottles of palm wine stood beside him. Empty. And like the knight in a game of chess, a foaming bottle **had leapt** (*me-lompat*) from the direction of the wall to the middle of the place where [the customers] had been sitting cross-legged, **carried** (*di-angkat*) **there** by Pan Kelodan's tattooed arm.²¹

I suspect that Tirtawirya here was subverting the more usual movement from figure to ground in order to work the cinematographic magic that was a hallmark of his writing style. What is important is the way that he takes advantage of the role-marking qualities of verbal predicates to establish rapid shifts of perspective that align with the relative positions of self and other. Here we see once again a case of the alignment of the Indonesian system of discourse coherence with the rule on "sequence of topic" and the positioning of participants in texts and speech act in spatial and temporal terms organized along a cline of person.

I can think of no more striking illustration of the effective use of shifts between "active" and "passive" form than the climactic final paragraph of "Facing the Judge". Here we find a series of eight AV verbs marked with the prefix *meng-* and one intransitive *ber-* verb that carry along the action as Pan Kelodan nervously approaches the front door of the house of the judge. Along the way he has an accident – bumping into the frame of the doorway – that is described using an "accidental passive" form taking the prefix *ter-* that applies to Pan Kelodan as the Actor. This momentarily breaks the flow of the continuous verbal predicates taking *meN-*, but only to add to the sense of extreme nervousness that Tirtawirya portrays so powerfully in this paragraph. Let us look at this paragraph in its entirety, in this case including the Indonesian language text with the verbal markers of its verb phrases marked in bold:

*Pan Kelodan **berpaling** lantas cepat **membungkuk** **memberi** hormat. Seorang lelaki kurus tinggi dengan tangan sedang **memegang** rokok **menyuruh** Pan Kelodan untuk **masuk** ke dalam. Begitu gugupnya Pan Kelodan sampai-sampai **terlanggar** oléh bahunya daun pintu; bunyi berderéng kaca yang bergetar begitu hébat **menyebabkan** Pan Kelodan seolah **mau menangis** **minta** ampun **menoléh** ke samping, ke arah ruangan dan pak hakim. Betul-betul lemas lutut Pan Kelodan: Pan Kanginan **dilihatnya** tengah duduk di kursi sambil **menoléh** ke arah pintu.*

²¹ Dan – untung pula Pan Barakan hadir waktu dia mengambil uang dulu itu – adalah saksi saya dalam perkara ini. Gelas bambu Pan Barakan kosong. Di sampingnya tegak dua botol tuak. Kosong. Dan seperti kuda catur botol berbuih melompat dari arah dinding ke tengah persilaan, diangkat tangan Pan Barakan yang penuh dihiasi tatuage.

'He **turned around**, then quickly **bowed** to **show** his respect. A tall, thin man **holding** a cigarette in his hand **ordered** Pan Kelodan to **enter**. Pan Kelodan was so nervous his shoulder **struck** the door. The ping of the vibrating glass was so loud that it **made** Pan Kelodan **want to cry** and **beg** for mercy as he looked to the side, to the living room of the judge. for being careless when **entering** the house of such a great man. Now his knees went really weak: for there who else **did he see** (*di-lihatnya*) but Pan Kanginan sitting in a chair while **looking back** in the direction of the door'.

The crucial point here is that we follow Pan Kelodan along through a series of steps along the way that all take the form of intransitive or AV verbs that by definition refer to Actors, who are the grammatical subjects of their associated verbs. But at the climactic moment when Pan Kelodan encounters Pan Kanginan, who has arrived before him at the home of the judge, there is an abrupt shift to a UV verb that has as its single argument Pan Kanginan, who is the Object of Pan Kelodan's seeing, but treated as the grammatical subject, much like "be seen" of English. (One could choose to try to reflect this parallel in English directly, but "Pan Kanginan was seen by him" is decidedly awkward in English.)

Thinking back to Becker's analysis of a Classical Malay sentence we can now see the entire story as following a similar progression from figure to ground. In "Facing the Judge" the figure of Pan Kelodan and elaboration on his movements and memories takes up more than 90% of the narrative. Against this background the choice of a UV/passive voice predicate at the climactic moment of the story to shift attention to Pan Kanginan creates a strong sense of contrast that introduces a new topic of discourse, who in narrative terms represents the undoing of all of Pan Kelodan's hopes and fears.

In this passage we see a dramatic shift that can only be accomplished in a system of textual coherence that follows the rule of "sequence of topic" and capitalizes on possibilities that arise from the opposition of AV/active and UV/passive perspectives in a symmetrical voice system. In this we see a reaffirmation of the potential of A.L. Becker's heuristic approach to linguistic investigation.

CONCLUSION

Becker was above all else an essayist, who took Ralph Waldo Emerson as a model appropriate for a North American scholar equally interested in language, society, and nature. And he preferred to focus on short samples of text that he unpacked in terms of their linguistic structures at macro- and micro-levels of analysis. Given the advanced state of his knowledge of linguistics as it was practiced in his time, especially his attention to the emerging field of discourse studies, his articles can be challenging in a first reading. And he was not without his detractors. Among these was the estimable structuralist linguist E.M. Uhlenbeck, who faulted Becker both on analytical and philological grounds.²² It is important not to brush aside

²² See E.M. Uhlenbeck (1992) *inter alia*.

these criticisms. At the same time, they often have more to do with details than with the innovative perspectives that Becker brought to his work. These remain important perspectives, and have reached a steadily growing audience since the publication of his *Beyond translation* (1995). While not all translation requires anything close to the level of competence needed to produce essays like those of Becker, a familiarity with his work can push us in the direction of translation grounded in a clear understanding of the major elements that give coherence to speech acts and textual artefacts. As Becker was at pains to demonstrate, in shaping the way language presents the world, these patterns of coherence have important consequences for how societies understand themselves, and how we understand the societies we study in the human sciences. His work should thus stand as one among other beacons in the field he thought of as a “modern philology”.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AN	Austronesian
AV	Actor Voice
NP	Noun Phrase
OJ	Old Javanese language
OJED	<i>Old Javanese English Dictionary</i>
OJR	<i>Old Javanese Rāmāyana</i>
RK	<i>Rāmāyana Kakawin</i>
UV	Undergoer Voice
VP	Verb Phrase
WMP	Western Malay-Polynesian

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