

Transformation of Tradition: Incorporating Technology to Transform Local Culture in the Form of Modern Sundanese Script

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Abstract

Sundanese script is a system for writing Sundanese. The traditional writing system in Sundanese began in the 14th century until the 19th century. Sundanese script is related to cosmology that developed in Sundanese society. This research will review the role of technology in transforming local values by comparing the Ancient Sundanese Script and the Modern Sundanese Script through ATUMICS method. The result of this study shows that there is a simplification happening when transforming the Ancient Sundanese Script to the Modern ones. However, the Sundanese cosmology embodied within the Sundanese script is not lost. Thus, the transformation of tradition could become one of the options in preserving local traditional values while adapting it into the current world.

Key Words: Transformation of Tradition, Technology, Local Culture, Sundanese Script

INTRODUCTION

The Sundanese script is the result of the initiative and creation of Sundanese people, which is contained in several texts. The shape of the letters follows the shape of the final Pallava letter. The political hegemony of the Mataram Islamic kingdom into the Sundanese region made the ancient Sundanese script replaced with Javanese Cacaran script. Hence, it was known as Sundanese Carakan. The procedure for writing is adapted to the language used, namely Sundanese. Besides the ancient Sundanese letters, in addition to recording the ancient Sundanese language, this letter has also been used to write Arabic and Javanese (Cirebon) related to the spread of Islam in the Sundanese region (Baidillah et al., 2008, p. 50). In the Sundanese region, the letters that have developed are Ancient Sundanese, Javanese Sundanese or Carakan, Arabic Pegon, and Latin (Maharsi, 2013, p. 28). In addition to the current Latin letters in Sundanese, there is also the development of the Baku Kaganga Sundanese. Anatomy of the Standard Sundanese Letters refers to the Old Sundanese letters with a slight adjustment to the form. According to Hole (1877), the Ancient Sundanese Script had the basic type of the Advanced Pallava script. These scripts have similarities with the Tibetan and Punjab script models (Baidillah et al., 2008, p. 45). The appearance of the Carakan Sundanese letters is influenced heavily by the existence of the kingdom of Mataram. Although the political influence of the Mataram kingdom ended in the Sunda region, the language and letters used by the Sundanese people at that time remained.

Javanese is used as the official language of government, and Javanese letters are used in official letters which are adapted to the sounds in Sundanese to produce a Sundanese-Javanese combination called Javanese Carakan (Maharsi, 2013, p. 29). According to Hole (1877) in a book titled *Tabel van Oud en Nieuw Indische Alphabetten*, it is said that the modern script of the Sundanese Tatars age is no more than about 1500 years old. From this statement, it can be interpreted that the ancient Sundanese script,

which appears in many Sundanese inscriptions, is the result of the creativity or creation of the Sundanese (Mulyanto, 2012, p. 11).

Sundanese script is an orthographic system created by the people of West Java that includes scripts and literacy systems for writing Sundanese (Mulyanto, 2012, p. 13). The Sundanese script is a manifestation of Sundanese artifacts that contain many symbols and values. Sundanese script is classified into traditional script or known as Indigenous Script. In 1997, the Sundanese Script congress was held in Bandung to discuss Sundanese developments and culture including Sundanese letters. At that time, the congress officially recognized the Sundanese letters as Sundanese characters without any mention of ancient and standard words. On May 26, 2006, at Padjadjaran University, a seminar on Standardization of Sundanese Script for Unicode was held. One aim is to review and determine the form and number of Sundanese characters to be included in the Unicode standard (Baidillah et al., 2008, p. 82).

The registration of Sundanese script to Unicode aims to have the use of Sundanese script to have standards throughout the world, such as the Hangul Korean script, Arabic script in the Middle East region, and the Japanese form of Katakana-Hiragana. The standardization includes the form of letters including the degree of slope of the letters, so that many fonts that will be produced as variations of the type of font used, whether serif, sans serif or decorative, can have some underlying guidelines. Sundanese script began to be reintroduced afterwards. The large number of Sundanese-language texts and Sundanese languages stored in libraries in several countries makes one of the reasons Sundanese script is registered with the Unicode organization. There are three important issues for artists and designers when they work with traditional goods, namely preserving, revitalizing, and transforming (Nugraha, 2018, p. 169).

METHOD

To preserve, revitalize and transform Sundanese script, the transformation of tradition method is used. This method was proposed by Adhi Nugraha based on the results of his dissertation research at Aalto University in Finland. This method transforms tradition, this method is called the ATUMICS method. ATUMICS is an acronym for Artifact, Technique, Utility, Material, Icon, Concept and Shape. The ATUMICS method is a method that consists of basic elements attached to artifacts. While the Artifact itself is an object or center which becomes the object of transformation of tradition. The method results from the analysis of various artifact conceptions and product designs, as taught in most art and design schools and proposed by many design scholars (Nugraha, 2018, p. 172). The purpose of this method is to maintain tradition. The method can be seen in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 shows a correlation between elements of tradition and modern elements that will produce an innovation. In addition to these two elements there is another element of motivation that produces new products such as economic, social, ecological, cultural, survival and self-expression. Transformation of tradition is a process of integration between tradition and novelty. Integrate modern elements and traditions like Figure 1 that produce new products.

