

Javanese Proverbs as a Reflection of the Personality and Principles of Javanese



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ABSTRACT: This research aims to reveal the meaning of Javanese proverbs from a semantic and lexical perspective so that they form the characteristics of Javanese culture. The data and data sources in this research come from articles spread on social media. In this research, the data used are four proverbs, namely: (1) Ono Dino Ono Upo, Ora Obah Ora Mamah (There are days when there is rice, not moving, not eating); (2) Mikul Nduwur, Mendem Jeru (Lifting it high, burying it as deep as possible); (3) Esuk Dhele Sore Tempe (morning soybeans afternoon tempe); and (4) Adigang, Adigung, Adiguna (Strength, Power, Intelligence). In data analysis, the method used is a qualitative descriptive method with structural and ethnolinguistic language analysis techniques based on Javanese proverbs. The research results show that (1) this proverb reflects that Javanese people live in simplicity; (2) this proverb reflects that Javanese people live by working hard; (3) the Javanese proverb reflects Javanese people living with noble character and respecting their parents; (4) the proverb reflects that Javanese people live in order; and (5) a reflection of the Javanese people who are firm in their stance and polite in living their daily lives. Therefore, it is true that the meaning of the language used can be the culture of the language itself.

KEYWORDS: adigang adigung adiguna, ethnolinguistic, isuk dhele sore tempe, ora obah ora mamah, mikul nduwur mendem jeru, Javanese proverb

INTRODUCTION

Proverbs are an important part of Javanese society because they have symbolic meanings that contain moral values and provide advice to people. Moral values refer to what humans can and cannot do towards God, humans towards other people, humans towards themselves, and humans towards living creatures or other objects (Arfianingrum, 2020). Javanese proverbs also have certain aims and meanings as expressions using keywords of moral teachings and are used through an illustration process. Javanese proverbs are widely used in the educational process to emulate and shape people's character, habits, and behavior.

Culture is a symbolic system or configuration of symbolic systems (Fizriyani & Mujtaba, 2022). The Javanese have knowledge that forms the basis of their thinking and history, epistemology, and culture, using symbols or emblems to convey messages or advice (Ningsih & Badrudin, 2015). Our ancestors have used this symbol since prehistoric times, just like the pitch among the Javanese. Understanding a particular cultural symbolism must first be seen in the context of the symbolic system or symbol. Culture itself means the entire system of ideas, actions, and results of human work.

Ethnolinguistics is a science that studies language not only in terms of its structure but also its function and use in the context of sociocultural situations (Folley (1997) in Abdullah, Wibowo, Hidayati & Nurkayatun, 2021). In an ethnolinguistic view, there is a link between language and the worldview of its speakers. Minority languages with low ethnolinguistic viability are replaced by languages with strong ethnolinguistic viability. (Wierzbicka, 1997). This is influenced by the fact that speakers with low ethnolinguistic competence tend to strengthen their language choices in the more dominant language.

Terminologically, ethnolinguistics is linguistics that discusses comparatively the elements or themes of ethnic culture and people living in a region in various parts of the world to gain an understanding of the history and process of development and spread of human culture on earth. Apart from that, the term ethnolinguistics can also be called anthropolinguistics (Baehaqie, 2013). Baehaqie explained that operationally ethnolinguistics can be defined as a branch of linguistics that can be used to study the language structure and/or vocabulary of a particular ethnic community based on the perspective and culture of the speaking community, with the hope that this culture influences the linguistics of that community. Therefore, ethnolinguistics can of course be used to analyze Javanese proverbs.

Based on the review above, of course, many researchers have studied philosophy in Javanese culture using an ethnolinguistic approach. First, research conducted by Safitri, Zuriyati & Rohman (2022) about proverbs in Javanese society as a

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reflection of the personality of Javanese women. This research aims to analyze Javanese proverbs relating to women. The data and sources of information for this research come from the Collection of Javanese Proverbs and were selected from proverbs related to women. Data analysis uses qualitative descriptive methods using structural and ethnolinguistic language analysis techniques in Javanese proverbs. The results of this research show a close relationship between the proverbial principles of Javanese women's personality. Women in Javanese society, as speakers of proverbs, do not just utter empty statements but statements in the form of Javanese proverbs that reflect the character of Javanese women.

