

## A Javanese word game

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### ジャワ語のことば遊び

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ケロトボソとは、ジャワ語の民俗語源学として知られている言葉あそびである。kerata ケロト そのものは、「狩る」を意味し、basa ボソは、「言語、ことば」を意味することから、文字通りには、「言葉を探す」ゲームと訳すこともできる。ケロトボソは、句、節、文のいずれかの形式で、ある言葉の「語源」を説明するものである。たとえば：

cangkir= dianggo nyancang pikir  
ティーカップ 使われる 没頭する 考える

ティーカップを意味する cangkir は、没頭する nyancang の第2音節 cang と、考える pikir の第2音節 kir とで出来たことばである。こうして、「ティーカップは、考えに没頭するときに使われる。」という、ケロトボソが出来上がる。

ジャワ学者、影絵芝居の演者 Dhalang などはケロトボソに詳しい。宮廷の文献や書籍にみられるケロトボソの数は約 50 ほどであるが、ケロトボソは、生産性があり、常に創作されているものでもある。本論は、ジャワ語のケロトボソの音韻論的特徴について論じた後、これが他の民俗語源学とどのように違うのか、また、ケロトボソに現れる語彙がどのようなものかを論じる。そして、宮廷の文献にあるケロトボソから2世紀近く経た現在、ケロトボソがジャワ人のアイロニーを含む言葉遊びとして息づいていること、さらにまたこの伝統が現代のインドネシア語に波及し、膨大な数の省略語・省略形の流行語を生み出す背景にあることを主張するものである。

#### Introduction イン트로ダクション

*Keratabasa* is the Javanese term for folk etymology although the origin of *keratabasa* itself is not known. As *kerata* denotes ‘hunter’, and *basa* ‘language’, *keratabasa* may literally mean ‘searching of words’. Professionals of Javanese literature and language, *dhalang*, shadow puppet players are well familiar with *keratabasa*.

Although the number of terms which have *keratabasa*, published in articles and books is about fifty, *keratabasa* can be productive and creative. This paper will discuss what differentiates *keratabasa* from the folk etymology of other languages; what kind of words are found in *keratabasa* vocabulary; and what are the phonological features of *kerata basa*. *Keratabasa* is a phrase, clause, or sentence, which purports to provide the etymology of a word. The most popular pattern is a combination of the last syllable of the first clause/phrase and the last syllable of the second clause/phrase

I will then argue that Javanese flexibility in

phonological and morphological features as well as rich vocabulary makes the formation of *keratabasa* easier. We will also argue that *keratabasa* is influenced by the Javanese preference for acronyms.

#### I. Structure 構造

##### 1.1. Combination of the last syllable of each phrase or clause 基本型：それぞれの語の最後の音節をとる。

*Keratabasa* is a phrase, clause, or sentence, which purports to provide the etymology of a word. The most popular pattern is a combination of the last syllable of the first clause/phrase and the last syllable of the second clause/phrase as shown in 1, a sentence *keratabasa*.

*KERATA BASA* = CV(c)CV(C)+ n CVC + CVC  
CVC

ケロトボソ＝最初の語の最後の音節と最後の語の最後の音節を組み合わせたもの。

1. *gusti* = *bagusing ati*  
master good def. art. heart  
“The lord should have a good heart”.  
王たるもの、よき心を持つ。
2. *kodhok* = *teka-teka ndodhok*  
frog as soon as coming squat  
“Frog squats”.  
蛙は留まるとすぐに這い蹲る。
3. *ludruk* = *gulune gela-gelo, sikile*  
a theater neck shakes right and left, legs  
*gedrag-gedrug*  
move up and down  
“Ludruk starts with a dance of head shaking and leg moving”.  
ルドウルックは、首を振り足を動かす演劇である。
4. *bocah* = *mangané kaya kebo, pagaweané ora*  
child eating-the like buffalo actions neg.  
*kecacah*.  
counted  
‘(The term) child originates from a sentence ‘his/her eating is like that of buffalo, and his/her actions are not countable’.  
こどもというものは、水牛のようによく食べ、振る舞いも予想がつかない。

According to this *keratabasa* the last syllable of *kebo* ‘buffalo’ and the last syllable of *kecacah* ‘counted’ are combined to create the term *bocah* ‘child’. In this way, *bocah* ‘child’ is considered to derive from the notion that *mangané kaya kebo* ‘his/her eating is like buffalo, and his/her action cannot be accounted for’.  
Example 5 is a clausal *keratabasa*.