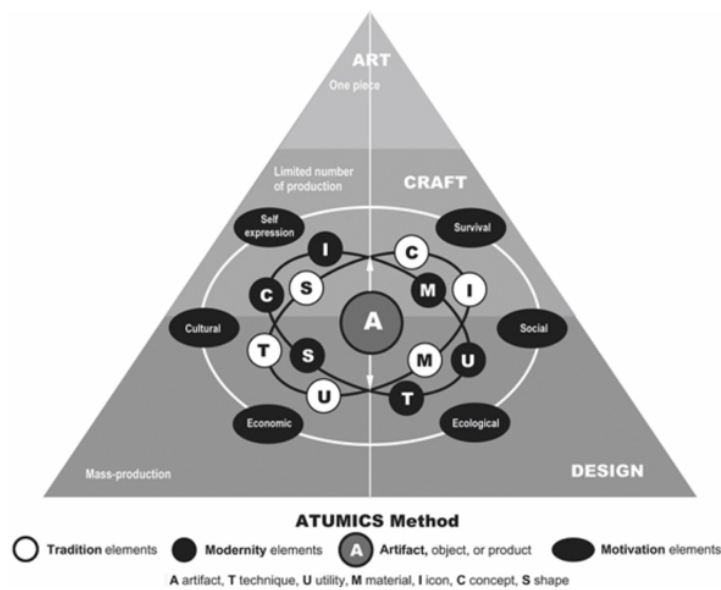


Figure 1. ATUMICS METHODS
(Nugraha, 2018, p. 175)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Sundanese script embody the philosophy of life of the Sundanese people. The Sundanese script is divided into two, namely Ancient Sunda and Raw Sunda. The forms of the alphabet have its distinct aesthetic. The aesthetic for the Sundanese can be expressed following the form of beauty itself. Aesthetics or beauty is part of the Sundanese philosophy. The beauty for Sundanese people is that they rely on their ideas, activities, and artifacts on the nature around them. The beauty of Sundanese nature is a hipogram for the creation of art. But the artwork is always functional, in addition to the value of its direct beauty (Isnendes, 2014). The development of technology made changes in the shape of the Sundanese script. The Sundanese script is called the Raw Sundanese script. The standard Sundanese script is an adapted form of the ancient Sundanese script for contemporary Sundanese writing. The application of the ATUMICS concept can be seen below.

Table 1. Application of the ATUMICS Concept

Artefact	The Ancient Sundanese Script	The Modern Sundanese Script
Techniques	The procedure for manual writing with a simple tool. The visual variation depends on the writing style of the author	The procedure for writing using digital media in the form of digital letters. Visual variations can be adjusted according to the desires of the letter designer.
Utility	The Sundanese script as communication and information media.	The Sundanese script as communication and information media.
Material	Writing media and tools such as stone, metal, leaf, paper, chisel, hammer, knife, pen, ink.	Media and writing tools use computers, with some supporting materials such as paper and digital media.
Icon	Symbols and meanings of the Sundanese script along with visual variations on the script	Symbols and meanings of the Sundanese script along with visual variations on the script
Concept	The embodiment of the Sundanese philosophy of life and expression in Sundanese aesthetics.	The embodiment of the Sundanese philosophy of life and expression in Sundanese aesthetics.
Shape	The letterforms, basic shapes, anatomy, grid system and letter systems	The letterforms, basic shapes, anatomy, grid system and letter systems

From the table above it can be seen that the technique has changed. In the ancient Sundanese script, the media and stationery used still used simple equipment. Visual variation in letters depends on the writing style of the author. In the modern Sundanese script, the procedure for writing uses digital techniques applied to conventional media, the letters are installed directly on the hardware.

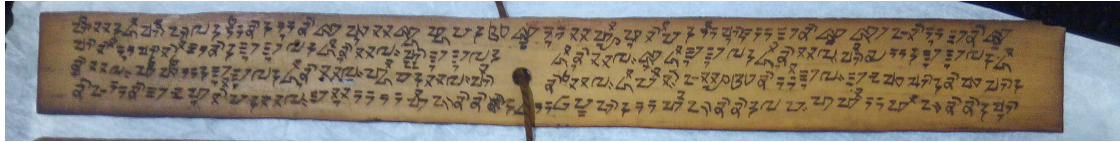


Figure 2. Ancient Sundanese Script on the Lontar

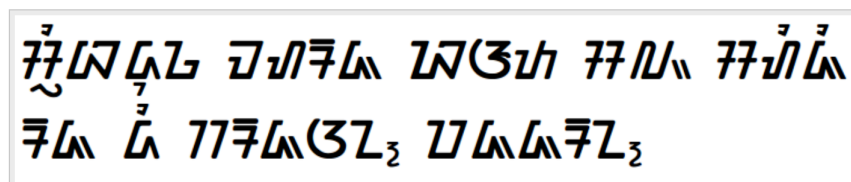


Layout Papan Tombol dalam posisi normal



Layout Papan Tombol dalam posisi Shift

Figure 3. Sundanese Script on Keyboard
(Nurwansyah, 2015a)



