

Textual and Contextual Meanings of Peni and Nogo Folklore in Lembata Language

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Contextual Meanings Peni and Nogo Folklore Textual Meaning Contextual Meaning	Peni and Nogo is a legend of the <i>Lamatuka</i> people that has been passed down through generations within the local community. This folklore contains many messages that are not only explicit but also implicit. The objective of this research is to examine the textual and contextual meanings contained in the folklore of Peni and Nogo. This qualitative descriptive research used an ethnolinguistic approach to understand the messages conveyed in <i>Peni</i> and <i>Nogo</i> folklore. The data source for this research is the folklore book of <i>Peni</i> and <i>Nogo</i> written by <i>Gerady Tukan</i> . The technique to collect the data is by reading the entire text, identifying the meanings contained in the story, and presenting the data descriptively. The researcher used triangulation techniques to keep the validity of the data. The results show that the textual meaning within the <i>Peni</i> and <i>Nogo</i> folklore gives a literal meaning of a triangular love story between two siblings and a young man named Demon. This narrative is framed by jealousy that triggers slander, and exile, involving the authority of social structures and the community's spiritual beliefs. Death is chosen as a means to resolve the conflict in this story. This was identified by the researcher through six lexical items found in the text, namely <i>suanggi</i> , the village head, <i>Berawang</i> , <i>Lera Wulan Tanah Ekan</i> , <i>kebaku</i> and the phrase 'eyes closing forever'. The realization of these elements is also embedded in extralinguistic contexts involving people, situations, purposes, and places that reveal historical, social, political, religious, and educational meanings related to community life. Social and religious meaning are the dominant contexts in this story.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is an inseparable part of human life because, as a communication tool, it is used to expressed thoughts and feelings to others (Mailani et al., 2022). This happens because language is not just a meaningless symbol. It does have meaningful sounds, signs, words, and sentences. Therefore, each idea can be comprehended by both the speaker and the listener.

Meaning is always attached to what we say (Amilia and Anggraeni, 2017). It is found in the words and sentences used in communication with others, which make the language meaningful, because through meaning one can perceive the reflection of values, as well as someone's perspective that contained a message or mandate. The process of understanding meaning is the most important part of using language. Due to the fact that language is not an individual, which is used and understood by the speaker alone, but its use becomes appropriate if the speaker and the speech partner understand each other's meaning of the speech (Sari 2015, p. 171). The meaning of speech must be understood by considering the context in which the language is used in order not to cause misunderstandings.

In addition to functioning as a direct communication tool, language is also used as an indirect communication tool that is in written form (Dia et.al., 2023, p. 3). This written form generates a variety of linguistic products that are accessible to many people. One of the language products that is relevant in everyday life is folklore. It reflects people's lives and ways of thinking, adapting to the cultural context that shapes them. Folklore contains positive values that can be a reflection of our lives for action and behavior (Yetti 2010, p. 4). The fact is each person has different individual characteristics, culture, and social background. This causes differences in the way of interpreting the meaning of the folklore itself, so that not all moral values can be understood completely. The values have meaningful messages for society, so the meaning must be understood well in order to make the message is delivered to many people. In the form of discourse and text, folklore is a linguistic product that cannot be separated from textual and contextual meaning. Both play an important role in creating a meaningful message in a story. Textual meaning is obtained from the structure of the writing that composes the story itself, while contextual meaning considers the context, the situation behind the story.

As Devi and Septiana (2020) stated, folklore are stories that have existed since ancient times and have developed among the people and then been passed down, in the ancient context, folklore was used by parents to entertain and advise children to behave well. However, if it is seen in a broader context, folklore is not just a fictional composition to entertain children. It contains implied messages that play a role in displaying social issues inherent in people's lives. That is expected to be the case reminder to society to always live in accordance with existing values and norms to achieve common prosperity.

