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Colors, Sounds, Rivers: Descriptive Terms and Informational Priority in Hobongan

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ABSTRACT

In this report on color, other sensory, and navigational descriptors in Hobongan, an Austronesian language spoken by approximately two thousand people on the island of Borneo, I provide the available expressions and note that the expressions are rarely used. The study is theoretically backed by Nexus Theory (Perkins, 2019), a linguistic approach to analyzing elements of language in context. The expressions are thus given analyses within contexts in which they occur in various kinds of narrative discourses: narratives that the Hobongan created orally or in writing, narratives whose content was borrowed but that are now a common part of Hobongan interaction through narrative, and narratives that have been translated. The three types of narratives reveal uses of color and other descriptive information. Color expressions are rarely used in any type of narrative, but other descriptive information occurs more frequently, including information about locational and navigational information. These patterns of description correlate with the predominantly oral nature of Hobongan at this time (Ong, 2003) and with the use of locational and navigational information to organize narrative discourses (Perkins, 2017). I therefore hypothesize that descriptive expressions, including color expressions, can be indicators of linguistic-cultural priorities.

INTRODUCTION

The Hobongan are a group of approximately two thousand people on the island of Borneo, mostly in the Indonesian province of Kalimantan Barat. The Hobongan have traditionally used oral narratives to speak about their experiences and have been engaging in a translation task for several decades, and they have recently begun to write narratives, as well. In their narrative discourses, they use descriptive information in ways that correlate closely with their predominantly oral culture and with their known discourse-informational priorities of organizing narratives through spatial information (locational and navigational). Descriptors provide a glimpse of Hobongan informational priorities through the differences between availability of expressions and commonness of use of those expressions.

METHOD AND APPROACHES

Community-Based Language Research

This report is based on ongoing field research that I am conducting among the Hobongan, during field visits made in 2012-2015, and 2019. When conducting field research, I use the principles of Community-Based Language Research (Czaykowska-Higgins 2009). According to the principles of CBLR, linguistic research is conducted on a language, in this case Hobongan; for a language community: some benefit must accrue to the community, such as assistance with materials needed to gain minority rights, and more specifically to some of the narratives used for this study, the encouragement to write down their narratives

for their own uses; with a language community: the linguist is an active participant, not an external observer (Dimendaal, 2001); and by the language community, with the linguist facilitating: the Hobongan speakers are the experts on their language, and they determine how their language and language materials are used.[1] Active participation affords a great deal of material that is not stereotypically associated with linguistic research but that is important to the Hobongan for various reasons.

Nexus Theory

In order to be responsible and as thorough as possible with a language description, the linguist has to make decisions about what to do with the kinds of information that arise through active participation. Traditionally, a great deal of contextual information is eliminated during the process of creating linguistic descriptions, with sound systems, morphology, and syntax being the entire content of language description until relatively recently, when broader categories of information have been more often included, including sociolinguistic information and various exemplars of discourses (see Perkins, 2017, for a comparison). To date, there remains a gap between the theories that are available to work with subsections of linguistic information, such as syntactic theories (e.g., the Minimalist Program, Chomsky, 1995) and phonological theories (e.g., Optimality Theory, Prince and Smolensky, 1993), and the theories that are available to guide language description, such as expansions of subsection theories or Dixon's Basic Linguistic Theory (2010), which addresses the needs of descriptive field linguistics (Dryer, 2006).

To address the gap and systematize my approach, I have begun to work toward such a theory, and I am calling it Nexus Theory to emphasize the importance of intersections between and among various types (e.g., syntax and semantics) and levels of linguistic information (e.g., individual sounds or entire narrative discourses). There are well-known theories and active research being conducted in some of these intersections, such as the syntax-semantics interface, but there remains no systematic approach that addresses additional intersections, as well as the relationships between these intersections and the approaches that linguists take when conducting field research (such as CBLR). Because this theory has only been addressed in an invited talk (Perkins, 2019), I include a brief outline of the approach here. In general, the approach needs to work between a theory of linguistic description and more specific theoretical approaches to more specific sub-areas of linguistics. It needs to work cross-linguistically in order to address phenomena that might be rare but available and in order to facilitate relevant cross-linguistic comparisons. It needs to include various kinds of linguistic context, including social context, language-in-use, and other intra-language phenomena. It cannot background or underestimate oral language because many of the languages that have yet to be described remain primarily oral. It needs to account for different purposes, rather than assuming or presuming shared purposes.

