

**ECOLOGICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATION OF *KABHANTI*
PERFORMED BY MUNA COMMUNITY IN MUNA REGENCY,
SOUTH EAST SULAWESI**

Hadirman

Teachers' Training College, University of Haluoleo
Kendari, South-East Sulawesi
email: hadiecolinguistik@yahoo.co.id

ABSTRACT

Kabhanti is one of the oral traditions performed by *Muna* community. It is performed as part of the traditional ceremony adhered to by Muna community as an amusement and a means of presenting ideas and ideologies, and bequeathing the values which are useful to human life. Specifically, this present study was intended to describe the forms of ecological representation of *Kabhanti* performed by *Muna* community, to reveal the ideology it contains, and to interpret the ecological meanings it contains. The theory of ecolinguistics, the theory of ideology, and the theory of semiotics were eclectically used in the present study. Qualitative method was used and the data were descriptively and interpretatively analyzed. The present study was conducted at *Watumela* Village and *Latugho* Village, *Lawa* District, Muna Regency. The data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interview, the informants' personal experience, and documentary study.

The results of the study showed that ecologically the *kabhanti* performed by Muna community represented natural environment and human environment. All the ecological lexical items and the human ecological lexical items in such a performance reflected the existence of Muna people in their lives. It contained environmental, educational, social and developmental ideologies. The meanings of ecological representation in this present study included the meaning of environment, the meaning of cultural endurance, the meaning of identity, and the meaning of solidarity.

Keywords: representation, ecology, ideology, ecolinguistics, *kabhanti*, and Muna community.

INTRODUCTION

Kabhanti is one of the oral traditions of the Muna community in Muna Regency, South East Sulawesi Province. It is performed using a specific language representing natural environment and human environment. The ecological lexical items representing the natural environment and human environment prove that the Muna people, especially the *pemantun* (the poem reciter) are close to their environment. However, it is getting extinct as it has been scarcely performed in the domain of traditional ceremony. In relation to such a phenomenon, the problems of the present study are formulated in the form of three questions. They are what its ecological representation is like; what ideologies it contains, and what its ecological representation means.

In relation to this present study, the use of the concept Muna reflects that there is a number of individuals who occupy a region in Muna Regency. They make friends and associate

with each other. In their interaction, they are confined by regulations, norms, values, manners, and procedures; they are bound to the feeling of solidarity and collective interest; they recognize that there are norms which make them interact with each other.

Barker (2005: 10) states that representation is related to how the world is socially constructed and presented to and by us. Further, the essence of cultural studies can be defined as the studies in which culture is considered the practices of meaningfulness and representation. Representation is an action to present or represent something through another thing outside itself, which is usually in the form of a sign or symbol (Piliang, 2006: 24).

Ecology is a network. Understanding ecosystem means understanding a network (Widianarko, 2004: 112). Moreover, Suharso et al (1993: 8) state that the central concept of ecology is ecosystem, that is, an ecological system formed by the mutual relation between animate beings and their environment. Apart from that, Mbete (2001: 15) states that ecology or environment refers to natural and social spaces which interact and influence one another. Although human beings recognize that they are part of the natural and biological systems, the psychological factor, the social dimension, and the cultural dimension inspire people to distinguish the natural environment from the cultural environment.

In general, this study was intended to obtain the basic data and the relation between the oral tradition and linguistics concerning the forms of the ecological description in the oral tradition of *kabhanti*. The ecological representation revealed is wrapped by the environmental language used by the *pemantun* (poem reciter) when performing *kabhanti*. This present study is significant theoretically and practically. In theory, it was expected that the results of the study would justify and enrich the information needed to strengthen the theoretical framework of the relation between the oral tradition and ecolinguistics in the cultural life of a society. In practice, it was expected that the result of the study could be used as the basis for empowering the ecological linguistic potential in the creation of the *kabhanti* text.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted in Muna Regency, South East Sulawesi Province. Lawa District was chosen as the location where the research was conducted for several considerations; they are (1) it is relatively homogenous, the Muna people living there work as traditional farmers cultivating dry land and still perform the oral tradition *kabhanti*, although it is scarcely performed; (2) the oral tradition *kabhanti* is still performed by the Muna community, although it has been scarcely bequeathed and it is only in the cognitive of the old speakers; and (3) it seems

that the oral tradition *kabhanti* does not function to trigger communal unity and the consciousness of the Muna community.

