

# The Maritime Lexicon of Indonesian Proverbs as a Guide in the Dynamics of Cultural and National Life

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## ABSTRACT

Language and culture have values and legal order that greatly influence people's behavior. The behavior of the Indonesian people can be reflected through the way they interact using language devices. Indonesian people who live in coastal areas have specific language tools, one of which is the maritime lexicon in the form of proverbs that are full of meaning, organized, concise, and dense. Maritime lexicon and expressions reflect the experience, work ethic, character, and behavior of the community which is understood collectively based on the life views of each of its supporters. This article is an effort to explore the language existence and maritime culture also to explain the lexicon function in Indonesia proverb which contain values and labeling in the maritime community in Indonesia. This study was conducted from the perspective of the relationship between language and culture (Kramsch, 1998 and Duranti, 2000). The data for the purposes of this study is the lexicon in proverbs related to maritime, especially the lexicon "sea" and "water". Data were obtained from various literatures, such as books and journals. In addition to written data, oral data were also obtained from informants who were fluent in Indonesian. The data is presented descriptively, which explains the data according to the facts of the language used. After that, interpretive methods are applied, namely interpreting language facts based on people's social behavior in accordance with their cultural context. Thus, the values of social and cultural events can be obtained based on the perspective and experience of the informant associated with the context of the supporting community. The results of the study show that maritime culture in Indonesian proverbs using the lexicon "sea" and "water" is full of values in the form of advice, obedience, patience, education, satire, and politeness. Maritime lexicons and expressions can make a very important contribution to the development and enrichment of Indonesian culture in various spheres of life. In addition, it can be a guide in the dynamics of cultural and national life.

**Keywords:** *language and culture, maritime, lexicon, Indonesia proverb.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the largest country in Southeast Asia, most of which consists of coastal area. As a maritime country with an area of approximately 1.9 million square miles, Indonesia has 17,508 islands, 770 ethnic groups, and 726 languages as well as various ethnicities and customs. Ethnic and cultural diversity is the wealth of the Indonesian nation which gives its own color and uniqueness, especially in relation to maritime culture.

Bogdan and Taylor (in Moleong, 2012: 4) explain that culture is all aspects of human life which includes systems of knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, language systems, and other abilities acquired by a

community group. Maritime culture is applied to empower the mind and spirit to organize all aspects of human life through the use of all things related to the sea. Empowerment and marine resources are utilized for the growth and dynamics of community life from generation to generation.

The behavior of the maritime community can be reflected through how to interact using language as a medium. Language as a medium of interaction is one of the elements of culture that is full of values and legal arrangements or customs. It contains concepts that are explored in patterns of behavior in cultural and national life. Fromkin (2000) also explains that language is only given to humans and that language makes humans into

humans. In this case, language reflects the character and self-esteem of each speaker.

Indonesia, which is inhabited by various ethnic groups, basically has life experiences that have been passed together, namely as immigrants, traders, students of knowledge by navigating the vast ocean and making the sea a livelihood. The marine environment has its own characteristics that can be observed through language in the form of the lexicon they use. In interacting with each other, the maritime community places a high priority on naming and labeling in accordance with the prevailing order of life. Each individual has a name and label as a marker of everything that will be communicated (Oktavianus, 2019: 17). The lexicon used has the same meaning context and applies collectively which is applied to the daily life of the maritime community.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted from the perspective of the relationship between language and culture (Kramsch, 1998 and Duranti, 2000). The data for the purposes of this study is the lexicon in proverbs related to maritime such as the lexicon "sea" and "water" obtained in various literatures, such as books and journals. In addition to written data, oral data were also obtained from informants who were fluent in Indonesian. The data is presented descriptively, namely explaining language facts according to the actual situation. After that, an interpretive method is applied, namely interpreting language facts based on the social behavior of the Indonesian people to obtain values about social and cultural events. The meaning of these language facts can also be based on the perspective and experience of the informant associated with the context of the supporting community.

## **3. ANALYSIS**

### **3.1. Language and Maritime Culture**

Language and culture are like two inseparable sides of one coin because in language, the value content of each culture can be revealed. Koentjaraningrat (1985: 88 - 89) viewed that language is one of the seven elements of culture that are universal. However, each region has a different culture, both in terms of language, clothing, communication style and traditions that are often carried out by the community. From this point of view, language is a means of interaction that forms culture in humans.

Furthermore, (Duranti, 1997: 14-17) said that language and culture simultaneously with a balanced proportion which can be used as an analytical basis. It can be reviewed in three aspects, namely (1) competence and performance, (2) indexicality, and (3)

participation. The concepts of competence and performance are two key terms in generative grammar which were developed by Noam Chomsky (1965) in Frankfurt on the sites online [http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-322-84061-5\\_6](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-322-84061-5_6).

Competence is a system of knowledge of a language (system of a culture) that is controlled by speakers of a language in question, while performance is a real use of language in actual communication situations which is a reflection of the language system that exists in the speaker's mind. The concept of indexicality concerns signs that have an existential relationship with those they refer to. The concept of participation is intended as the involvement of speakers in producing an acceptable form of speech.