The next research was reviewed by Susilo & Indira (2022) about the philosophy of Javanese Hanacaraka. This research aims to explain the Javanese script contained in Hanacaraka and explain the philosophy contained in this script. The method used in this research is matching; a means of determining language, a recorder and preserver of language (i.e. writing), and a person who becomes a speech partner. The process and meaning of this research see the connection between language and Javanese culture in society. The results presented in this paper are Hanacaraka in Javanese script and the philosophy contained in this script. Only a few selected grammatical features may be correlated with something outside the language, for example in religion (*Kejawen*), texts that lead to a mystical direction, and also the philosophy of life circulating in Javanese society.

The existence of previous research describing philosophy in Javanese culture shows that interpreting culture in ethnographic studies through proverbs or philosophy is very interesting. Different from previous studies, this research focuses on four Javanese proverbs (*Ono Dino Ono Upo*, *Ora Obah Ora Mamah* dan *Mikul Nduwur*, *Mendem Jeru*, *Esuk Dhele Sore Tempe*, and *Adigang*, *Adigung*, *Adiguna*) that reflects Javanese culture and contains advice. This study also uses an ethnolinguistic approach. Based on this, the problem that will be revealed is how the personality, principles of life, and hard work in Javanese society are reflected. Therefore, this study aims to reveal the meaning of Javanese proverbs from a semantic and lexical perspective so that they form the characteristics of Javanese culture. This study is expected to provide new knowledge and interest to readers that the meaning revealed from a proverb can reflect their culture and penetrate their personality.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach. Research data was taken from secondary data. Because qualitative research is interpretive, the researcher is the key instrument. The data used for analysis are 4 Javanese proverbs, including: (1) *Ono Dino Ono Upo*, *Ora Obah Ora Mamah*; (2) *Mikul Nduwur*, *Mendem Jeru*; (3) *Esuk Dhele Sore Tempe*; and (4) *Adigang*, *Adigung*, *Adiguna*.

The method used in this research is a qualitative method with content analysis and hermeneutic interpretation analysis. These paribasan texts require a more refined and comprehensive understanding. Therefore, apart from hermeneutic interpretation, lexical and semiotic interpretation is also used, considering that Paribasan is written with language signs which are Javanese cultural codes. The results of the analysis in this research are presented informally. The informal presentation method is the formulation using ordinary technical words. The overall technique used in this research is the note-taking technique, the researcher is as follows: (1) Recording data obtained from data sources spread across social media. (2) look for the meaning of Javanese proverbs using a Javanese dictionary (3) analyze and correlate Javanese proverbs with reflections of personality and life principles.

DISCUSSION

The results of analysis of four data: (1) *Ono dino ono upo*, *ora obeah ora mamah* 'Ada hari ada nasi, tidak bergerak, tidak makan' (There are days when there is rice, not moving, not eating); (2) *Mikul Nduwur*, *Mendem Jeru* 'Mengangkat tinggi-tinggi, memendam sedalam-dalamnya' (Lifting it high, hiding it as deep as it can); (3) *Esuk Dhele Sore Tempe* 'pagi kedelai sore tenpe'; (Morning soybean afternoon Tempe); and (4) *Adigang*, *Adigung*, *Adiguna* 'Kekuatan, Kekuasaan, Kepandaian' (Strenght, Power, Intelligence) that findings found can be categorized and classified as follows:

Javanese Reflection of a Simple Life

The proverb '*Ono dino ono upo*' literally means '*ada hari ada nasi*' (there are days when there is rice). Here, the ancestors who created the proverb used the word '*dino*' means '*hari*' (days) because we require food or energy every day. The most important thing is to use the words '*upo*' or literally in Indonesian it means '*satu biji nasi*' (a grain of rice). This proverb reflects the attitude of Javanese people who think that every day, they will have food even if it is only one grain of rice. This shows a simple, humble attitude and accepting what is there with gratitude.

Proverb of '*ora obah ora mamah*' literally means '*tidak bergerak tidak makan*' (not moving not eating). Here, the ancestors expressed the purpose of working to eat. This proverb describes the value of a simple life that Javanese people uphold. They tend not to prioritize material luxuries or excessive things in their lives. Instead, they value simplicity, stability, and balance in life.