The approach has a great deal in common with other major approaches to discourse analysis and linguistic pragmatics, because discourse and linguistic pragmatics, by their nature, incorporate much of

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[1]I wish to thank all of the Hobongan who have participated in my linguistic research. They have been generous with their time and expertise and have answered many questions and introduced many more. They are ideal linguistic partners. They have given consent for the use of the material that have have provided for written analyses, but they reserve the right to present themselves in images. For those who are interested, the following is a link to content that they made available via a government program to document minority populations. Although most of the clothing is traditional for ceremonies, the song was composed and written for this video and is about modern ideas; the dances are also traditional, but traditionally performed only by women. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7X1gVMxNqT8. Link active as of January, 2022. I would also like to thank Rachel Searcy, a missionary and friend who works among the Hobongan to facilitate a translation of the Bible. She has provided access to her language materials, including sections of completed translation, and many other types of support during my field visits. Her cultural and language expertise have been indispensable.

the contextual information that Nexus Theory requires. However, many theories of discourse assume shared intentions, the linguistic equivalent of the literary- theoretical Intentional Fallacy (Wimsatt and Beardsley, 1946), such as cooperation (Grice 1975, 1978, 1989; Levinson 1983; Evans 2015); relevance (Sperber and Wilson 2002); constructing rationality (Habermas 1981/1984, 1981/1987); face management (Culpeper 2011). Any of these purposes can occur and be prioritized by various languages or language users, but the purpose must be part of the information to be described, in order to be relevant cross-linguistically and to account for varying purposes within languages. Other theories provide labels that background the analytical work that needs to be done in order to apply labels (e.g., Halliday 2014). Or theories make assumptions that are already known not to apply cross-linguistically, for instance, Longacre 1968, and Labov and Waletzky 1967, both of which treat narrative as temporal sequence or personal orientation, respectively, and therefore fail to be relevant to Hobongan, which prioritizes navigational information to organize narrative and other types of discourses.

Avoiding the difficulties that have been noted points toward some options for moving forward, including examining what unit of language is the most basic in language. For the purposes of Nexus Theory, I take discourses to be the fundamental units, rather than sentences, which is traditional in linguistics. Using larger units of language as fundamental is becoming more available in the field, however, with Pascual (2014) using conversational turns as fundamental. Again, however, what counts as a fundamental unit needs to be part of the description, rather than an assumption, and what counts as a discourse can vary, and does vary, across languages. In Nexus Theory, a unit of language is taken to be a discourse if native speakers of a language accept a unit of language as a discourse, and vice versa. Within those units of language, information is the understood content of a concept, again defined within a language and according to what is acceptable to or provided by native speakers. Part of the goal of Nexus Theory is to generate linguistic descriptions that native speakers would recognize as being about the language that they speak.

Nexus Theory makes two main theoretical claims. The first is that there are two main types of information that can be compared and contrasted, with results described: information that is provided directly via the words, sounds, and structures that are used; and information that is provided indirectly in order to maintain coherence and cohesion but that is not stated or written. The kinds of information that needs to be stated or inferred can vary cross-linguistically and again must be part of the language description. Another claim is that, in narrative contexts, as are common in oral languages, a narrative discourse must include temporal, spatial, character, and causal information, broadly defined as required in the language being examined and ranked according to linguistic and cultural principles available in the language under consideration. Narrative discourses that lack one or more of the types of information can be taken to be either defective examples of narrative discourses or not narrative discourses at all. Maintaining focus on language-specific approaches to the units of the language and the information that those units provide can make cross-linguistic comparisons difficult because different languages manage information differently. However, with the information and patterns being described, linguists can compare and contrast what language speakers are actually doing, rather than assuming that cooperation or relevance, for example, look the same across the world's languages or are used the same ways across languages and speakers.

Some research questions that Nexus Theory relies on are as follows: What makes this (for some value of 'this') make sense?; What information, stated or implied, is required to in order to make this make sense?; How is the required information used by native speakers, by scholars, by others, to make this make sense?; In what ways do different uses by different speakers affect the senses assigned or argued for? In conducting a Nexus Theory-based examination of a language or aspect of language, the researcher begins with units of discourse that are accepted as such by the native speakers, and subunits of the language are delineated and analyzed based on their uses within discourses. As an example, in Hobongan, a unit of language is a discourse if it includes information about location and navigation, even

if the discourse is otherwise topically not related to spatial information, such as in philosophical discourses. Sentence divisions within these discourses can be tricky to analyze, and different speakers/writers divide sentences differently. Nevertheless, each sentence contains a subject and at least an implied verb. Hobongan speakers mostly agree on what morphological elements are free or bound, with some variation for terms invented on an ad hoc basis. They largely agree about the phonemes of their language, with a few complications with regard to r/d/l. They also understand how interaction plays into the construction of an oral discourse and the ways in which aspects of their sound system, for example, can play into making a discourse more or less interesting to an audience. They cannot always provide a how-to guide for making discourse better/worse by their own standards, but they consistently recognize better and worse discourses and can correct perceived problems in worse discourses, which makes the elements that they are recognizing available to observers. Examination of information available within discourses continues across subsections of linguistic information as needed to account for the variations that the language allows according to acceptance by native speakers.