If culture is said to be everything related to the mind and the mind, maritime culture is the empowerment of the mind and mind to organize all aspects of human life. These two things can synergize through the use of all things related to the sea. Because the marine environment has its own characteristics, the way in which all aspects of human life live in coastal areas, which are active in the sea, and who play in the sea will certainly show its own characteristics as well. Kramsch (1998:3) states that language functions as language expresses, embodies, and symbolizes cultural reality (see also Oktavianus: 1999: 19). Language determines concepts and has meanings that are understood by community groups with regard to forming definitions of their views of life (Basrowi & Sudikin, 2002: 81-82). In this case, maritime language and culture give birth to a synthesis of cultural values that reflect the mindset of coastal communities.

In interacting with each other, coastal communities use very varied maritime lexicon and expressions that can be understood collectively based on the life views of each of its supporters. A comprehensive understanding of the relationship between maritime language and culture can be studied in anthropological linguistics. This field of study is an interdisciplinary field of science that studies the relationship between language and the intricacies of human life, including culture. Language in the form of proverbs was initially only used among coastal communities. Now for generations it is widely used by the community and understood collectively. This is related to the transfer of ideas and behavior patterns in the form of language. In fact, it can be a reflection of the mindset and character that is widely understood by the people of Indonesia. Furthermore, it will increase to become the norm about what is acceptable and unacceptable in social life which is woven into the form of expressions and proverbs.

### **3.2. Lexicon and Proverbs**

The terms lexicon, lexical, and lexeme need to be distinguished to provide a clear understanding to the

public. Lexicon is categorized as a noun that has something in common with vocabulary. Lexicon is a language component that contains all information about the meaning and use of words in the language (Kridalaksana 1993:126). This lexicon derives an adjective form known as a lexical term, which is a unit of language form that contains meaning. Meanwhile, lexemes can be equated with basic words or word candidates that can be present as words after experiencing the word formation process.

The process of word formation is included in the scope of morphological studies. Lexical meaning can be interpreted as meaning that is lexical that is in accordance with its referent which can be studied in the semantic field. According to Chaer (1994: 12), lexical is a meaning that is in accordance with the results of the observation of the senses, or a meaning that is really real in our lives. If the lexicon is associated with behavior and people's lives, the meanings and values obtained are in anthropological studies.

If it is associated with anthropological studies, the life of coastal communities shows the values of politeness in language and their softness to maintain their background in life. They are not used to triggering desires and disappointments or feelings of dissatisfaction directly. The proverbs used are packaged in a concise, dense, and full of meaning. The proverb is used based on a very careful view and comparison of nature and events that occur and apply in society. Furthermore, proverbs can be in the form of groups of words or sentences that state the intent, condition of a person or things that express actions, behavior or things about a person. These proverbs are often inserted in conversation to advise, compare or insinuate, and voice the inner atmosphere of society. It is hereditary in nature and is used to strengthen the purpose of writing, giving advice, teaching or living guidelines. Another understanding, proverbs are fragments of sentences that have frozen, both in terms of form, meaning and function in society. Proverbs used by coastal communities are formed into expressions in the form of lexicon that contain positive values and can be used as guidelines in dealing with various dynamics of life.

The application of the "sea" and "water" lexicon in maritime proverbs aims to advise, commemorate, give patience, compare, or insinuate someone, and voice the community's spiritual atmosphere in an orderly and pleasant manner.

### 3.2.1. Proverbs using the Sea

Proverbs using the "sea" lexicon can be seen in the following of lexicon means advices, lexicon means obedience, lexicon means patience, and lexicon means education.

#### a) Lexicon means advice

- (1) In the sea it can be guessed, in the heart who knows.
- (2) Germs across the ocean are visible, elephants on the eyelids are not visible
- (3) The ocean is dry when you weigh it

In the context of natural speech, the meaning of the proverb of *The sea can be guessed, in the heart of who knows* in example (1) has a very important basic value in life. It gives advice to the public to be careful when interacting with interlocutors to avoid misunderstandings. Basically, everyone's way of thinking or knowledge is different so that speakers and speech partners cannot guess each other's way of thinking. Furthermore, the proverb in example (2) shows *Germs across the "ocean", the elephant in the eyelids does not appear* to contain value provides advice to the community to be able to refrain from discussing the shortcomings of others because no human being is immune from shortcomings. In this case, it is said to someone who is able to reveal the faults (badness) of others, but his own faults are not realized. Furthermore, the proverb in example (3) *"Oceans" when taken dry* also contains advice so that people avoid living extravagantly. A person should live a simple life because even though he has a lot of wealth, in the end it will run out if he always spends it without taking into account the needs of life which are prioritized.

#### b) Lexicon means obedience

- (4) If the hook is an inch long, do not expect the sea to be suspected.
- (5) Throwing salt into the sea.

