

AN ANALYSIS OF PROVERBS IN INDONESIAN LANGUAGE AS FRAMES OF REFERENCE IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Cross-cultural communication; Frame of reference; Proverb; Indonesian language.	This study describes the proverbs in Indonesian language that function as the frames of reference in cross-cultural communication with special reference to the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena in the proverbs in question. The study is viewed from the perspective of cultural linguistics, one the new theoretical perspectives in cognitive linguistics exploring the relationship of language, culture, and conceptualization. The study is descriptive-qualitative on the basis of secondary data collected through library research considered along with the experiences the writers when visited and lived abroad. The results of study show that the proverbs in Indonesian language as the frames of reference in cross-cultural communication are as follows: (01) <i>Lain ladang lain belalang, lain lubuk lain ikannya</i> 'Different fields different grasshoppers, different depths different their fish' and (02) <i>Di mana bumi dipijak, di situ langit dijunjung</i> 'Where the earth is stepped, there the sky is upheld'. The forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in the proverbs are specific in some respect to Indonesian language as the reflection of Indonesian culture designating the ways Indonesian people view and make sense of their world, especially in regard to cross-cultural communication. The meanings implied in the forms of linguistic phenomena used in the proverb (01) are concerned with the natures of cultural differences as the basic concept of cross-cultural communication, while the meanings implied in the forms of linguistic phenomena used in the proverb (02) are concerned with the manifestation of that basic concept in action in the sense that it is best to follow the cultural realities such as customs, rules, norms, values, habits, and traditions of a place being visited or lived in an attempt to prevent potential conflicts arising due to misunderstanding of cultural differences.
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INTRODUCTION

There is no society on this earth living without language because language makes the life of a society as a whole meaningful. The meaningfulness of language can be seen in its use as a medium of communication between and among a society as members of a speech community to fulfill their basic needs as human beings (Cassirer, 1987; Suriasumantri, 2001; Porat, 2022). The reason is clear and understandable that the aim of language used by a society as members of a speech community is not only to express their thoughts, ideas, and feelings, but also to convey their experiences in the world. The world conveyed through language they employ involves both the factual world and the symbolic world which refers to the world in which the objects used as the referents of language used are imaginative as the objects are in their cognitions or minds

(Berger & Luckman, 1967; Miller, 1968; Keesing, 1981; Stross, 1981; Wallace, 1981; Grice, 1987; Whorf, 2001; Maslova, 2004; Malcom, 2007; Abdikalyk et al., 2016; Sihotang, 2018). In this regard, language used by a society as members of a speech community serves not only as the window of their world but also as the window into their cognitions or minds (Bernstein, 1972; Wallace, 1981; Palmer, 1996; Whorf, 2001; Ungerer & Schmid, 2006; Palmer & Sharifian, 2007; Sharifian, 2011; Yu, 2007).

Along with the function of language, as aforementioned, it is a true to say then that language serves as the reflection of culture shared by a society as members of a speech community. This is because culture is deeply ingrained in the fabric of a society (Sapir, 1949), as pointed out by Brown (1994) that culture shared by a society is deeply ingrained part of the very fiber of their being, but language is the most visible and available expression of culture they share. In line with this, Kramsch (2001) propounds that language used by a society as members of a speech community is a system of symbols that has the power to shape and create cultural realities such as norms, values, perceptions, and identities. The cultural realities are reflected in a wide range of ways that they use when communicating each other, both in macro-interactional levels and in micro-interactional levels such as in a certain speech event or speech act (Duranti, 1991).