Sribaduga Maharaja nyaeta salah sahiji raja di karajaan Pajajaran

Figure 4. Sundanese Script Applied
(Nurwansyah, 2015b)

Figure 2 shows the writing on ejection media with a scalpel knife. Figure 3 shows the Sundanese script placed on the virtual keyboard to write Sundanese characters on conventional media. Figure 4 shows the results of typing on a computer. The shape which is an ancient Sundanese and standard Sundanese script form can be seen below.

ka = 𐌀𐌀	ga = 𐌀𐌔	nga = 𐌀𐌔𐌌
ca = 𐌀𐌔	ja = 𐌀𐌔𐌌	nya = 𐌀𐌔𐌌𐌔𐌔𐌔𐌔𐌔
ta = 𐌀𐌔𐌔	da = 𐌀𐌔𐌔	na = 𐌀𐌔𐌔
pa = 𐌀𐌔𐌔	ba = 𐌀𐌔𐌔𐌔𐌔𐌔	ma = 𐌀𐌔𐌔𐌔
ya = 𐌀𐌔𐌔𐌔	ra = 𐌀𐌔𐌔𐌔	la = 𐌀𐌔𐌔𐌔
wa = 𐌀𐌔𐌔𐌔	sa = 𐌀𐌔𐌔𐌔𐌔𐌔	ha = 𐌀𐌔𐌔𐌔𐌔

Figure 5. Shape on Ancient Sundanese Script
(Baidillah et al., 2008, p. 53)

ka = 𐌀𐌀	ga = 𐌀𐌔	nga = 𐌀𐌔𐌌
ca = 𐌀𐌔	ja = 𐌀𐌔𐌌	nya = 𐌀𐌔𐌌𐌔𐌔𐌔𐌔𐌔
ta = 𐌀𐌔𐌔	da = 𐌀𐌔𐌔	na = 𐌀𐌔𐌔
pa = 𐌀𐌔𐌔	ba = 𐌀𐌔𐌔𐌔𐌔𐌔	ma = 𐌀𐌔𐌔𐌔
ya = 𐌀𐌔𐌔𐌔	ra = 𐌀𐌔𐌔𐌔	la = 𐌀𐌔𐌔𐌔
wa = 𐌀𐌔𐌔𐌔	sa = 𐌀𐌔𐌔𐌔𐌔𐌔	ha = 𐌀𐌔𐌔𐌔𐌔

Figure 6. Shape on Modern Sundanese Script
(Baidillah et al., 2008, p. 67)

Figure 5 shows the symbol of the sounds of Cartagena from the ancient Sundanese script, while Figure 6 shows the symbols of the sounds of Cartagena from the standard Sundanese script. In the two pictures, it can be seen that the shape adjustment from the ancient Sundanese script became a simpler form. The material used in the ancient Sundanese script and the standard Sundanese script changed. According to Hole (1882), the media used to write using scripts in the past were copper stones, palm leaves, palm leaves, bamboo, daloewang, native cotton (boéh), Chinese and European paper (Holle, 1882, p. 15). Whereas for now, the material used varies from

various types of paper, digital media, ambient media and other media. In this article, changes occur in technique, material and shape.

CONCLUSION

The development of the Sundanese script today is inseparable from the efforts of experts and creative people in exploring and reviving the Sundanese script in the Sundanese community. The Sundanese script is the work and initiative of the Sundanese people, which has been brought back at this time. The written tradition of writing in Sundanese society can be seen in the era of the Sunda and Galuh kingdoms that were discovered in the 8th century and continued until the 16th century. Krom (1915) argues that according to available evidence, the oldest Sundanese manuscripts date from the 14th century, and since then Sundanese manuscripts continued to be written and transcribed until the end of the 20th century. (Ikram, Susanti, Pudjiastuti, & Trigangga, 2015, p. 165).

Transformation of tradition is a way to create new products derived from local traditions with adjustments to the six elements contained in the ATUMICS theory. Transformation of tradition is an effort to maintain tradition in the modern era which is adjusted to the times. By reviewing the forms between the Ancient and the Modern Sundanese script, transformation of tradition can be an option in the effort of cultural preservation. Although the form seems to have been simplified, the philosophy and the cosmology of Sundanese people still remains within the Modern Sundanese Script. Thus, this transformation of tradition is a beneficial tool to adapt local traditional values to the modern era.

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