Adigang, *Adigung*, *Adiguna* come from Javanese Language. *Adigang* means strength, *Adigung* means power, and *Adiguna* means intelligence. *Adigang*, *Adigung*, *Adiguna* people should not be arrogant by relying on their strengths. "So, humans should not have character *Adigang*, *Adigung*, *Adiguna*". Do not rely on the strength, power, and intelligence you have. As the ancestors said below:

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Adigang tegese sifat kang ngendelake kekuwataning awak (raga). Adigang digambarake kaya kidang, amarga tandang tanduke cukat lan trengginas. Adigung tegese sifat kang ngendelake kekuasaan, keluhuran moyang, pangkat, drajat, keturunan kraton. Watak iki digambarake kaya gajah. Awake gedhe, padudon akeh menange lan ora ana sing madhani awake. Dene Adiguna yaiku sifat kang ngandelake kapinteran, kecerdasan lan akal. Sifat iki digambarake kaya kewan ula. Ula iku kewan kang sawangane ringkih, nanging wisane bahaya.

Meaning: *Adigang* adalah sifat atau watak yang membanggakan kekuatannya (kekuatan tubuh atau badan), digambarkan dengan hewan kijang. *Adigung* adalah sifat atau watak yang membanggakan kekuatan, kebesaran, pangkat dan keturunan. Watak ini digambarkan dengan hewan gajah. *Adiguna* adalah sifat atau watak yang membanggakan kecerdasan atau kepandaian. Watak *adiguna* digambarkan dengan hewan ular. (*Adigang* is a trait or character that boasts of its strength (body or bodily strength), depicted by a deer. *Adigung* is a trait or character that boasts of strength, greatness, rank and lineage. This character is depicted as an elephant. *Adiguna* is a trait or character that boasts intelligence or cleverness. The superguna character is depicted as a snake).

People should not rely on and brag about the advantages they have. Our parents or relatives often convey these words of advice. They hope that their sons and daughters will not have bad traits as intended in the proverb *Adigang Adigung Adiguna* in everyday life. Parents want their children to have good character, not be arrogant, and be able to respect other people.

The proverb *Adigang Adigung Adiguna* is addressed to people who put themselves first. *Adigang* addressed people who use their power to show that they are strong, their power is used to oppress others. *Adigung* is aimed at people who use their power for their interests. *Adiguna* is a person who uses his intelligence to boast. In essence, this proverb is aimed at people who have strength, power, and intelligence but do not use it for good, all the advantages they have are not useful for other people but for personal gain.

Overall, this proverb teaches Javanese to live simply, be grateful for what they have, and not be too crazy about luxury or excessive desires. Living by these principles helps them to maintain balance, stability, and peace in their daily lives.

Javanese Reflection of Hard Work

The proverb of "*Mikul nduwur*" means '*membawa beban ke atas*' (carry the load up). This expression describes the concept that a person must be willing to make hard efforts and bear heavy responsibilities to achieve goals or achieve success. Javanese believe that hard work and persistence are the keys to achieving desired results. They appreciate hard and persistent efforts in carrying out work or business.

"*Mendhem njeru*" means '*memendam dalam-dalam*' (buried deep). This section shows an attitude of humility and humility in living life. Javanese people believe that even after achieving success or success, a person must remain humble, respect other people, and not be arrogant. This humble attitude also teaches that in hard work, a person must face all obstacles and challenges with a humble attitude and not be proud.

Moreover, the proverb of '*Ora obah ora mamah*' in literally means '*tidak bergerak tidak makan*' (not moving not eating). This phrase implies that if someone does not try or change, then they will not get the desired results or progress. It emphasizes the importance of effort, change, and activity in achieving goals and achieving success. For Javanese people, this proverb teaches about the importance of hard work, change, and optimism in life. The message from the ancestors to the Javanese people through this proverb is that by making efforts and adapting to change, a person will obtain the expected results or achieve success. A belief that every day there will always be sustenance from God if we are willing to try.

This proverb often becomes a motto for *wong cilik* (people who are economically deprived) especially Javanese people in encouraging themselves to work. Because the only working capital you have is physical energy. Trust in God with all our heart, and do not lean on our understanding. Acknowledge Him in all our actions, then He will preserve our lives. Every day sustenance must be given, and provided, and as long as it can come from anywhere. This proverb suggests that good fortune does not just lie around and people just need to reach it easily. In other words, to earn a living, you need to work hard every day.

Overall, this proverb teaches Javanese people to live a life of hard work, perseverance, and perseverance in achieving goals and achieving success. They believe that with sincere effort and a humble attitude, one can overcome obstacles and achieve progress in life. Hard work is seen as an important and valued value in Javanese culture, and this proverb illustrates that view.