Apart from macro-interactional levels, the features of language used in micro-interactional levels can be seen, among other things, in proverbs or adages which refer to traditional sayings that express the perceived truth based on common sense or experience. A proverb often appears both in the form of metaphor or metaphorical expression and in the form of formulaic language as a fixed and non-literal expression commonly used in speech as pre-packaged linguistic units. The features of linguistic phenomena in proverbs used by a speech community in a speech event or speech act are specific in some respect to culture they share as the parent culture in which that their language is embedded. The specific features of such linguistic phenomena are reflected not only in their forms but also in their meanings. The forms refer to the physical features of linguistic phenomena used that can be identified on the basis of its surface structure, while the meanings refer to the contents stated and implied in the forms of linguistic phenomena used in accordance with text and context in the linguistic phenomena are used (Bustan et al., 2024; Bustan & Ludji, 2024; Bustan, 2025). Therefore, the meanings can be identified and classified into textual meanings which refer to meanings in text and contextual meanings which refer to meanings in contexts as the nonverbal settings in which the forms of linguistic phenomena are used. The contextual meanings of linguistic phenomena used in a proverb designate cultural conceptualization ascribed in the cognitive map of its speech community as the frames of reference for them in viewing and make sense of the world.

The conceptions provided above are of great importance not only in understanding the relationship between both language and culture belonging to a society as members of a social group but also in understanding cross-cultural communication as a field of study investigating how people from different cultural backgrounds communicate or interact each other. The study aims to prevent the potential conflicts arising due to the misunderstanding of cultural differences as main barriers and challenges hampering effective cross-cultural communication. In an attempt to achieve the intended aim, therefore, it is necessary to investigate the proverbs in which their contents are concerned with the perceived truth based on common sense or experience in regard to conception that cultural diversity is the act of inclusiveness. In the case of Indonesian people, the study is beneficial not only as the frames of reference for them when communicating with

their fellow Indonesian people as the members of big multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual nation in the world, but also as the frames of reference for them when communicating with those of other nations all over the world as the members of global society.

This study addresses the proverbs of Indonesian language that function as the frames of reference in cross-cultural communication in the context of interaction with those coming from different cultural backgrounds, both with fellow Indonesian people as the members of a pluralistic nation and with foreigners all over the world the members of global community. As the problem is pervasive, the study focuses on the features of linguistic phenomena used in the proverbs in question with special reference to their forms and meanings as the main concerns of study. The study is conducted for the basic reason that the features of linguistic phenomena used in the proverbs are specific to Indonesian culture as the parent culture in which Indonesian language is embedded. The specific features of linguistic phenomena in the proverbs are reflected in their forms and meanings designating the ways Indonesian people view and make sense of the world in regard to cross-cultural communication. The meanings stored in the forms of linguistic phenomena used in the proverbs are distinctive in nature as the contextual meanings are different from the textual meanings. The contextual meanings contain a set of customary norms or rules inherited from the ancestors of Indonesian people dealing with the pattern of behavior that should be applied when interacting with those coming from different cultural backgrounds to prevent the potential conflicts arising due to the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of cultural differences, as reflected in such cultural realities as customs, rules, norms, values, habits, and traditions.

FRAMEWORK

The function of language as the reflection of culture shared by a society as members of a social group, as aforementioned, is the main concern of study in cultural linguistics as one of the new theoretical perspectives in cognitive linguistics which explores the relationship of language, culture, and conceptualization belonging to a society as members of a social group (Palmer, 1996; Langacker, 1999; Ungerer & Schmid, 2006; Palmer & Sharifian, 2007; Sharifian, 2011). This is in line with the idea of Abdikalyk et al. (2016) that concept as a linguo-philosophical unit of linguistics is the main concern of study of cognitive linguistics. In the framework of cognitive linguistics, concept refers to a semantic unit that has linguo-cultural features and characterizes the speakers of any chosen ethnoculture. As it reflects an ethnic mindset, the concept marks the ethnic language image and serves as the so-called brick to build 'the house of their being' as members of a social group (Maslova, 2004; Langacker, 1999; Porat, 2022). In the perspective of cultural linguistics, language used by a society as members of a social group is explored through the lens of culture they share to uncover conceptualization ascribed in their cognitive map as the source of reference for them in viewing and making sense of the world (Palmer, 1996; Bustan, 2005; Palmer & Sharifian, 2007; Sharifian, 2011).