Hobongan Language and Culture

Hobongan is a relatively small minority language, spoken by a couple of thousand people. The language is currently stable, being spoken by the three generations of people recognized by the Hobongan (children, people with children, and people who have grandchildren). It is an Austronesian language, of the Müller-Schwaner Punan group (Hammerström, et al. 2021; Lewis et al. 2021[2]). The Hobongan live in five main villages along the upper Kapuas River, which is in Kalimantan Barat, and there are smaller groups and individuals who live outside of those villages and who sometimes cross into Kalimantan Timor. Many Hobongan continue to be primarily hunter-gatherers and semi-nomadic, engaging in cultivation of rice and some gardening, and sources of protein and additional vegetables being collected in the forest. There is minimal education available in Hobongan, a religion course developed by the missionary being the exception. Education is otherwise in the majority language of Bahasa Indonesian. Only kindergarten through sixth grade are available in a few villages. If people desire additional education, they must travel into the town of Putussibau. Access to electricity and cellular telephones is increasing the Hobongan's access to the majority language and culture of Indonesia, as well as with other languages and cultures beyond Indonesia.

Typologically, Hobongan is exceptional mainly in regard to information in discourse, in which Hobongan emphasizes spatial information, specifically information regarding locations and navigations over information about characters or temporal information such as duration or sequence. Syntactically, the language is predominantly SVO, with adjectival verbs. Morphologically, the language is predominantly analytic. Phonemically, Hobongan has five main vowels that can be lengthened or combined in almost any combination and has seventeen phonemic consonants that are distributed by place and manner of articulation in typologically expected ways.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

In this report, I have attempted to be thorough with the available and relevant descriptive inventory in the language. However, I have not been comprehensive, and determining what counts as 'descriptive' in a language can present some difficulties. Hobongan has two main ways to instantiate descriptors: verbal descriptors, which means that information that would be conveyed by adjectives in, for example, English,

[2]In the typological catalogues that are available from Ethonologue and Glottolog, the official language abbreviation is HOV, rather than the expected HOB. The phonemic 'b', which is phonetically realized as a bilabial fricative when spoken intervocalically, was miscategorized during an initial language survey in the 1960s, and efforts to correct the error have not been successful. Glottolog has begun referring to the language as 'Hobongan' rather than 'Hovongan', although the abbreviation remains 'hovo'.

is presented by verbs in Hobongan ('to-be-green', rather than 'green'); and serial nouns, in which the noun or nouns that function as descriptors follow the noun being described.

Ho	kobo	ture	ho	mongala	iq	moq	mongala	darom.
3rd.sg	die	because	3rd.sg	very	to-be-small	and	very	to-be-cold

1. Verbal Descriptors (from Tikun)
'Because she died, she was very shrunken and very cold.'

2. Serial Noun Descriptors (from Kejadian: Genesis 8:21)

Porajo	Yahue	a	moq	maraq	bun	pua	na
Then	Jehovah	CONJ	and	smell(V)	smell(N)	sacrifice	EMPH

tonutung	moq	ho	sajaq	pahajoq	sangan	Anya.
to-be-burned	and	3rd.sg	EMPH	comfort	throat	3rd.sg

'Then God smelled the scent of the burnt sacrifice and He was very pleased with it.'[3]

It is possible to think of any noun or nominal as a descriptor, but I have attempted to avoid expanding the category of descriptors to include all nouns, in order to continue to be thorough while keeping the scope of the project doable within the length of an essay. However, in a few instances, such as olfaction, sensory descriptors only exist as serial nouns, and in those cases, I have made an exception in order to be thorough with the semantic domain under investigation. Verbal descriptors are a relatively common phenomenon in the world's languages, including in widely spoken languages such as Mandarin. Despite being readily available, when presenting a report in English about descriptors in a verbal-descriptor language, decisions must be made about which verbs are more adjectival and which verbs are more verbal. I have chosen to work between syntax and semantics. Verbal descriptors are such if they function as verbs syntactically and contain semantic information that is primarily descriptive. For some terms, the semantic content requires a judgment call, with descriptive information being available in but secondary to verbal information. This kind of flux between and around semantic content in the lexicon and syntactic instantiation is typical of many Austronesian languages. Theoretical work continues, and there are many ways to address these fluctuations. For the purposes of this analysis, and following Sawaki (2016), I assume that lexical items as elements of a cognitive lexicon are not strictly any lexical category until they are instantiated in use, at which point, the syntactic rules of the language determine their lexical categories