5. *guru* = *digugu lan ditiru*  
teacher = to be obeyed and be imitated  
“teacher = (one who is) to be obeyed and imitated”  
教師は、従い、真似るべき人。

According to this *keratabasa* the term *guru* ‘teacher’ derives from the phrase *digugu lan ditiru*. The last syllable of *digugu*, a passive form of *gugu* ‘to obey’ and the last syllable of the passive form of *tiru* ‘to imitate’ are combined to make the term *guru* ‘teacher’.

Example 6 is another phrasal *keratabasa*.

6. *gusti* = *bagusing ati*  
lord beautiful-LOC ati  
王は心の美しいもの。

The term *gusti* ‘lord, master’ then supposedly derives

from a phrase *bagusing ati* ‘beautiful in mind’, according to its *keratabasa*. The last syllables of *bagus* and *ati* are combined to make *gusti*. A particle or suffix does not participate in the formation of a *keratabasa* so the locative suffix *ing* is not counted as being the last syllable of *bagusing*. A combination of non-last syllables is not common.

## II. Semantic classification of *keratabasa* ケロトボソの意味論的分類

### 1.1. Categorizing people 人の分類

Textbook *keratabasa* are often moral/ethical teachings as shown in examples 2 and 3 above. Therefore, adjectival *keratabasa* for certain categories of people are many.

7. *garwa* = *sigaraning nyawa*.  
spouse split def. spirit/soul  
‘One’s spouse (female) is a half of one’s heart/life.’  
妻とは、魂の片割れ
8. *mantu* = *dieman-eman meksa metu*  
son/daughter in law to be cared, forced follow  
‘Sons/daughters-in-law are supposedly forced to follow.’  
婿、嫁は従わなければならないもの。
9. *maratuwa* = *mara-mara ketemu tuwa*  
parents-in-law become meet old  
‘Parents-in-law are those who get old while coming to meet (sons/daughters-in-law).’  
義理の親とは、会っていくうちに老いていくもの。
10. *wanita* = *wani ditata*  
woman = brave to be put in order  
‘Woman likes to be arranged.’  
女はコントロールされるもの
11. *tuwa* = *ngenteni metune nyawa*  
old wait leaving soul  
年寄り、魂が出て行くときがくるもの。  
“Old one waits for leaving of his/her soul”.
12. *sepuh* = *sabdane ampu*  
old saying mystically powerful.  
“What old people say are mystically powerful.”  
年寄は、神秘的に力を持つ者。
- 1.2. Ogre and monsters 怪物
13. *buta* = *kalbu sing ora ditata*  
ogre heart which neg. controlled  
“Ogre’s mind cannot be controlled.”  
怪物の気持ちは統制がきかない。

## 2. Categorizing occupations and actions 職業や行動の分類

Occupations or actions are also described and evaluated by *keratabasa*.

14. *maling = njupuk amale wong sing ora eling*  
pickpocket take away good.things people that  
NEG conscious  
‘Thief = (one who) takes away the good things of people (who are) oblivious.’  
盗人は、ぼっとしている人のものをひったくる。

15. *sopir = yen ngaso mampir*  
driver when take a rest drop by  
‘Driver = one who, when taking a rest, pops into a stall.’  
‘Driver pops in a stall whenever he wants to take a rest’  
運転手はよく、ちょっと寄って一休みする。

## 3. Body parts 身体名

16. *cangkem = yen ora dicancang ora mingkem*  
mouth if not tied NEG close  
‘Mouth keeps open if it is not closed well.’  
口たるもの、しっかり閉めないで開きっぱなし。

17. *kuping = kaku njepiping*  
ear awkward listening to  
‘(We) get awkward when listening with ears.’  
耳だけでは聞くことはなかなかできない。

18. *sirah = isining rah*  
head content intention  
‘Head is a container of intention’.  
頭は意思の器。

## 4. Clothings 衣類

19. *sindhur = isin yen mundur*  
sash embarrassing when go back  
スカーフは後ろ前につけたら恥ずかしい。

20. *kathok = diangkat sitok-sitok*  
pants being lift one by one  
‘Leg should get in one by one when wearing pants.’  
脚は、ズボンをはくときは片方ずつ入れるもの。

## 5. Household wares 調度品

Several *keratabasas* for terms for household matters are found. It should be noted that several of them such as

cangkir and kursi are redefined as sources for friendship or socialization.