Every region has its unique and diverse folklore. The community of Lembata has many folktales that are widely shared among the local people, such as the origin story of *Peni Muko Lolon*, *Nowin Waliq*, and the legend of *Peni* and *Nogo* from the *Lamatuka* region, which were written by Gerady Tukan. As a whole, the story of *Peni* and *Nogo* describes a love triangle conflict between *Peni*, *Nogo*, and a man named *Demon*. *Nogo* feels threatened by the presence of *Peni*, so she uses the issue of *suanggi* to eliminate her sister and win *Demon*'s attention. This legend for the *Lamatuka* people highlights the realities of their traditional life, which was strongly influenced by supernatural powers possessed by a figure known as *suanggi* (Larasati 2022, p. 25).

The social realities found in the folklore of *Peni* and *Nogo* reveal that folklore serves as a medium of communication for the community to express aspirations, social criticism, and meaningful moral messages, which are intended to serve as lessons for younger generations. Messages are not always conveyed explicitly, so a deep understanding is required to understand the implied message in them. Therefore, a text must be understood both textually and contextually to gain a complete understanding of other social realities that are often overlooked. Due to the important messages of the folklore to the Lembata people themselves, the researcher interested in conducting research entitled "TEXTUAL AND CONTEXTUAL MEANINGS IN PENI AND NOGO FOLKLORE OF LEMBATA".

METHOD

The research designed of this study is qualitative descriptive method, that is focused on the phenomenon of language and how the language had been formulated in written formed created meaning, namely textual meaning which is known as meaning formed from the text itself and contextual meaning, which is defined as the situation in which the text is created.

The research instrument used by the research to collect the data is documentary research. Documentary is the study which is focus to analyze or interpret writing material based on its contexts. These materials include notes, textbooks, newspaper, journal letters, movie, diaries, articles, manuscripts, and so on (Sulistiyawati, 2006). This research utilized *Peni* and *Nogo* folklore as data which was already been documented and published in the book form.

There are four techniques to collect the data namely documentation, reading and highlighting, identification, and classification. The collected data was analyzed consist of data reduction, organize the data, displaying the result, and interpreting the findings. The validity of the research data was verified through source triangulation. This technique requires the researcher to compare interview results from various sources or informants to ensure the reliability of the collected information (Nurfajriani et al., 2024). Therefore, the researcher conducted in-depth depth interviews with local informants to ensure that the interpreted data aligns with the local community's knowledge sources.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Textual meaning is defined as the meaning that is generated from the realization of lexicogrammatical elements, which serves as the medium through which a text is manifested, whether in written or spoken form, according to the situation in which the language is used with a periodic structure (Martin in Wiratno,2010). The lexicogrammatical elements that form a text consist of lexical aspects as well as grammatical aspects. *The combination of these elements creates a complete meaning within the text, so that textual meaning can also be understood as literal meaning, which is indicated by the presence of lexical items used in the text. The researcher found that the textual meaning in this story indicated by six lexical items, namely suanggi, the village head, Berawang, Lera Wulan Tanah Ekan, Kebaku, and the phrase close forever which are elaborated as follows:*

1. Suanggi

The main problems in this story starts when Nogo feels jealous of her sister. This situation drives Nogo to spread false rumors to all the villagers, claiming that Peni is a *suanggi*, which is textually defined as an evil figure with magical powers who delights in devouring human flesh. The *suanggi* in this story is depicted as a frightening figure with a fearsome face, spiky hair standing up like thorns, pointed teeth, and long claws. This is presented in the following data:

Sentence 1 from the story:

“...Fortunately, I was able to run away in time, Mom. Otherwise, Peni would have torn my body apart and devoured it completely in the river. When I was just about to take a bath, Peni suddenly transformed in appearance. Her face became extremely frightening. Her hair stood upright like spikes firmly embedded around her head. Her teeth elongated, became pointed and reddish in color. Her fingernails also grew long and sharp. Then, not long after, many **suanggi** appeared with bodies that looked just like Peni's. They hurriedly came and surrounded me. Peni was ready to pounce on me to be eaten together with the other **suanggi**...”