Narratives Included

Analyses in this report are based on four narrative discourses, or collections of narrative discourses. The material was selected to provide an overview of what is available in the language: selections that are initially oral or written, Hobongan or translation or borrowing, recent or older. All of the texts were provided by native speakers of Hobongan through various processes. The first collection of narratives ("Tikun" (Stories)) was written by Hobongan high school students. They had learned to read in Hobongan

[3]EMPH (emphatic) markers direct attention to the syntactic unit that follows the marker.

and to read and write in Bahasa Indonesian, and the written narratives were elicited during a 2019 recent field visit in order to collect written materials to describe Hobongan writing before they were given a variety of prescriptive rules for how to write their language. Each student contributed several narratives. The narratives were collected and published and given to the students, who have shared their work with family and friends. The collection is also now used for literacy training among the Hobongan. The collection contains 7,395 words. The second narrative ("Lelang") is a single oral narrative collected by missionaries in the 1980s, from a speaker who was elderly at the time. The language in this narrative is among the diachronically oldest available in Hobongan. It is a narrative about travel and is relatively long for a transcribed narrative at 1,817 words.

The third is a collection of narratives about "Hamun Hamang" (Hamang's Father), a stereotypically stupid main character who takes figurative expressions literally. The content of these stories was borrowed, the Hobongan lacking fiction of their own (Perkins, 2019), but the stories have become popular, and many people tell and retell the stories, making amendments as they prefer for their audiences. Some of the Hamun Hamang stories have been collected and printed, and are now used in literacy training in Hobongan. The collection contains 1,541 words. The fourth narrative discourse is the translation of Genesis ("Kejadian"), completed by a Hobongan committee that works on translation with the missionary. Genesis was likely a collection of oral narratives that were later written down (Niditch, 1996), now translated from a written form by a group of primarily oral individuals into written form. The text is by far the longest at 67,466 words.

DESCRIPTIVE EXPRESSIONS IN NARRATIVE DISCOURSES

In this section, I present the descriptive terms that provide information about various sensory experiences. Color terms are perhaps primarily visual, although one might imagine that a person who is blind could be able to distinguish via palpation between darker/lighter colors on a sunny day because the different colors would absorb different amounts of solar radiation, resulting in temperature differences. There are visual terms beyond colors, of course, many of which are included here. I also include descriptors for other sensory information, including proprioception.

Color and Other Visual Descriptors

Colors and Patterns

Taking Berlin and Kay (1969) as a starting point for determining what is a basic color term in the language, it appears that Hobongan might have been a language that initially had a word for relatively darker colors and a word for relatively lighter colors: cora-ora and nyahang, respectively. Hobongan speakers have been in contact with other groups over the centuries, possibly millennia, and have acquired terms from other languages. Unfortunately, records do not exist for the Hobongan past, but some inferences about acquiring color terms are possible given other evidence: the additional colors terms look like acquisitions in part because the patterns in the acquisitions do not fit any particular typological pattern for color terms and in part because some of these words are close cognates with other color terms in languages in the region.

There are more specific color terms at this point: *moqotom* (black); *pute* (white); *mosiq* (red: also includes irritation or inflammation, such as chapped or sunburned skin); *ijo* (blue/green/purple); *tobori* (red/orange); *lihining* (clear). Note the lack of a term specifically to designate yellow. There are terms for yellow flowers and fruits that can be extended as needed, but at this point, those items are used in ad hoc instances rather than generally across the observable color category. *Lihining* (clear) is a non-canonical color term, but it appears to be making the leap from its original use to describe water quality (as opposed to *koot*, muddy) to refer more broadly to some pastel colors in the blue/green family, such as the color of

some non-Hobongan's eyes. At this point, it is the preferred term to describe blue or grey eyes, not *ijo*, which refers to deeper and darker hues. *Lihining* can still describe clear water and transparent objects, so it is not a Berlin-and-Kay color, but it does contribute both to the description of the language as it is currently used and to the literature critiquing some of Berlin-and-Kay's underlying assumptions about patterns (e.g., Levinson, 2000, for the Yeli Dnye language spoken on New Guinea). In the texts, color terms are rarely used. In Tikun, *ijo* appears once, and *tobori* appears once. In Lelang and Hamun Hamang, there are no instances of color terms. In Kejadian, there are 11 instances of color terms: *pute* (2), *tobori* (8), *tobori-bori* (1; the reduplication in this instance is a way to intensify the descriptor: "very red"). It should be noted that this greater use of color terms is necessitated mostly by the narratives about Esau, who is repeatedly described as "red" in the English sources used for the translation.

