



## Figurative Language in Kakong Community: A Study in Lombok Island

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### Abstract

The current research aims to find the types and functions of figurative languages commonly used by Kakong Community. The data gathered through observation, note taking, and interview then analyzed through the interactive model. At the end, the study concluded that: 1). the types of figurative languages that commonly used by Kakong community are similes, metaphors, and idioms. 2). the functions of those figurative languages are to maintain social relation, to criticize, to insult, and to give comment about something. 3). Using figurative language is preferable for Kakong community. The study also recommending that: 1). Kakong community has the obligation to save their language. 2). Preserving figurative language as one of the old culture heritages needs to be considered by extending further research. 3). People of Kakong community should be proud of having figurative language and they are supposed to use them continually. 4). the hidden values in figurative language need to be understood to get a better relationship in social life.

**Keywords:** figurative language, Kakong community, social relationship

### A. Introduction

It is generally known that people in different place speak the different language. Each language has its own characteristics, so does in Lombok Island. The *Sasak* language spoken in Lombok Island has its own characteristics. One of the special characteristics is the dialect. It has five dialects on a small island as Mahyuni (2006:1) states;

“Traditionally, Sasak has been classified to have five dialects *ngenó-ngené* (central west coast and central east to northeast coast), *menó-mené* (around Praya, central Lombok), *ngetó-ngeté* (around Suralaga and Sembalun); *kutó-kuté* (around Bayan, north part of the island); *meriaqmeriqu* (shout central area around bonjeruk, Sengkol, and Pujut)”.

In communication, people tend to use various body languages, sound, different level of politeness, or even figurative language. Generally, figurative languages are commonly used in

literary works, such as poems or songs. The use of figurative language is considered as a way to enrich the beauty of such literary works. Different from such works which analyze the use of figurative language in the literary works such as poems, novels, or songs, this study focuses on the analysis of figurative language used in a community laid in Kakong Village, North Lombok. Specifically, this research focused on the analysis of commonly figurative language used by Kakong community and seen as interactional view. Therefore, the research aims to explore the types of figurative languages commonly used by Kakong community in *Kuto-Kute* dialect at Kakong Village, as well the functions of figurative languages that Kakong community commonly used.

## B. Literature Review

### 1. *Language and Society*

Language is a carrier of messages. Some experts define language as a system of the arbitrary vocal symbol. Yule (2006) mentions some characteristics of language such as arbitrariness, duality, productivity, and cultural transmission. Language is productive because people have a million vocabularies in their mental lexicon. When uttering the words, the vocabulary just needs to be recalled. Furthermore, language has two meaning, for Lyons (1996) there are two types of meanings; linguistic meaning and speaker's meaning. In regard to the types of meaning, figurative language is one kind of the speaker's meaning, especially non-literal meanings. It is something different from what our word means, while literal meaning is what the word really means. (Lyons (1996)

Besides, the way people speak and the way they use language indicate their identities. Language is one of the determiners of the people to behave in society as Wardhaugh (2006:6) states "...language is a profound indicator of identity, more potent by far than cultural artefacts such as dress, food choices, and table manners". To sum up, since language is considered potent to indicate someone's identities, its consistency is a salient idea to be well documented.

Community in a society cannot be separated from language. It takes the role as a means of transferring the idea in communication as Wardhaugh (2006) states "there are some relationship between language and society such as; social structure influences or determines the linguistic structure and behaviour, linguistic structure and behaviour may influence the social structure, and society and language may influence each other". For Meyer (2009), language takes the role as part of the semiotic system. It indicates that when humans communicate, it happens not only through language but also through the other means such as gesture, art, dress, and music. Language has unique and universal characteristics which become one of the identities of the native speaker.

In addition, there are some functions of language, language also has functions; transactional view, which serves in the expression of content, and interactional view which involved in expressing social relations and personal attitude (Brown and Yule, 1983). In transactional, the content is the main part of the communication while interactional view shows the relationship among the people and relates to maintaining the social relation. Furthermore, Halliday and Hasan (1985) mention three functional theories of language, among others; informative uses (orientation to content), interactive uses (orientation to the effect), and imaginative uses. Moreover, Thomas et al. (2004) mentions two functions of language those are referential function and its effective impact. In referential function, "The one associated with what objects and ideas are called and how events are described... effective function concerned with who is 'allowed' to say what to whom, which is deeply tied up with power and social status". (Thomas et al., 2004:9). In conclusion, language functions can facilitate people in communication for sending information, maintaining the relationship, and showing their power.