The data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interview, and the informants' personal experience. The qualitative data in the form of recording of the performance of *kabhanti* and narrations were analyzed in the present study. The data were obtained from both the primary and secondary data sources. The primary data were directly obtained from the informants, the *kabhanti* text and pictures. The secondary data were obtained from written sources. The data were descriptively and interpretatively analyzed. The theories used to answer the problems of the study were the theory of ecolinguistics proposed by Einer Haugen (1972), the theory of ideology proposed by Thompson (2004) and Volosinov (1973), and the theory of semiotics proposed by Barker (2005) and Riffaterre (1978).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A text is stated to contain ecological representation if it contains the lexical items of natural environment and human environment. This insight is in line with what is used as the basis of ecolinguistic studies. The forms of ecological representation in the present study can be classified based on the lexical elements taken from the natural environment and human environment. The forms of the representation of the natural environment recorded in the performance of *kabhanti* in the Muna community included the description of flora, fauna, cosmos, energy, and mineral. Such a description was not meaningless but was functional and meaningful to human life as well. The phenomena of the natural environment which was present at the performance of *kabhanti* indicated that there was a relation between human beings and the environment it represented.

Human is part of the ecosystem. There were various types of interaction in the social environment. The representation of lexical items of human ecology refers to everything related to (1) human organism, (2) the activity of human body, (3) human life equipment, (3) names of places, (4) jewelry and dress, and the interrelation between human and the world of souls.

The traditional performance of the oral tradition of *kabhanti* in the Muna community contains several ideologies. An ideology is defined as a social glue which is used by a community to maintain the stability of its people to apply norms collectively. Thomson (2004: 17-22) states that an ideology is not only a relation of the form of power which is institutionalized in a modern state, but it is also a system of relation in everyday life which does not focus on minor things but also neglects the characteristic and wider structural boundary.

Kabhanti can also be performed as a suggestion of socialization to spread the ideology of the *pemantun* (the poem reciter) of the surrounding social reality. When it is recited to the public (the viewers), it is responsible for spreading a belief, ideology, values or a particular prejudice. When it is performed, it seems that the *pemantun* exposes (1) an environmental ideology, that is, the people's way of life which positions and uses environment to reveal the message which is intended; (2) an educational ideology, that is, an ideology of relation of both formal education and local education the Muna community has; (3) a social ideology, that is, an ideology of social relation taking place in the community; and (4) an ideology of development, that is, an ideology of physical and mental-spiritual developments.

The ecolinguistic representation in the *kabhanti* performed by the Muna community contains various meanings depending on the viewers' point of view, meaning that there is no single meaning. Meaning will be realized in relation to a particular discourse (Storey, 1984: 103). The lexical items used by the *pemantun* will change depending on his observation of the surrounding environment used as the idea of the *kabhanti* text. The meaning of the performance of *kabhanti* includes (1) environmental meaning, that is, the environmental meaning marking the relation of human and environment, that is, the relation in which the social and natural environments takes from and gives to the people who create them; (2) the meaning of cultural endurance, that is, the meaning which gives space to the community as the owner for the oral tradition *kabhanti* to exist in; (3) the meaning of identity, that is, through *kabhanti* the Muna people show their identity of having their own language 'Muna language' and the oral tradition *kabhanti*. In addition, through the performance of *kabhanti* the poem reciter invites the viewers to establish solidarity in praying that the ceremony will be successful, solidarity in building their village (Muna), and solidarity in achieving what is good together.

Novelties of the study can be stated as follows. Firstly, it turned out that environment was used to inspire the *kabhanti* text. There were two forms of ecological representation in the performance of *kabhanti* in the Muna community; they are (1) the natural environment and (2) the human environment. Some environmental forms had some references in the nature and the others did not as a consequence of the change in living environment and cultural environment; however, they were still recorded in the *kabhanti* performed. First, as far as the natural environment is concerned, two lexical items were recorded in the *kabhanti* text; however, their physical realizations were not available any longer; they are *sandana* 'sandalwood tree' and *ghoghorio* 'kepodang bird'. Second, as far as the human environment is concerned, the household tools which had already been extinct were found; they are (1) *kaghua* 'equipment used for drinking', (2) *kaperangku* 'equipment used for chasing sparrow away', (3) *o kampanaha* 'a tool

used for consuming betel vine' and (4) *kawera* 'pan made of soil'. The lexical items were already extinct and did not have any references. The ecological change and the people's cultural change caused the references of flora, fauna and household tools to get extinct.