In the perspective of cultural linguistics as an emerging paradigm of cognitive linguistics, language used by a society as members of a social group is explored through the lens of culture they share to uncover conceptualization ascribed in their cognitive map as the frame of reference of their experiences in viewing and making sense of the world (Palmer, 1996; Bustan, 2005; Palmer & Sharifian, 2007; Sharifian, 2011). The conceptualization is manifested, among other things, in metaphor as the system of knowledge shared by a society as members of a social group

that functions as a conceptual frame of reference for them to understand the world. Metaphor in this light is not just a figure of speech that compares two unlike things by asserting one thing is another. Metaphor creates vivid imagery and makes language more engaging by suggesting a resemblance between two things in which metaphor serves as a vehicle to convey complex ideas or emotions in a more concise and impactful way (Casson, 1981; Palmer & Sharifian, 2007; Duranti, 2001; Casson, 1981; Ungerer & Schmid, 2006; Bustan et al., 2024; Monteiro et al., 2024; Bustan & Ludji, 2024).

With respect to the fact that language as the most effective means of communication between and among a society as members of a social group is full of metaphors in viewing one experience on the basis of another experience, metaphor is also defined as a theory of society that contains their experiences on the world. It is said so because metaphor is one of the linguistic devices used to relate various domains of experiences and coherences between interrelated events (Miller, 1979; Wahab, 1990; Foley, 1991; Duranti, 2001). This conception implies that metaphor can be identified not only from the perspective of semantics as the transferences of name but also from the perspective of anthropology and philosophy. In the perspective of anthropology and philosophy, metaphor refers to the basic character of relationship between the human linguisticity and the world. As human linguisticity is always metaphorical in nature, it is true to say then that all words and names are not given by nature, but they are the results of human creation in their contexts of living together as members of a social group for years or a long period of time and even transgenerations. Therefore, in this regard, metaphor is seen as a part of cultural conceptualization emerging in cognition level (Palmer & Sharifian, 2007; Miller, 1979; Bustan et al., 2017; Bustan et al., 2024; Monteiro et al., 2024; Bustan & Ludji, 2024).

As a metaphorical symbol can't be understood its meaning without reference to the context of its use in discourse, according to Wahab (1990), metaphor can be identified and classified into several kinds, including sentential metaphor, nominal metaphor, and predicative metaphor. Sentential metaphor can be understood its meaning on the basis of its relation with sentence preceding or following it. Both nominal metaphor and predicative metaphor can be understood their meanings by observing the contexts of sentences in which they are used. Sentential metaphor appears in the form of complete sentence. Nominal metaphor appears in the form of noun or nominal phrase and predicative metaphor appears in the form of predicate. Based on the kinds of nouns serving as its component parts, nominal metaphor can be identified into several types, including human metaphor, animal metaphor, and plant metaphor. Human metaphor which is also known as anthropomorphic metaphor is referred to as nominal metaphor which is indicated by using the organs of human body attached to nonhuman entities in the physical environment. Animal metaphor, as aforementioned, is referred to as nominal metaphor which is indicated by using animals or the organs of an animal. Plant metaphor is referred to as nominal metaphor which is indicated by using of plants or the parts of a plant (Miller, 1979; Foley, 1997; Monteiro et al., 2024; Bustan & Ludji, 2024). As aforementioned, the use of metaphor or expression can be seen, for instance, in proverbs or adages in the meanings stored in the forms of linguistic phenomenon used extends from textual or lexical meaning to contextual or conceptual meaning (Bustan, 2010; Bustan et al., 2017; Foley, 1997; Monteiro et al., 2024; Bustan & Ludji, 2024).