2. The village head

In this story, the villagers who hear the rumor spread by Nogo begin to isolate Peni, leading the village chief to hold a council with the men to exile her to a place known as *Berawang*. Textually, the village head is defined as a figure entrusted by the community to govern the village. This is presented in the following data:

Sentence 1 from the story:

“...Based on the information from Nogo's story, the men, under the leadership of **the village head**, held a discussion to find a way to eliminate Peni from the village. ...”

3. Berawang

The community, having come to believe that Peni is a *suanggi*, immediately decides to banish her to a place called *Berawang*. Textually, *Berawang* is defined as a coastal area that is dry, barren, and filled with steep cliffs. This is presented in the following data:

Sentence 1 from the story:

“...Berawang is a coastal area located far from the village. The area around the beach consists of a vast, barren grassland, surrounded by steep cliffs and deep ravines. ...”

4. *Lera Wulan Tanah Ekan*

The event of Peni's banishment makes her mother feel deep sorrow, prompting her to offer prayers to Lera Wulan Tanah Ekan for her daughter's safety. Textually, Lera Wulan Tanah Ekan is defined as the God who rules the heavens and the earth. This is presented in the following data:

Sentence 1 from the story:

*“...The mother tried to recall the lineage of her own family as well as that of her late husband, but she could find no trace of it. She became increasingly perplexed and kept wondering where, when, and from whom Peni could have learned to become a *suanggi*, for she knew very well what Peni's daily activities were. She then refuted the accusations against her daughter in her own mind and immediately prayed, pleading for **Lera wulan Tana Ekan's** help to save Peni and bring her back to the village...”*

5. *Kebaku*

In this story, a new conflict begins when Nogo traps Demon by giving him *kebaku*. Textually, *kebaku* is defined as a dish made of wild peanuts that are cooked by boiling. This is presented in the following data:

Sentence 1 from the story:

“...While working, Nogo prepared a meal for Demon consisting of boiled wild peanuts (*kebaku*), fried corn, and boiled sweet potatoes. Although the taste was still slightly bitter, Demon ate it nonetheless out of hunger. Instantly, the residual poison that had not been drained caused Demon to faint and fall asleep at Nogo's ***lawang*** until late into the night...”

6. *Eyes Close forever*

At the end of this story, Nogo is overcome by guilt and despair, which ultimately causes him to fall into a ravine, leaving his eyes closed forever. Textually, the phrase “closed forever” is interpreted literally within the text to signify a person who has passed away. This is presented in the following data:

Sentence 1 from the story:

“...The next morning, Nogo asked Benga to accompany her to look for Demon at the cottage. When they arrived, she stopped abruptly when she saw Demon feeding Peni. Her spirit faded away, and she decided to leave the cottage. Demon then came out and asked Nogo to let him stay with Peni. Nogo nodded in agreement and returned to the *lawang*, overwhelmed by guilt for all she had done and feeling unworthy to continue living. At dusk, she climbed to the top of the cliff and gazed at the *lawang*, which held memories of her mother and Peni, filled with sorrow and remorse. Suddenly, Peni's image appeared before her, prompting her to reach out her hand to seek forgiveness. Yet all she found was empty air, and her body fell into the ravine, her eyes closing forever...”

The textual meanings are underlying by the context of the text. This research framework is grounded in Pateda's theory, which examines context from four perspectives, including person, situation, purpose, and place. It is analyzed from an ethnolinguistic approach that considers the extralinguistic context underlying how the text of Peni and Nogo folklore was constructed. The contextual meanings refer to the circumstances that influence a narrative. Therefore, the researcher found that the correlation between the context of person, situation, purpose, and place in this story

reveals various underlying conditions, including the historical, social, religious, economic, and political backgrounds of traditional *Lamatuka* society.