Secondly, the ideologies of the performance of the oral tradition *kabhanti* implied the people's ideas, feeling, desire, idea, and ideology in their lives. In the ideology of education, the people's ideology in choosing which works were allowed and which ones were not allowed was represented by the expression '*kotoginana kodotoangka ne giu pata mentela*', meaning 'do not attach to and do not follow the words which are not allowed'. This expression was also related to the character education. Further, the ideology of the Muna people's local education related to a group of knowledge which was taught in their family environment was recorded in the *kabhanti* text performed as well. They are (1) the knowledge of *bente* 'the knowledge of how to take care of oneself', (2) the knowledge of *kantisele* 'the knowledge of how to recall any soul which was lost due to being surprised', (3) the knowledge of *sawurondo* 'the knowledge of how to make oneself disappear in a second', (4) the knowledge of *kutika* 'astrology' (the knowledge of how to identify what days are good and what days are bad in the Muna calendar), and (5) the knowledge of how people learned from *tooke* 'house lizard' based on its natures.

Thirdly, there are five meanings which the ecological representation of the performance of *kabhanti* by the Muna people contained. They are (1) the meaning of strengthening environmental awareness, (2) the meaning of cultural endurance, (3) the meaning of inheritance, (4) the meaning of identity socialization, and (5) the meaning of strengthening solidarity. The cultural endurance was encouraged by the philosophy of the Muna people's culture. The expressions in *kabhanti* showed the spirit that establishing self-endurance and living endurance was important. In addition, it was found that in the oral tradition *kabhanti* had never been taught in any formal educational institution in Muna Regency.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

From the results of the study, several conclusions can be drawn. First, in the performance of *kabhanti*, the lexical items used by the poem reciter represent natural environment and human environment. Second, the ideologies the ecological representation in the performance of *kabhanti* include (1) environmental ideology, (2) educational ideology, (3) social ideology, and (4) developmental ideology. Third, the meanings of the ecological representation of the *kabhanti* performed by the Muna community include (1) environmental meaning, (2) cultural endurance meaning, (3) the meaning of identity, and (4) the meaning of solidarity.

It is suggested that, first, the poem reciter in the performance of *kabhanti* who usually comes from the old generation should introduce *kabhanti* to the young generation. Second, it is suggested to the Local Government of Muna that training should be provided to the teachers teaching locally loaded lessons so that they will implement the curriculum of locally loaded lessons well.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In this opportunity the writer would like to thank and highly appreciate Prof. Dr. I Made Suastika, S.U., as the main supervisor, Prof. Dr. Aron Meko Mbeté and Prof. Dr. Emiliana Mariyah, M.S., as co-supervisor I and co-supervisor II for their attention, supervision, and encouragement. The writer would also like to thank Prof. A.A. Bagus Wirawan, S.U. and Dr. Putu Sukardja, M.Si. as Head and Secretary of the Doctorate Program of Cultural Studies and all the teaching staff for transforming their knowledge to and helping the writer in completing his study.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barker, Chris. 2004. *Cultural Studies, Teori dan Praktik*. Cetakan Pertama. Yogyakarta: Bentang Pustaka
- Hadirman. 2013. "Representasi Ekologis dalam Pementasan *Kabhanti* pada Masyarakat Muna", disertasi, Program Doktor, Program Studi Kajian Budaya, Program Pascasarjana, Universitas Udayana, Denpasar.
- Haugen, Einer. 1972. "The Ecology of Language", in Dill, A.S. (ed.) *The Ecology of Language: Essays by Einer Haugen*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Mbeté, Aron Meko. 2008. "Selayang Pandang tentang Ekolinguistik", makalah Matrikulasi Program Magister Linguistik, Program Pascasarjana Universitas Udayana.
- Piliang, Yasraf Amir. 2006. *Dunia yang Dilipat, Tamsya melampaui Batas-batas Kebudayaan*". Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.
- Riffaterre, Michael. 1978. *Semiotics of Poetry*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press.
- Storey, John, 1994. *Cultural Studies dan Kajian Budaya Pop Pengantar Komprehensif Teori dan Metode*. Jakarta: Jalasutra.
- Suharso, dkk. 1993. *Kearifan Tradisional dalam Upaya Memelihara Lingkungan Hidup di Daerah Jawa Tengah*. Semarang: Depdikbud, Dirjen Kebudayaan, Penelitian Pengkajian dan Pembinaan Nilai-nilai Budaya.
- Thompson, John B., 2004. *Kritik Ideologi Global: Teori Sosial Kritis tentang Relasi Ideologi dan Komunikasi Massa*. Yogyakarta: IRGiSoD.
- Volosinov, N.V. 1973. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Judul asli *Marksizm I Filosofija*. Leningrad, 1993. New York and London: Seminar Press.
- Widianarko, dkk. 2004. *Menelusuri Jejak Capra Menemukan Integrasi Sains, Filsafat, dan Agama*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.