METHOD

This study is descriptive-qualitative as its aim is to describe the forms and meanings of proverbs in Indonesian language that function as the frames of reference in cross-cultural communication. The study was based on secondary data collected through library research. The method used in collecting the data was documentary study. The kinds of documents used as the sources of data were of two kinds, including general references such as books and specific references such as research results, scientific articles, and papers. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively by inductive method as the process of analysis was started from the data to abstraction/concept regarding the forms and meanings of proverbs in Indonesian language that function the frames of reference in cross-cultural communication (Muhadjir, 1995; Bungin, 2007; Moleong, 2021; Sugyono, 2022). The analysis of data was also done in accordance with the experiences faced by the researchers when visiting and living abroad.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of study shows that there are many proverbs in Indonesian language that can be used as the frames of reference in cross-cultural communication to prevent potential conflicts arising due to misunderstanding the natures of cultural differences between cultures. Based on the results of data selection, however, the proverbs in Indonesian language which are almost always used by the members of Indonesian people as the frames of reference for them in cross-cultural communication are as follows: (01) *Lain ladang lain belalang, lain lubuk lain ikannya* 'Different fields different grasshoppers, different depths different their fish' and (02) *Di mana bumi dipijak, di situ langit dijunjung* 'Where the earth is stepped, there the sky is upheld'. The features of linguistic phenomena used in the proverbs are specific in some respect to Indonesian language as the reflection of Indonesian culture which designate the ways Indonesian people as members of multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual nation view and make sense of the world, especially in regard to cross-cultural communication. The meanings stored in the forms of linguistic phenomena used in the proverbs are related two main concerns, involving the basic concept that should be taken into account and its application in the context of cross-cultural communication regarding the natures of cultural differences as reflected in such cultural realities as customs, rules, norms, values, habits, and traditions, as the act of inclusiveness.

Discussion

Referring to the results of study provided above, this section discusses in more depth the forms and meanings of proverbs in Indonesian language as the frames of references in carrying out effective cross-cultural communication with the fellow Indonesian people as members of multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual nation as well as with those coming from different cultural backgrounds all over the world along with their existence as the members of global community.

Data (01): *Lain ladang lain belalang, lain lubuk lain ikannya*

As seen in the physical features of linguistic phenomena used in data (01), *Lain ladang lain belalang, lain lubuk lain ikannya* 'Different fields different grasshoppers, different depths different their fish', the proverb appears in the form of a compound sentence made up of two independent

clauses or complete sentences as its component parts. The two independent clauses serving as its component parts are as follows: (1) *Lain ladang lain belalang* 'Different fields different grasshoppers' and (2) *Lain lubuk lain ikannya* 'Different depths different their fish'. The combination of the two independent clauses forms an asyndeton construction as it is not linked by using the coordinating conjunction *dan* 'and' or *atau* 'or' as lexical cohesive device. The coordinating conjunction is intentionally omitted for the reason that the proverb is defined as a formulaic language of idiomatic expression in Indonesian language which is accepted as a part of social convention inherited from their ancestors. Added to this, the omission of the coordinating conjunction also aims at keeping and maintaining the harmony of tempo and rhythm when the proverb is spoken and listened to as the number of words in the two independent clauses is the same as four.

Other than the use of syntactic parallelism, as aforementioned, the beautiful forms of linguistic phenomena used in the proverb that invite sensory pleasures when it is spoken or listened to is also indicated by lexicosemantic parallelism appearing in the forms of repetitions of its words or lexical items. The repetitions are indicated by the repetitions of the word (adverbs) *lain* 'different' appearing twice in the independent clause (a) as well as in the independent clause (b). The repetitions aim at emphasizing the textual meanings stored in the forms of linguistic phenomena used in the proverb regarding the fact that different fields have different grasshoppers and different depths have different fish as well. Along with the context of its use in the discourse of cross-cultural communication, the proverb is identified sentential metaphor as it can be understood its meanings on the basis of relation between the two independent clauses serving as its component parts. The semantic relation of the two independent clauses is synthesis in nature as the meaning of the independent clause (a) supports and emphasizes the meaning of the independent clause (b) or, vice versa, the meaning of the independent clause (b) supports and emphasizes the meaning of the independent clause (a)

In terms of its words or lexical items, the word (noun) *ladang* 'field' in the independent clause (a) and the word (noun) *lubuk* 'depth' in the independent clause (b) refer to the places. While the word (noun) *belalang* 'grasshoppers' in the independent clause (a) and the word *ikan* 'fish' in the independent clause (b) refer to the societies living in those places. Based on the two kinds of words (nouns) used, in this case *belalang* 'grasshoppers' in the independent clause (a) and the word *ikan* 'fish' in the independent clause (b), they can be identified as nominal metaphors, especially animal metaphors indicated by using those two animals which refer to human beings along with their existence as a society as members of a speech community residing in those places.