### 2. *Figurative language*

In communication, the indirectness often use in the Indonesian context. Disinclination and intimacy may be the consideration among the speakers. One way of indirectness is using figurative language. Fussell and Moss (1998:2) define "Figurative language is not deviant—not a form of communication that requires special or additional cognitive processes to understand and that occurs only in special circumstances..." Besides, Araya (2008:9) states "The use of figurative language constitutes a clear example to illustrate the deconstructive processes in which individuals are involved when using the language". Figurative language is the new view of meaning that can be found in many forms of discourse rather than the structural meaning of the word that someone conveyed. The closeness among speakers may lead them to use figurative language since both of them understand the meaning they create themselves. Furthermore,

Araya (2008:37) states that "Figurative language re-creates meaning when writing a poem, a play, a story, or when taking place in a conversation, speech, and/or lecture." It is clearly stated that figurative language also found in conversation. Since figurative language implies the new meaning of the word, it cannot be used in the whole conversation with all people; it depends on the situation and the background of the interlocutor itself. As Araya (2008:37) states that "Using figurative language depends on people's backgrounds because it is necessary to share internal cognitive, affective and social frameworks to interpret the world". If figurative language is uttered to people who do not know the interlocutor well, misunderstanding may happen. Furthermore, if it is spoken in the anger circumstance, the angry one may angrier. Besides, Fussell and Moss (1998) state "the production of figurative language occurs in the communication of emotional states and therapeutic context". The production of figurative language usually occurs in the certain situation. It may not happen in the formal situation because there is no emotional states or therapeutic context, there just a serious circumstance in that situation.

There are many types of figurative language. Araya (2008:37) mentions some types which are "...-metaphors, personifications, paradoxes, similes, synecdoche, antitheses, hyperboles, metonymies, allegories and idioms among others-..." Below are the definitions of each type:

- a) A simile is a comparison between two things essentially unlike. Some comparisons are made explicit by the use of some such word or phrase as like, as, than, similar to, resembles, appears, or seems. Araya (2008) mention that people use simile to make comparisons by using the expressions like, as such as to associate the characteristics and essences of one thing to describe another.
- b) The metaphor is an expression in which an implicit comparison is made between two things usually unlike. It does not use connective words such as like or as. Ortony (1975) cited in Fussell and Moss (1998) argues that metaphors are used as gaps filling in the lexicon, to provide succinct ways of stating ideas that would be lengthy or awkward to formulate in literal terms and to add vividness or intensity to a message. Meanwhile, for Araya (2008) metaphor implied analogy that identifies one object with another and ascribes to the first one more qualities or characteristics of the second referential element. For example: "She is a flower in class". The flower is the substitution for displaying an attribute of the physical appearance.
- c) Metonymy is the use of a name to represent the term. Jarman (2006) in Araya (2008), defines metonymy as "a figure of speech which is characterized by the substitution of a term naming an object closely associated with the word in mind for the word itself".
- d) Synecdoche is the figure of speech in which the whole is replaced by the part. Araya (2008) states that the use of synecdoche is to show a part of something to stand for the whole thing which creates a decentralization of the transcendental signifier and signified.
- e) Personification is the comparison in which human attributes are given to an animal, an object, or a concept. Araya (2008) argues that personification is the act of representing an idea, thing or being as having human characteristics or attributions. Animals or things are given the character of the human being.
- f) Hyperbole is statement containing exaggeration. Araya (2008) states hyperbole refers to an over-emphasis of an aspect of something.
- g) Paradox and antithesis are the contradiction. Araya (2008) states that instead of the "nonsense" construction, a contradiction becomes an important element to create meaning.
- h) The idiom is an expression having a special meaning different from the usual meanings of the words. Araya (2008) states no meaning is conceived in a structure but in a socio-cultural environment. It can be understood in a different way according to each culture of a society.
- i) Allegory is a story, play, poem, picture or other work in which the characters and events represent particular qualities or ideas, related to morals, religion or politics

In conclusion, the figurative language is rich of meanings that speaker can use in communication for any purposes.

### 3. Previous studies

Some previous studies might be relevant to this current study. Corts (2006) conducted a study entitled "Factors characterizing bursts of figurative language and gesture in college lectures". This previous study clearly differs from the current study in the setting of the study.