The proverb in the example (4) *If the hook is an inch long, do not expect the "sea" to be suspected* contains a warning value to the community to always obey and measure one's ability to do something. In other words, do not do a job that is beyond our ability or expertise because the risks to be faced cannot be handled properly. Furthermore, the value contained in example (5) *Throwing salt into the "sea"* warns the public to always avoid a useless job or a useless job by giving to people who have excess in their needs.

#### c) Lexicon means patience

- (6) Acid in the mountains, salt in the sea meet in a cauldron.

The proverb in the example (6) *Acid in the mountains, salt in the "sea" meets in a cauldron* contain values that contain advice to men and women to always be patient and believe that one's life partner has been determined by the Almighty. Even though they are far apart if they are a match, someday they will also be united in a family.

d) *Lexicon means Education*

- (7) Which sea does not have waves, which earth does not rain.
- (8) A fist becomes a mountain, a drop becomes an ocean.

The proverb in example (7) *Which "sea" does not have waves, which earth does not rain*, gives a life lesson that every business has difficulties or contains dangerous risks. Therefore, caution and careful calculation are needed to achieve the desired success. Furthermore, the proverb in example (8) *A fist into a mountain, a drop makes an "ocean"* is containing teaching or education that sometimes humans escape the control of themselves so that a small problem is usually exaggerated. Such traits can lead to misunderstandings or conflicts with others.

### 3.2.2. Proverbs using the Water

Proverbs using the water lexicon can be seen in the following example of lexicon means satire, lexicon means warning, lexicon means education, and lexicon means politeness.

a) *Lexicon means satire*

- (9) The water rippled as a sign that it was not deep, the water shook a sign that it was not full.
- (10) Milk is reciprocated by tubal water.
- (11) Like water on taro leaves
- (12) Because of a speck of tilapia, a cauldron of milk is damaged.

The proverb in example (9) *"Water" ripples is not deep, "water" shakes is not full* contains allusions to someone who has a habit of acting and speaking or being arrogant and looks superior. People who have such character usually do not have broad insight or deep knowledge. Furthermore, the values contained in example (10) *"Water" in Milk is reciprocated by tubal "water"* contains a satire to someone who does not appreciate the services of others. Whoever helped him. In fact, a person's kindness tends to be repaid with evil. Similarly, the example (11) like the *"Water" in taro leaves* contains satire to people who are not fixed. The character of this kind of person cannot be trusted and entrusted with responsibility. The values contained in the example (13), *Because of a speck of tilapia, a cauldron of milk is damaged* contains satire for people who only encounter minor problems or obstacles in their lives cause all hopes and ideals become unclear or messy. It can also be likened to people who have contributed a lot, but only with a few mistakes their services are easily forgotten.

b) *Lexicon means warning*

- (13) Calm water washes away.

- (14) Patting the water in the pan, splashed his own face.

The proverb in example (13) *"The water" in Calm water washes away* contains values that give advice that we should not underestimate people who are quiet or do not talk much because usually such people are highly knowledgeable people. Therefore, regardless of the existence of people around us, it must be respected without discriminating. Furthermore, proverb in the example (14) *Tapping the "water" in the pan, splashed on your own face* give satire to the person who opens the family disgrace. Basically, the disgrace of the family being exposed is the same as opening one's own disgrace.

c) *Lexicon means education*

- (15) While diving, drink water.
- (16) Prepare an umbrella before it rains.

Proverb in the example (15) *While diving, drinking "water"* gives values to people who are agile, agile, and able to manage time well. People who have this habit can become successful people because they are able to do one job while doing another job. Moreover, the meaning of the proverb in the example (16), *Prepare an umbrella before the rain* implies that we should always be on guard before a disaster or danger comes. This proverb can be applied in everyday life, both in spoken and written form. This proverb as a parable has the meaning that we should be on guard before a disaster or danger comes.

d) *Lexicon means politeness*

- (17) Rice is eaten with thorns, drinking water tastes like husks.

The meaning of the proverb in the example (17), *Rice is eaten with thorns, drinking "water" tastes like husks* is giving an illustration of the mood for someone who is experiencing serious problems and has not found the right solution. Such a situation is conveyed politely to describe the difficulties experienced and there has been no resolution so that it affects eating and drinking activities that feel meaningless or do not feel good in living this life.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Proverbs are a reflection of civilization as well as a symbol of the identity of coastal communities. Proverbs that use maritime lexicon such as 'sea' and 'water' can contain positive values that can be used as guidelines and warnings in dealing with various dynamics of life. Cultural values in the expressions formed with the lexicon "sea" and "water" are very varied which carry various meanings, namely advice, obedience, patience, education, satire, and politeness. Those proverbs are a means of disseminating culture by transferring ideas,

ideas, and patterns of behavior from one community group to another. The proverbs can provide values and become guidelines in aspects of human life, especially Indonesian society. Thus, maritime culture makes a very large contribution to the development and enrichment of Indonesian culture. Proverbs can also be used by current and future generations as guidelines in the life of the nation and state.

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