Lihining does appear three times in Kejadian, but not as a color term as such. In two cases, the term appears to refer to a transparent object, and in another, there is a metaphorical use referring to someone's speech. Whether the Hobongan would interpret transparency as a color option in the two instances available in that text is an area for future research. Hobongan has additional descriptors that apply to visual information, including to information that is (mostly) visual, such as patterns: *pak* (describes blocks of color), *burit*, (speckled, as of a chicken), *peat* (speckled, as of a chicken; I am unsure of the distinction between *burit* and *peat*), *teret* (striped or lined), *bocangkulak* (wavy, of a design), *bopak-pak* (splotchy), *pahabong* (striped like a rainbow). In the narrative discourses used for analysis and comparison, *teret* occurs 14 times in Kejadian (describing Joseph's coat of many colors), and *pak* occurs once in Tikun. The pattern descriptors do not appear in Lelang or Hamun Hamang. For frequency of occurrence, the patterns terms also behave like color terms, occurring infrequently or not at all in Hobongan-originating narrative discourses, and being used more frequently when necessary to accommodate the differing informational priorities of a translated narrative discourse.

There are also some questions as to why Joseph's coat of many colors might have received *teret* (striped) as the preferred descriptor. It is possible that some of the other pattern descriptors remain limited in use to chickens, for example, but it is also possible that the missionary working with the Hobongan could have nudged them in the *teret* direction: most images of Joseph's coat in North American Christianity portray the cloak as striped (a quick Google image search for "Joseph's coat of many colors bible" resulted in 12/162 unique images being entirely striped; to be generous, I included designs that were not entirely striped as being other designs). The portrayal of Joseph's cloak as striped is therefore strongly available in North American Christianity, and that translation could have resulted from that availability, rather than from the text itself, which emphasizes the many colors more than any particular arrangement of the colors. It is also possible that those Hobongan who have been influenced by Bahasa Indonesian Christian materials might have seen striped portrayals of Joseph's cloak, which often follow other majority-style portrayals and interpretations. This remains an area for future research.

These pattern terms behave syntactically like color terms, in that they are verbal descriptors. The Hobongan themselves appear not to distinguish color from pattern in any consistent way. If asked about a chicken's color, for example, felicitous responses can and do include information about the chicken's pattern. In other words, the surface appearance is the surface appearance, and making and using categories for various types of surface appearances is not currently part of the Hobongan interaction with the world.

Other Visual Information

Additional visual descriptors exist, but many of them indicate information that can be acquired by palpation, such as descriptors for size, shape, texture, making them possible descriptors in the haptic domain or overlapping between visual and haptic. Determining whether these terms are primarily haptic or visual for Hobongan speakers remains a possibility for future research. For this analysis, I group them

with visual information for convenience and because exclusively haptic terms are rare in Hobongan, making it unlikely that the following terms comprise a category that otherwise is not detailed in Hobongan: *daru* (long horizontally); *iq* (small in general, can be used for quiet sounds); *ngorumit* (small in size); *hiuq* (big in general and can also describe loud sounds); *ngolokepeng* (flat and rectangular); *uso/tuso* (long and thin), *ngorosopukoi* (long and narrow[4]); *noloco* (oblong); *nyipi* (thin); *nyiq* (fat, of an animal); *nyaqung* (fat, of a person); *cutang* (tall, of a person or tree standing); *dibuq* (short in length or height); *peran* (large); *tami* (narrow, sitting with knees up); *siban* (narrow); *toloe ko* (long and pointy); *tolocong* (long and somewhat narrow); *lokopok* (attractive). Adding all of the additional possible visual descriptors to the analysis does increase the occurrences of visual descriptors in the narratives. Tikun includes *daru* (4), *iq* (6), *hiuq* (3), and *nyaqung* (1), for 14 visual descriptors that are not color terms, 16 with color terms included. Lelang again includes none of the visual descriptors. Hamung Hamang includes *daru* (1), *cutang* (3), *hiuq* (2), and *toloe ko* (1). Kejadian contains the most visual descriptors by instances and by tokens: *daru* (9), *iq* (9), *tuso* (1), *ngorumit* (9), *nyiq* (2), *tolocong* (2), *cutang* (11), *dibuq* (1), *hiuq* (62). Colors are not notably important in Hobongan usage. Visual information is also not often described. Given that Hobongan remains a primarily oral language, transitioning toward more literacy, and that the translation (Kejadian) started out as a collection of oral discourses, it is possible that auditory information is described more frequently.