21. *wedang = ngawe kadang*  
hot drink to call/to invite relative/sibling  
‘Hot drinks invite relatives’  
熱い飲み物は親せきを集める。

22. *kursi = yen diungkurake banjur isi*  
chair = when being left behind then fill  
‘When somebody leaves a chair, somebody else sits (on that chair) next.’  
椅子は立つと、すぐに他の人が座るものだ。

23. *piring = sepiné yen miring*  
plate deserted when slanting  
‘Plate gets empty when slanted.’  
皿は、傾けると（こぼれて）空になるもの。

24. *gelas = yen tugel ora kena dilas*  
glass = if breaks neg. can fixed  
‘When a glass breaks, it cannot be fixed.’  
グラスは割るともうもとに戻らないもの。

## 6. Vehicles and transportations 乗り物

Several *kerata basa* are found in terms for vehicles.

25. *andhong = anake supaya gelis nggendhong*  
carriage child so that easy to shoulder  
‘Andhong is used so that it is comfortable to carry little child’.  
馬車は、小さな子供連れのときには快適なもの。

26. *Sepur = asepe metu ndhuwur*  
train smoke-def. exit high  
‘Train’s smoke goes up high.’  
汽車は、煙が高く上がるもの。

27. *Sepeda = asepe tidak ada*  
bicycle= smoke-def. neg. exist  
‘Bicycle does not have smoke.’  
自転車は、煙がないもの。

## 7. Stories and performances 物語やパフォーマンス

28. *Ludruk = gulune gela-gelo, sikile gedrag-gedrug*  
ludruk neck moving right and left, leg moving up-and down  
‘Ludruk is a theater in which the performers move their necks and legs’.  
ルドルックという演劇は、首や足を動かして演じる劇。

29. *Tayub = ditata supaya katon guyub*  
 dance be arranged so that look friendly  
 “The dance tayub is arranged to make people socialize.”  
 タユブという踊りは、人が社交するためにある。

Others: その他：

30. *garbu = yen ora mbegar ora bisa mlebu*  
 gate if neg. open neg. can enter  
 “If not open, (you) cannot enter.”  
 門は、開けなければ入れないもの。

### Non-Javanese 非ジャワ語

That *keratabasa* are not limited to providing etymologies to just Javanese words. Indonesian words and foreign words are also subject to being “explained” by *keratabasa*. So far five month terms are found, although it is evident that two out of oktober, nopember, and desember are derivative from one of them.

31. *januari = hujan saben ari*  
 January = rain every day  
 ‘January is a month when it rains every day.’  
 1 月は、雨が連日降る月。
32. *pebruari = yen mepe mburu ari*  
 February = when dry be left day  
 ‘February is the month you need more than a day to dry (clothes)’.  
 2 月は、洗たくものを干すのに 1 日以上かかる月。
33. *oktober = untub-untube sumber*  
 peep out source  
 “October is the month when sources appear”.  
 10 月は資源が現れる月。
34. *Nopember = ana sumber*  
 “November is the month when there are sources”.  
 11 月は資源がある月。
35. *Desember = gedhe-gedhene sumber*  
 “December is the month when the sources are large”.  
 12 月は、資源がたくさんある月。

From here, we can now assume that we can make a *keratabasa* from

### III. Code-mixing ジャワ語とインドネシア語のコード・ミキシング

cf. *UUD = ujung-ujunge dhuwit*  
 edge money

←*Undang-undang Dasar*  
 Constitution  
 UUD (憲法) は、金の端くれ。

The tradition of coining *keratabasa* has spread to Indonesian. So several *keratabasa* are combinations of elements from Javanese and Indonesian. In 17, *tidak ada* ‘non-existent’ is Indonesian.

36. *Sepeda = asepé tidak ada*  
 bicycle= smoke-def. neg. exist  
 ‘Bicycle does not have smoke.’  
 自転車には煙がない。

### IV. Development to *plesetan* ‘word games’ アイロニーとしての言葉遊び *plesetan* への発展

Since *keratabasa* involve punning they have developed to become jokes. For example, *wanita* ‘woman’ in example 7 above has another *keratabasa* as in 37. Note that the first element *wani* is a whole word, an exceptional pattern.

*Wanita wani ditata.*

*Woman bother arranged (controlled)*

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37. *wanita = wani mranata*  
 woman brave to put in order  
 ‘Woman wants to arrange things’  
 女は、コントロールしたがるもの。

*Anak* ‘child’ above has another *keratabasa* as shown in 38.

38. *anak = anane ming kepenak*  
 child exist only desire  
 “Child has only desire”.  
 こどもは、ものを欲しがらるだけ。

This *keratabasa* is an ironical variation of the original *keratabasa*, using pun, *plesed/tan*.