The present study investigates the figurative language in a community while the previous study investigates the figurative language in the college. In the following year, Zinken (2007) conducted a study on discourse metaphors: the link between figurative language and habitual analogies. This study is similar to the current study for the purpose of analyzing the analogical schemas in behavior. However, it differs in term of the purpose. The current research aims to scrutinize the figurative language used by a community while the previous study explores the link between the analogies and the figurative language. Another relevant study may be the work of Fadaee (2011) who conducted a study entitled "Symbols, metaphors, and similes in literature: A case study of "Animal Farm". This study addressed to find out the effect of using figures of speech on the writer's style and the addressee's understanding. This study might be relevant to the current study in term of the purpose to explore the use of figurative language, but, again, it differs in the field of study. The present study aims to explore the use of figurative language in a community while the previous study aimed to explore the figurative language in the literary works. The next relevant study conducted by Sharndama and Suleiman (2013) entitled "An analysis of figurative languages in two selected traditional funeral songs of the Kilba people of Adamawa State" in Nigeria. This previous study is different from the current study in the purpose and setting of the study but has similarity in exploring the figurative language used by the community although the previous study just focused on the funeral song. At least, it is also used by a community.

The previous studies mentioned focused on various aspects such as literary works and nature of communications, and the factor of using figurative languages. All relevant works presented mentioned were conducted around the world and none of them analyzing the use of figurative language used in a community, they were mostly talk about figurative language in the literary works.

### **C. Methodology**

#### *1. Research Design*

This study belongs to ethnography research. The phenomena being described is the commonly use of figurative languages in a village namely Kakong lies in North Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, and its effect on communication with the interlocutor. Ethnographical data were gathered from observation and interview.

#### *2. Setting and Subject of the Study*

The study was conducted in Kakong Village, a small village in Gangga district of North Lombok, with the total population over thirty hundred people. In daily life, most of the Kakong community work as farmers, but some of them work as civil servants such as teachers or nurses. The researcher of this study is a member of Kakong Community thus she has good access to do her research. Besides, she also has the good understanding about language being used there.

The area was chosen as the setting because it is easily accessible and the language which is used by the people is unique. Some of them commonly use figurative language in their conversation. Those are some of the reasons why this study is conducted. All Kakong community is the subject of this study to gain the data until the research question answered.

#### *3. Technique of Collecting Data*

The data were taken from some Kakong speakers. The technique to collect the data was observation, note taking, and interview. Observation and note taking were used to write down the figurative language that the Kakong community commonly utter. Besides, it was also used to write down the non-linguistics components such as body language, laugh, or eye contact with the speakers when they speak it. The interview was used to confirm the meanings and functions of each figurative language that has been collected in note taking phase.

#### *4. Trustworthiness*

The trustworthiness of the data came through triangulation technique which was gathered through observation, note taking, and interview, while the source of data is gathered from the proponent villagers.

#### *5. Data Analysis*

The model adopted for analyzing the data was the interactive model from Miles and Huberman (1994). The components of an interactive model are collecting the data followed by data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion or verifying conclusion. Data reduction is

the phase when the data gathered is selected and classified into the appropriate one. The appropriate data will be taken but the inappropriate will not be taken. After reducing, the data will be displayed in order to answer the research question. The last is drawing the conclusion from the whole answers of the research questions to make the conclusion of the research.

#### D. Findings and Discussion

This part covers the sociolinguistics situation in Kakong village, the description of Sasak figurative languages, its types and its functions. The sociolinguistics situation in Kakong village will be discussed first followed by the description of Sasak figurative languages, its types, and its functions.

##### 1. Sociolinguistic Situation in Kakong Village

In daily life, as other communities, Kakong people also use language not only for transferring information containing the content but also to show the social relationship among them. The social relation is marked by using language in term of figurative appropriateness including the use of figurative language.

The uses of *base alus* 'polite language' are seldom because there are no noble people in Kakong Village. If they use *base alus*, the version of their language is different than the common *base alus* in Sasak. For example, if *base alus* for the word "you" which is used by noble people is *pelungguh*, then in Kakong village is *epe*.

Meanwhile, the use of *Bahasa Indonesia* 'Indonesian language' is hardly found. Indonesian sometimes is used in *rapat banjar* 'meeting of traditional organization especially in the village', or *rapat gawe* 'a meeting for preparing everything before doing the party or events' but in term of bilingual, they will use Indonesian and also Sasak at one time or it is commonly called code-switching.

In daily conversation, the relationship among families or among the members of a family is the same. They use of Sasak language in their conversation. They are polite, but sometimes they used impolite language in form of figurative language. It is acceptable because they have already known each other. If they talk to the stranger, they will not use figurative language because it is not really polite and sometimes difficult to understand. It can be said that only among Kakong villagers they often use the figurative language to avoid misunderstanding.

In the informal meeting, when Kakong community is sitting together in *beruqaq* 'traditional veranda', they talk many things including all aspects of life. There is no particular problem that they need to clarify or discussed, but this relates to maintaining the social relation. They usually talk about the joke and often use informal languages including figurative language. Besides, in the formal meeting, Kakong community uses formal language in which there is rarely figurative language used.