Javanese Reflection of a Virtues Personality

The context of the proverb "*mikul nduwur mendhem njeru*," Hard work and a humble attitude also reflect the virtues valued in Javanese culture, including the virtue of filial piety to parents. The following is a further explanation:

Mikul Nduwur '*Membawa beban ke atas*' (carry the load up): Describes hard work and perseverance in carrying out responsibilities. For Javanese, working hard also means giving their best and trying to fulfill social responsibilities, including respecting and filial piety to parents. Through hard work, they try to build a better future for their family and parents. This proverb describes the condition of a person who holds or experiences deep suffering, disappointment, or sadness in his heart. More broadly, this proverb teaches about the power of holding heavy emotional burdens or keeping personal problems without showing them openly to others. In Javanese culture, a person needs to maintain their self-image and maintain personal privacy.

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Mendhem Njeru 'memendam dalam-dalam' (buried deep): Emphasizing an attitude of humility. In the context of filial piety to parents, an attitude of humility and humility is very important. Javanese people are taught to respect, listen to, and respect the advice of their parents. This humble attitude reflects high appreciation and respect for parents, as well as a willingness to learn from them. Apart from that, it can also be interpreted as an expression of patience and determination in facing life's challenges or difficulties. Even though a person may experience deep suffering, he remains steadfast and does not show sadness or weakness to others.

Apart from that, for Javanese people, the proverb of '*mikul dhuwur, mendhem jero*' has the purpose that as children, we are obliged to elevate the status of our parents and cover up family disgrace. So, from this proverb, there is some good advice that there is no harm in knowing. *Mikul dhuwur*, meaning we must respect our parents and uphold their good names. *Mendhem jero*, meaning that all the parents' shortcomings do not need to be emphasized. For Javanese people, the saying '*mikul dhuwur, mendhem jero*' means that as children, we are obliged to raise the status of our parents.

This saying was expressed by the first vice president of Indonesia, Pak Harto when he was talking to Bung Karno. Pak Harto is currently negotiating with the President who is asking about the dissolution of KPI. In this case, Pak Harto agreed that he wanted to disband the KPI so that there would be no demonstrators. In his expression, Pak Harto said "*Saya akan mikul dhuwur mendhem jero* (I will *mikul dhuwur mendhem jero*)". Then, by explained that he wanted to appoint Mr. Karno, who was considered a parent or teacher to him.

The form of faith here is recognizing the fact that parents are intermediaries in the birth of humans. God created humans through parents, namely father and mother. Therefore, believers, who believe in God, are obliged to respect their parents. Because parents are the ones who act as intermediaries for us until we are born in this world and care for us until we can truly live on our own as adults. Likewise our attitude towards teachers. Teachers become our intermediaries so that we know something, from not being able to read to being able to read, from not being able to count to being able to count. Likewise, until we can write. Therefore, we manifest our devotion to God based on faith, including by respecting our parents and teachers.

In Javanese culture, filial piety to parents is considered one of the most important life values. Javanese people believe that respecting, helping, and caring for parents is a non-negotiable obligation. This reflects values such as respect, devotion, and responsibility towards family and ancestors.

Javanese Reflection of Society that is Firm in its Establishment

The proverb of "*Esuk Dhele Siang tempe*" is interpreted as a non-permanent position. What is said now can change at any time so it cannot be easily trusted. For example, if someone makes a decision or agreement, the decision and agreement should be implemented according to what was said but the decision is not implemented or is even denied. In Javanese there are terms known as *mencla-mencla* or what is said does not correspond to the reality of what is done.

The word "*dhele*" means '*kedelai*' (soybean) and *Tempe* is a symbolic word that contains the meaning that something can change (establishment), why was this diction chosen *dhele* and *tempe* because *dhele* can turn into *tempe* through certain processes. The chosen word of *esuk 'pagi'* (morning) and *sore* (afternoon) suggests a period (a person can change at any time). Based on the linguistic structure to clarify the meaning, words can be inserted, *Esuk (sek) dhele sore (wes/ dadi) tempe*, in the morning it's still *tempe*, in the afternoon it becomes soybeans so it's easy to interpret.

Esuk dhele sore tempe When translated into Indonesian, it means morning soybeans and afternoon tempeh. The use of this proverb is basically to soften the expression of annoyance, annoyance, and disappointment towards someone who cannot keep their promises or someone whose words do not match their actions. This proverb is commonly used in Javanese society. Javanese people are accustomed to expressing something that is bothering them with sentences, and symbolic words like this proverb. This proverb can be used as satire or advice so that someone must be able to keep promises and be able to take responsibility for what has been said or agreed upon.