*Garwa* ‘wife’ in 39. is also a humorous variation of the original *keratabasa* shown in 4. above.

39. *garwa = ketemune barang sigar karo barang dawa*  
 female spouse match thing split with thing long  
 ‘Taking a wife is to match a split thing with a long thing.’  
 妻を娶るとは分かれたもの長いものとをマッチングさせるもの。

## V. Socio-historical background 社会・歴史的背景

Although many Javanese do not know what *kerata basa* is, they are enjoying this word game, constantly creating new *kerata basas*. This creation is highly sarcastic, often appearing on newspapers and TV shows. Like other poetry, *kerata basa* has been used to implicitly criticize the current politics and society. Following examples are recent *kerata basas* circulated in public.

## VI. Plesedan (punning)=> sindiran (sarcasm) 駄洒落のことはあそびからアイロニーへ。

40. bapak = **badane** okeh sing **gupak**,  
father body lots rel.pro. is messy  
“Older men are messy”.  
おじさんたちは、だらしない。

41. biyung (ibu) = **bimbingane** kudu disengku**yung**,  
mother education should be staggered  
“Mother’s education gets staggered.”  
母親教育は、なかなか進まない。

Sarcastic *keratabasa* for occupation is abundant.

42. polisi = **pol-pole** ming ngapu**si**,  
police as much as only clean away  
“Police lie as much as they can.”  
警察官はねっからのほら吹き。

Following examples are recent *kerata basas* circulated in public.

43. *jaksa*= **ajak** **maksa**  
public prosecutor ask to join force  
‘Prosecutors force (people)’.  
検察官は押し付けるだけ。

44. *wartawan* = **wargane** **ansah** oleh **prawan**,  
journalist group def.art. always get maiden  
“Journalists are the group who always get maidens”.  
ジャーナリストは、若い女の子にすぐに手を出す。

45. *hakim* = **hubungi aku kalau(nek) pengin menang**,  
judge contact me if want win  
“Contact me if you want to win.”  
判事 hakim とは、「勝ちたかったら連絡してください。」という意味。

46. *advokat* = **ana vulus (dhuwit) mangkat**,  
lawyer exist money to leave  
“Lawyer is the one you want if you have money to leave”.

弁護士は、金さえあればOKという者。

Government politics, social problems are the main themes of *keratabasa*.

47. *Undang-undang Dasar UUD* = **ujung-ujunge dhuwit**  
edge money  
‘Indonesian Constitution UUD means ‘the edge of money’  
インドネシア憲法は金の端くれ。

## Conclusion: Creativity of keratabasa 結論：ケロトボソの創造性

*Keratabasa* is constantly increasing because of 1. Javanese flexibility of tense, voice shifts, and 2. A large amount of vocabulary. Also, Javanese tendency of creating acronym contributes to the creativity of *keratabasa*.

1. Morphological flexibility omitting of particles, articles, negation marker, tense marker, voice shift,

two sets of lexicons: *ngoko* and *krama*  
complete – incomplete  
positive- negative  
past-future  
progressive – stative  
future – present  
passive - non-active

2. The tradition of acronym  
Reinterpretation of acronym->formation of *kerata basa*
3. Socio-political reasons implicitness and word play, ethical teaching

*Keratabasa*, Javanese folk etymology, is a witty word game, which explains the origin of word. Lists of *keratabasa* are found in court manuscripts dating from the mid-19th century (Behren and Pudjastuti 1997, Florida 2000, Wade and Tana 2012). Textbooks and court manuscripts have listed about 50 words of *keratabasa*.

The most popular pattern of *keratabasa* is a combination of the last syllable of the first clause/phrase and the last syllable of the second clause/phrase, although a few exceptions are found. The definite pattern is that the last syllable of *keratabasa* sentence/ clause/phrase is the last syllable of the word.

*Keratabasa*’s are also found in modern textbooks for Javanese language and literature. These textbook *keratabasa* describe characters of people, occupations,

and actions, implicitly suggesting that *keratabasa* traditionally have involved moral/ethical teachings. Because of their morphological flexibility, *keratabasa* have expanded to become a word game, going beyond textbook *keratabasa*. Currently Javanese play this word game, without noticing that this is a variation of *keratabasa*. Many times *keratabasa* are created to implicitly criticize the cultural and socio-political situation. In this way, Javanese are constantly adding new *keratabasas* to their original *keratabasa* without telling that they are *keratabasa*.

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