Historical Meanings

This data contains a sentence that present the context of situation, namely the tsunami that hit the island of *Lepan Batan*. The context of person in this story refers to the mother who tried to rescue her two children, Peni and Nogo, as well as the villager who managed to survive the disaster. The context of place shown in this story is *Lepan Batan* island, which is believed to be the original island of the community, as well as the mountainous area. The context of purpose highlighted in this story is the people who survived the disaster chose to settle in the mountainous area because they were traumatized by the disaster they endured. The way these contexts are connected reflects a historical meaning. The historical meaning is found in the following data:

Sentence 1 from the story:

“...Once upon a time, a devastating earthquake hit the island of *Lepan Batan*. This event caused ocean waves crash onto the land, causing the island to be submerged. At that time, Peni and Nogo were saved by their mother who clung to a log even as her hands were stung repeatedly by a scorpion. Once they reached the land, the surviving people decided to settle in the mountains due to the trauma caused by the ferocity of the sea ...”

Historical value refers to the meaning contained in historical stories about past events that continue to leave a distinct impression in the present (Djumadin 2023, p.24). The historical meaning in this story reveals that the *Lamatuka* community believe that their ancestors originally came from an island known as *Lepan Batan*. This island was submerged because of a tsunami, and ever since, the people have scattered to various areas and decide not to settle near the coastline. This explains why many of the older villages were established in the mountainous areas. In addition to the trauma caused by the event, the community also chose to live in the highlands because the location was considered strategic and made it easier for them to defend themselves against enemies attacking their village.

Social Meanings

This data presents the context of person, specifically the mother, who is depicted as having a strong relationship with her two children, Peni and Nogo. The strong relationship is presented by the mother's act of keeping on swimming, even one of her hands was stung by a scorpion, in order to protect her children. This is also shaped by the context of situation. At that moment, a tsunami endangered their safety, which led the mother sacrifice herself for her children. The way these contexts are connected reflects the social meaning. The social meaning is found in the following data:

Sentence 2 from the story:

“...Peni and Nogo were saved by their mother who clung to a log even as her hands were stung repeatedly by a scorpion ...”

The social meaning refers to three aspects namely (1) affection which is embodied in the practice of helping each other, care, loyalty, and devotion (2) responsibility which is reflected in attitudes of discipline or obedience, a sense ownership, empathy and (3) harmony in life (Zubaedi in Souliisa and Fanggi, 2023). 2. The social meaning in this story reflects how the people of *Lamatuka* community perceive the figure of mother as a loving, protective, and resilient woman who always fight for her children's survival in any condition. In the *Lamaholot* community, which consists of *East Flores*, *Adonara*, *Solor*, and *Lembata*, especially *Lamatuka*, which has the perspective that women are regarded to have a high status, so they are highly respected. This is reflected in the customary engagement process, where a man who intends to take a woman as his wife is expected to make

a considerable sacrifice. This sacrifice is carried out by giving ivory as *belis* (bride price), which carries significant value since it is a rare traditional object that is not easily found.

Political Meanings

This data presents the context of situation in which Peni received more attention from Demon, which made her feel jealous and intend to get rid of Peni. The context of purpose can be seen from how Nogo throws a piece of goat bone into the river as a political means to create the issue of a *suanggi*, in order to gain the villager's trust so that she can get rid of her sister from the village. The way these contexts are connected reflects a historical meaning. Political values are regarding power, involving material conflicts and economic strength (Suryawati and Sofiani Sofiani, 2022). The community's long-standing belief in *suanggi* has led to a predominantly negative perception of this figure among the Lamaholot people. In the perception of the Lamaholot community, *suanggi* refers to a figure believed to possess magical or supernatural powers used to inflict suffering on others, whether through illness, death, or damage to property (Bernadus, M.E. 2025, p. 81). The community's negative perception of *suanggi* has become a deeply rooted issue within their belief system, making it possible for Nogo to exploit this as a political tool to drive Peni out of the village. This political meaning is presented in the following data:

Sentence 3 from the story:

"...Over time, Nogo's jealousy turned into hatred, so that she was always rude to Peni. she secretly planned to embarrass Peni in front of the Demon and even looked for a way to eliminate her. Nogo carried out his plan by inviting Peni to bathe in the *Glewe* style. She used a wide leaf folded like a cone to pour water on Peni's back. While pouring water on Peni's back, Nogo deliberately dropped a piece of goat bone that she had brought from Lawang into the river and then screamed hysterically. "Peni *suanggi*...! Peni eats human flesh so that there are human bones that are carried into the river. Peni *suanggi*..." That was Nogo's scream as she ran towards the village. Peni was confused by Nogo's attitude, and tried to calm herself down before preparing to return to the village..."

Religious Meaning

The story also reveals a context that showcases the community's belief in the power of God, known as *Lerawulan Tanah Ekan*. *Lera* means sun, *Wulan* means moon, *Tanah* means earth, and *Ekan* means all that is on earth. Thus, *Lerawulan Tanah Ekan* is regarded as the ruler of the heavens and the earth, more powerful than humans and other spirits (Bernadus, M.E. 2025). This is the indigenous belief of the traditional *Lamatuka* community prior to the introduction of other religions. This Religious meaning is presented in the following data:

Sentence 8 from the story:

"...Since that day, the mother felt sad about the fate that befell her child and also felt ashamed because the villagers mocked her for giving birth to a child with *suanggi* powers, which of course were inherited from her parents. The mother tried to remember her family lineage and her late husband, but she could not find it. She became increasingly confused and wondered where, when, and from whom Peni learned to be *suanggi*, because she knew Peni's daily activities very well. Then she denied herself about what was accused of her daughter and immediately prayed for help from *Lera wulan Tana Ekan* to save and bring Peni back to the village..."

Educational Meaning

The contextual meaning in this data contain in the phrase "her spirit faded away". This phrase means that Nogo does not have any hope or purpose to continue her life. This is shaped by the context of situation within the text, which reveals that Nogo had an inner conflict within herself. This is caused by the fact that the man she loved did not choose her, despite all her efforts to win him over by hurting her own sister. This situation drove her to despair, which ultimately led her to throw herself into a deep ravine. The context underlying that excerpt of the story conveys a moral lesson, which provides a meaningful message to the reader. The moral

meaning found in this story is that an ambition not grounded in moral awareness will lead a person to destruction. This educational meaning is presented in the following data:

Sentence 9 from the story:

"...The next morning, Nogo asked Benga to accompany her to look for Demon at the cottage. When they arrived, she stopped abruptly when she saw Demon feeding Peni. Her spirit faded away, and she decided to leave the cottage. Demon then came out and asked Nogo to let him stay with Peni. Nogo nodded in agreement and returned to the *lawang*, overwhelmed by guilt for all she had done and feeling unworthy to continue living. At dusk, she climbed to the top of the cliff and gazed at the *lawang*, which held memories of her mother and Peni, filled with sorrow and remorse. Suddenly, Peni's image appeared before her, prompting her to reach out her hand to seek forgiveness. Yet all she found was empty air, and her body fell into the ravine, her eyes closing forever..."

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research indicate that the folklore of Peni and Nogo contains textual and contextual meanings. The textual meaning within the story is constructed through the realization of lexicogrammatical elements, which are identified as six lexical items, namely *suanggi*, the village head, *Berawang*, *Lera Wulan Tanah Ekan*, *Kebaku*, and phrase 'eyes close forever'. The lexical item use in this text, as overall reveals the textual meanings concerning the love triangle between Peni, Nogo, and Demon. The story concludes in tragedy due to jealousy that generates slander through the *suanggi* issue. The *suanggi* issue causes Peni to be exiled to *Berawang*. The story is embedded by external context that highlights the social reality of the community.

The context constructed within the story consist of the context of person, situation, purpose, and place. The overall context is interrelated and reveals historical, social, political, religious, and educational meanings. The most dominant meanings within the story are the social and religious meanings.

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