Positive values or characters contained in the meaning of a proverb *Esuk dhele sore tempe* is honest and responsible. Honesty is behavior that is based on efforts to make oneself a person who can always be trusted in words, actions, and work. What is said must match the action. Be honest about the abilities and abilities that are a mutual agreement. For example, if you are not able, you must have the courage to say honestly that you are not able and vice versa. Try to be who you are, be yourself. Responsibility, attitude, and behavior of a person to do everything that has been agreed upon or become a mutual commitment. Responsible for what has been said, responsible for all actions taken. Do not run away from reality even if it doesn't match expectations.

Honest and responsible character is reflected and implied in the proverb *Esuk dhele sore tempe*, this means that someone should not change easily '*pagi menjadi kedelai dan sore menjadi tempe*' (in the morning it becomes soybeans and, in the afternoon, it becomes tempe), with honesty and responsibility we will be trusted by other people and it will make everything easier for us. On the other hand, if we are dishonest, other people will not believe us, all our words and actions will be considered lies and this will make things difficult for ourselves. Become a person who is firm in his stance, not easily provoked so that he is not easily shaken whatever the circumstances because it is difficult for people who change easily to gain the trust of others.

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Javanese Reflections on Order and RhetoricThe proverb of "*ono dino ono upo*" This proverb is included in the rhetorical technique of alliteration. Alliteration is the repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of adjacent words. In this case, the sound "o" repeating the words "*ono*" and "*upo*", creates a rhythmic and repetitive effect in the sentence.

Repetition patterns in statements '*ora obah ora mamah*' visible in the repetition of the phrase '*ora obah ora*'. In Javanese, this phrase means "not changing, not breaking" or literally "nothing increases or decreases". In the context of the proverb, this phrase describes the idea that one must be consistent and unchanging in the face of challenges or changes in life. Apart from that, this proverb also has a rhythmic pattern that is created through the repetition of the "o" sound in the phrase. The repetition of the "o" sound creates a rhythm and harmony that can give the proverb a distinctive feel. This pattern may be more of a characteristic or language style found in Javanese and gives the proverb its own beauty or impression.

The proverb "*mikul nduwur mendhem njeru*" has rhythm and repetition of sounds created through repeating similar words. The repetition pattern that can be found in this proverb is the repetition of the sound "*ndu*" from the words "*nduwur*" and "*njeru*". This repetition provides a rhythmic and repetitive effect that creates a distinctive impression in the sentence.

Although there is no typical or structured rhetorical pattern in this proverb, repetition sounds "*ndu*" provides a strong rhythmic element in the sentence, creating a memorable rhythm. This can be seen as a rhythmic pattern that occurs naturally in the proverb. In this regard, it is important to note that the repetition of sounds or rhythmic patterns in a proverb can provide beauty and a strong impression, even if it does not specifically follow the rhetorical patterns that have been identified.

The proverb "*Esuk dhele sore tempe*" is rhyme and assonance which creates a sound effect in the proverb so that this proverb is pleasant to hear. Rhyme is found at the end of words *Esuk dhele* *sore tempe*. Repetition of vowel sounds (assonance) is found in *Esuk dhele sore tempe*. The sound play here creates a certain effect, namely the regularity of the sound when this proverb is spoken. In the proverb *adigang adigung adiguna* there is a rhyme at the end of the word, the words *adigang*, *adigung*. Alliteration is found in *adigang*, *adigung*, *adiguna*. Assonance at the beginning of a word *adigang*, *adigung*, *adiguna*. The sound play here creates sound regularity in the proverb.

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, proverbs in Javanese can be studied using an ethnolinguistic approach or another term, namely anthropolinguistics. The four Javanese proverbs studied are (1) *Ono Dino Ono Upo*, *Ora Obah Ora Mamah*; (2) *Mikul Nduwur*, *Mendem Jeru*; (3) *Esuk Dhele Sore Tempe*; dan (4) *Adigang*, *Adigung*, *Adiguna*. Based on the results of the discussion above, it can be concluded that four proverbs reflect the personality of Javanese society. The things that are reflected in Javanese people are: that (1) this proverb reflects that Javanese people live in simplicity; (2) this proverb reflects that Javanese people live by working hard; (3) the Javanese proverb reflects Javanese people living with noble character and respecting their parents; (4) the proverb reflects that Javanese people live in order; and (5) this proverb is a reflection of the Javanese people who are firm in their stance and polite in living their daily lives. Therefore, it is true that the meaning of the language used can become the culture of the language itself, such as the Javanese people who attach their culture and personality to their language.

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