Sound Expressions

Very few sonic descriptors exist in Hobongan. Most terms are used as nouns or transitive verbs. Like many Austronesian languages, Hobongan has some flexibility across lexical categories, with nouns available for use as descriptors. However, in order to compare across categories, I have limited the inventory here to the terms that are specifically used as descriptors: *moqotek* (loud, harsh, of sound); *tomokabep* (crunchy, of a sound); *tokeng* (high-pitched, of a sound). From the visual section, both *iq* (small, quiet), and *hiuq* (big, loud) can be used to describe sounds, not just sizes. In the texts used for this analysis, none of the dedicated sound descriptors occur, and neither of the magnitude terms are applied to sounds.

The paucity of descriptors should not be taken to indicate a lack of interest in auditory phenomena. Instead, auditory information is given in nominal and verbal forms, and Hobongan has a sizable lexical inventory that designates various sounds, including onomatopoeic terms and standardized sounds that people make under certain circumstances, such as *akai* (ouch). Basically, the Hobongan make sounds and name sounds, and they have some verbs to indicate the making of various sounds. Linguistically in Hobongan, sounds are concrete and active phenomena, more than experiences to be described. Reduplication also supports the importance of auditory information in Hobongan. At this point, reduplication is productive in Hobongan only for intensification and for imitating iterative sounds, and the available elements for reduplication are most flexible in the auditory domain and include syllables and continuants, such as *sererererereq* (the sound of something bumping along, with *re* repeated at will to indicate each bump), *tototokan* (an echo, with *to* repeated at will to indicate the number of echoes), and *terrrrr* (the sound of thunder, with the trill extended at will to indicate the duration or volume of the thunder).

More Sensory Expressions

In order to compare inventories consistently, I include here some additional sensory descriptors.

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[4]*Ngorosopukoi* and *uso/tuso* appear to be semantically synonymous. There could be some historical distinction in syntax and morphology because Hobongan commonly forms verbs from nouns by nasalizing the initial sound of the noun. The possible noun form for a long-and-thin-thing is no longer in active use, making the morphological possibility a hypothesis only.

Surfaces (textures)

Hobongan has a relatively rich inventory of descriptors for textures. These could be thought of as the truly haptic portion of the lexicon, although many textures are also visible: *corihop* (slippery); *mukum* (smooth, dull); *mama* (level/flat, of a brass gong); *nasap* (smooth, of boards); *tokosam* (smooth, of water); *bocangkelok* (wavy); *kuluk* (knotted, of hair); *botojung* (bumpy, lumpy); *rono* (calm/smooth, of water). In this category, there are a couple of descriptor-verbs that are formed morphologically from nouns by replacing the initial consonant with the nasal of the same place of articulation: *ngosop* (rough-hewn, from *kosop*, a rough-hewn thing); *ngololupak* (wavy, from hypothesized form *kololupak,* which I have not encountered in use)

In Hobongan, the texture inventory is often connected with specific materials or objects. There is not just smooth, but smooth wood or water or gong. With descriptors so closely tied to items or materials in the Hobongan world, it would not be surprising if these descriptors were infrequently used in borrowed or translated texts, and that is in fact the case. There is 1 instance of *corihop* in all of Kejadian and no instances of texture descriptors in Hamun Hamang. In Tikun there is one instance of *mama*, and in Lelang, one instance of *nasap*. Even in original Hobongan texts, then, there are not many uses of texture descriptors, but given the relative lengths of the texts involved, there is more description of texture in the Hobongan texts than in borrowed or translated texts.

Substances (weights/hefts)

Weights and hefts could also be considered haptic, and to some extent visual, but I have separated them here because of a different dimensionality. Textures are perceivable based on surfaces (roughly two-dimensional), but weights and hefts require a more three-dimensional experience with the items having weight or heft. As with surfaces, substances are often linked to specific materials or things: *bahat* (heavy); *nyiqun* (light in weight); *dahom* (deep, of water); *tohoceng* (very tight); *mohop* (thick, of hair). In the texts, there is one instance of *dahom* in Tikun, no substance-descriptors in Lelang and Hamun Hamang, and five descriptors in Kejadian: two *dahom*, one *bahat*, two *nyiqun*. These kinds of three-dimensional substances appear to parallel one another across the various types of texts, perhaps because of the generic nature of the terms used. Water is crucial to life, and heavy or light objects can be encountered by anyone.