The meanings stored in the forms of linguistic phenomenon used in the proverb extend from textual or lexical meanings to contextual or conceptual meanings. The contextual or conceptual meanings designate the cultural conceptualization of Indonesian people that different societies living in different places share different cultures because every culture has its own ways in viewing and making sense of the world. The differences between cultures of different societies can be seen in cultural realities such as customs, rules, norms, values, habits, and traditions. In an attempt to prevent the potential conflicts arising due to the misunderstanding of cultural differences, therefore, the proverb is regarded as one of the basic concepts that should be taken into account in the contexts of cross-cultural communication.

Data (02): *Where the earth is stepped, there the sky is upheld*

As seen in the physical features of linguistic phenomena used in data (02), *Di mana bumi dipijak, di situ langit dijunjung* 'Where the earth is stepped, there the sky is upheld', the proverb appears in the form of a complex sentence made up of two clauses as its component parts. The two clauses serving as its component parts are as follows: (a) *Di mana bumi dipijak* 'Where the earth is stepped' as the main clause as it can stand alone as a complete sentence and (b) *Di situ langit dijunjung* 'There the sky is upheld' as the subordinate clause as its meaning depend on the main clause and, as such, the clause is also known as dependent clause. The proverb is defined as a formulaic language in Indonesian language which is accepted by Indonesian people as a part of social convention inherited from their ancestors. The harmony of tempo and rhythm when the proverb is spoken and listened to as the number of words in the two clauses is the same as three.

The meanings stored in the forms of linguistic phenomena used in the proverb are concerned with the manifestation of basic concept provided in the proverb (01) regarding cultural differences as the act of inclusiveness. The forms of linguistic phenomena used imply a set of meanings that must be shown by the members of Indonesian people in their patterns of behavior when they visit and live in new places around Indonesia or abroad. The patterns of behavior must show adaption, tolerance, respect, and honor towards cultural realities such as customs, rules, norms, values, habits, and traditions applied by the people in the new place they visit or live. This is in line with a universal proverb or adage in English, When in Rome, do as Romans do, which means that the patterns of behaviors must be in accordance with the customs rules, norms, values, habits, and traditions applied in the places being visited or lived.

The patterns of behavior are reflected both in the verbal patterns of behavior and in the nonverbal patterns of behaviors to prevent the misunderstanding of cultural differences reflected in the customs, rules, norms, values, habits, and traditions. The proverb functions as a moral and ethical guideline for Indonesian people in the contexts of cross-cultural communication not only with the fellow Indonesian people but also with those of other nations or countries to maintain the harmony of social relationships in one side and to enhance the stability of social system on the other. The deeper meaning is that, in the contexts of cross-cultural communication, it is best to follow the customs, rules, norms, values, habits, and traditions of a place being visited or lived to prevent conflicts arising due to the misunderstanding of cultural differences. The meanings stored in the forms of linguistic phenomena in the proverb (02) are concerned with the manifestation of the basic concept of cultural differences in the proverb (01) as the cultural barriers and challenges that hamper effective cross-cultural communication.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the proverbs of Indonesian language which are mostly used as the frames of reference in cross-cultural communication are as follows: *Lain ladang lain belalang, lain lubuk lain ikannya* 'Different fields different grasshoppers, different depths different their fish' and *Di mana bumi dipijak, di situ langit dijunjung* 'Where the earth is stepped, there the sky is upheld'. The meanings stated and implied in the forms of linguistic phenomena used in the proverb (01) serve as the basic concept that should be into account in cross-cultural communication. As actions speak louder than words, the meaningfulness of that concept must be manifested in actions, as reflected in the proverb (02). The meanings in the forms of linguistic phenomena used

in this proverb is that it is best to follow the customs, rules, norms, values, habits, and traditions of a place being visited or lived to prevent potential conflicts arising due to the misunderstanding of cultural differences as cultural barriers and challenges that hamper effective cross-cultural communication.

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