Scents

Scents are only described in phrases with the noun *bun* (a smell). In these phrases, the descriptors are nouns and follow the noun that they modify. I have included these terms here because they syntactically modify a noun and because they fit the overall examination of sensory descriptors, but they are quite different from the verbal descriptors that are included elsewhere. There are no verbal descriptors for scents: *bun hango* (smell of smoke); *bun tut* (smell of fart); *bun ukot* (smell of pig). The noun *bun* is used five times in Kejadian, but not co-occurring with the descriptors. There are no instances of the noun in the other texts, and no descriptors for scents in any of the narratives.

Tastes

Tastes perform grammatically more like the other parts of the sensory inventory, with verbal descriptors: *loqong* (delicious); *miqilu* (acidic, sour); *moqomi* (sweet); *mi* (sweet, a regional variant); *paqip* (bitter); *comi-omi* (salty). The reduplicated form *comi-omi* is based on the noun for the flavor of salt, *omi*. In Hobongan, the fundamental concept for flavor is about salt, and the term has been extended to cover any flavor or taste, as well. Tastes show up more in Kejadian than do other sensory terms: six instances of *loqong* and one instance of *moqomi*. No tastes appear in the other narratives. Once again, sensory descriptors are not a major component of Hobongan description in use.

Other

The items in this category are perhaps not traditionally considered sensory, but I have grouped them here because proprioception is now recognized as a sense, because neurological feelings are body-based, and because these descriptors perform in use as do other sensory descriptors: *jang jangon* (dizzy; lexicalized reduplication from *jangon*: confused); *sopo-po* (exhausted); *nuro* (sleepy).

None of these descriptors are used in the selected narratives.

Descriptors for Water and Terrain

Rather than focusing on sensory descriptors, Hobongan has an extensive lexicon of descriptors for river-based terrain, which is important to navigation, the domain that Hobongan narrative discourse is organized around. In general, there appears to be a relative backgrounding of subjective sensory experience and more foregrounding of descriptors for the aspects of the Hobongan world that they focus on linguistically and use on a daily basis: *acaq* (steep); *amap* (gently sloped); *dahom* (deep, of water); *dipa* (to be across river from); *dirin* (narrow, of a creek); *lohaq* (cleared, of trail or land); *moong* (dammed or blocked as of a waterway); *moqoco* (distant); *neqe* (shallow, of river); *ngolaha/ngosaq* (to be bare of trees); *nohucung* (modifier: steep; nominal: waterfall); *nunyung* (of land, to be narrowing between two rivers or creeks); *takang* (receding, of water); *tosulon* (level, of ground or location); *uut* (to be in an upriver direction); *baqen* (to be in a downriver direction); *nogagaq* (to be stuck on a rock or gravel bar, from the nominal form *togagaq*); *poriu* (having islands); *kohot* (of a landslide); *ngulong* (still or quiet, of water); *nocariq* (to be small, of a stream of water; from the nominal form *tocariq*); *koot* (muddy; the semantic contraster with *lihining*, clear).

The descriptors related to navigable areas are used relatively frequently in the selected narrative discourses, except for Lelang, which is the oldest narrative discourse, and the one that was spoken by a fully monolingual, elderly Hobongan speaker. There are few descriptors of any kind in Lelang. In that narrative, there are primarily nominal and verbal lexical items, with all of the usual discourse markers, focal markers, and conjunctions that Hobongan requires. In other words, the style of that narrative discourse is noticeably different from the styles of the other narratives. Whether that is a diachronic phenomenon, an idiolect phenomenon, a sociolinguistic phenomenon, or a mix of factors remains to be explored. The navigational descriptors appear throughout the other narrative discourses. In Tikun, *anon* appears once, *dipa* appears twice, *lohaq* appears ten times, *moqoco* appears twice, *uut* appears three times, and *koot* appears twice, for a total of twenty. That can be compared with sixteen total sensory descriptors in Tikun.

In Hamun Hamang, there are two uses of *lohaq*. That can be compared with seven uses of visual descriptors. Although the Hamun Hamang narratives are now accepted and used and told among the Hobongan, there remain some differences between the ways in which information is prioritized. Because these narratives were borrowed, they are not primarily about navigation, and visual information occurs more frequently. In Kejadian, *dahom* is used twice, *dipa* is used three times, *lohaq* is used 26 times, *moqoco* is used 13 times, *uut* is used seventeen times, and *nogagaq* is used three times, for a total of 64 uses of navigational descriptors. That can be compared with 133 instances of sensory descriptors, the vast majority of which are visual descriptors. Kejadian prioritizes visual information beyond what would be expected in a Hobongan-originating narrative discourse.

DISCUSSION

In the Hobongan narrative discourses examined, descriptors for the world-of-interaction are more commonly used than descriptors of personal sensory experience. Nevertheless, Hobongan has a culturally relevant set of sensory descriptors, including color terms.

Color terms were important enough, or notable enough in the languages in contact with Hobongan, for the Hobongan to acquire more beyond the two that appear to be original. However, although available, they are not frequently used in Hobongan-originated narratives, but are used more often in a translated set of narratives. I have also suggested that Hobongan is in the process of creating at least one color term via semantic extension: *lihining* (clear), which used to apply primarily to water but can now be used to describe blue or gray eye coloring. *Lihining* as a color term has not yet appeared in written, transcribed, or translated narrative discourses, which is to be expected for a relatively new use.

Other visual descriptors are used relatively more frequently, perhaps because color is a subset of the range of visual information that is available to sensation and perception. Non-visual sensory descriptors are used even less frequently. Of particular note, given that Hobongan remains a primarily oral language, is that there are very few descriptors for sounds, and some of those that exist (*iq*: small; *hiuq*: big) intersect with other possible sensory domains: those two terms in particular could be visual or tactile, and also refer to relatively quiet or loud sounds. In Hobongan, terms to refer to sounds are verbal or nominal, rather than descriptive, making them core items both syntactically and semantically in the Hobongan lexicon and free of many of the fluctuations that affect other types of terms and concepts in the language.

Few taste descriptors are available, with a term referring to salty taste (*omi*) being basic and extended to combine with other terms to refer to other tastes. Hobongan includes ways to describe many of the major recognized tastes, including bitter, tart, and sweet tastes. There might be a reference for umami, but as that is relatively recently recognized taste (in the English-speaking world), and whether or not there is a way to describe that taste is an area for additional research. Smells are unique in the language in that there are no verbal descriptors but only serial nouns to refer to smells. Describing smells therefore requires phrasal constructions, rather than standing on their own as single-term descriptors.

Perhaps expectedly, proprioceptive information is rare both in available descriptors and in use.

CONCLUSIONS

Use of the available inventory of descriptors in Hobongan aligns with the pragmatics of Hobongan information use and management, in life as well as in narrative discourse. In the oldest narrative in the set used for analysis (Lelang), very little description occurs. Information is organized around navigation and location, which are treated as concrete activities and places. In more recent narrative discourses written by Hobongan speakers (Tikun), description is rare but included, and location and navigation remain the focus, with extensive use of concrete actions and places. In narratives whose content is borrowed (Hamun Hamang), there is little description, but also little focus on location and navigation, marking these discourses and fundamentally different Hobongan-originated narratives. In a translated set of narratives (Kejadian), much more description is included, along with some locational and navigational information that is required for discourses to be discourse. However, the use of visual and taste information marks this set of narratives as significantly different from Hobongan-originating narratives.

The Hobongan-originating narratives aligned in the past and continue to align in current use with certain oral language characteristics, notably that those narratives are close to the Hobongan "lifeworld", as Ong (2003, p. 42) terms it. When people live closely with the world in which they speak and think and interact, description, and the abstraction that description relies on, are less necessary. The most important information is kept concrete and active in the Hobongan-originated narratives, in contrast with the description and abstraction that is more common in a translated set of narratives. Hobongan descriptors are often closely linked with materials or items, such as gongs or chickens. Those kinds of descriptors that are available continue to reinforce closeness to the lifeworld. The materials themselves dictate the descriptors that can be applied, limiting those descriptors' applicability to information from outside the

Hobongan world, such as with the borrowed and translated narratives. In addition, the two Hobongan-originated narratives show what is possibly a shift toward literacy. Lelang was provided by an elderly, monolingual, exclusively oral speaker and includes little description. Tikun was provided by high school students who had learned to read and write in Bahasa Indonesian and who have had significant exposure to Bahasa Indonesian through their schooling. There are more descriptors in Tikun than in Lelang. All of the narratives remain focused on locational and navigational information, but the kinds of metaphorical distance from the lifeworld that literacy, and the literal distance that attendance at schools in town and away from the oral culture, afford are beginning to be evidenced in the narratives that Hobongan writers have produced. Hobongan descriptors provide an overview of where the language is on the orality-literacy cline. They also provide indicators of what information is more significant to them in their interactions with the Hobongan world, and information about what categories are more or less important to their thinking about that world.

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