In summary, the use of figurative language in Kakong village occurs in informal meeting or conversation and the interlocutors have already known each other. Also, they have the same basic knowledge of the figurative language.

##### 2. Description of Sasak Figurative Language

There are many figurative languages spoken by Kakong community. However, this part only displays common figurative languages spoken there. There are 31 figurative languages listed and usually used by Kakong community.

The data of this study were gathered from community members and writer's personal experiences as a community member of Kakong village. List of this figurative language was examined in the real life to know functions in the daily life of the community. The characteristics of figurative language utterances used some preferences which were taken from experiences and things such as animal, fruit, and the characteristics of human itself to characterize the denote things. The meaning of those listed figurative languages usually linked to the social life in Kakong community. It would not be described in this paper since it is not the purpose; however, the function and the type of figurative language used are presented. Table 1, the list of commonly figurative languages used in Kakong Village, North Lombok.

**Table 1. List of Sasak Figurative Languages and the Literal and Non-literal Meanings.**

No	Sasak Figurative Language	Literal Meaning (LM) and Non-literal Meaning (NLM)
1	Kengkanan cupak [k'3ŋkanan Cupak]	LM= The meal which was eaten by <i>cupak</i> . <i>Cupak</i> is a character in <i>Cupak Gerantang</i> play/drama in Sasak culture. NLM= eating too much food
2	Kumis diq maraq bateq timpas [kumis di' mara' bate' timpas]	LM= Your mustache is like <i>Bateq timpas</i> . It is a big knife usually for cutting meat or bone of meat. NLM= Your mustache is very thick
3	Diq milu-miluan doang jari etaq-etaq kah [di' milu-miluan doan jari etaq-etaq kah]	LM= You always participate to be crumbs NLM= just joining an event but doing nothing
4	Ya meleng maraq matan sampi [ya m'3l'3ŋ mara' matan sampi]	LM= She/he observes like the eyes of cows NLM= look sharply
5	Siq inges ulun dik [si' ing'3s ulun di']	LM= Your head is very beautiful NLM= your action is bad
6	Tau tutuq ramenya ito maraq klikit [tau tutu' ramenya ito mara' klikit]	LM= People are very crowded over there like flies NLM= The situation when the people are very crowded in a place; they look like flies
7	Siq alus muanya maraq parut [si' alus muanya mara' parut]	LM= Her/his face is very smooth like scraper NLM= Her/his face is very bad looking; there are many acnes in her/his face
8	Ingesnya maraq teloq dewa [ing'3snya mara' teloq dewa]	LM= Her beauty is like an egg of ghost NLM= A girl is very beautiful and it makes men afraid to ask her for dating
9	Giginya maraq tambah [giginya mara' tambah]	LM= Her/his teeth is like mattock NLM= His/her tooth is very big; it looks like mattock
10	Naenya maraq rumpak [naenya mara' rumpak]	LM= His foot is like <i>rumpak</i> 'a giant leg' NLM= His/her leg is very big like <i>rumpak</i> 'the leg of giant'
11	Bulunya meleket [bulunya m'3leket]	LM= Her/his hair is burned NLM= The curly hair looks like the plastic which is being burned on fire, become one and difficult to apart.
12	Deq gawe ngaben tai [de' gawe ŋab'3n tai]	LM= There is no use to do something with the human waste NLM= no longer use to try hard
13	Diq melampaq maraq paulan teres [di' m'3lampā' mara' paulan teres]	LM= Your walking is like the run of ants NLM= very slow walking thus taking too long time to arrive at the destination
14	Tanaqnya ngaq sejengkal [tana'nya ŋa' s'3j'3ngkal]	LM= His/her land is just a span NLM= poor
15	Deqnya gitaq calon mentoaqnya ngeliwat [de'nya gita' calon m'3ntoa'nya ŋ'3liwat]	LM= He/she does not see her/his future mother/father-in-law cross NLM= too serious
16	Mauq ikan pogot [mau' ikan pogot]	LM= Get the angry fish NLM= scolded
17	Pupuran diq maraq tembok melampaq [pupuran di' mara' tembok m'3lampā']	LM= Your face powder is like the walking wall NLM= using face powder excessively
18	Membono maraq mpok ngadang nyamuk [m'3mbono mara' '3mpok ŋadaŋ nyamuk]	LM= Abstracting is like an owl block the mosquitoes NLM= A jobless person but won't look for job
19	Basong tetek bentot jamaq [basoŋ t'3t'3k bentot jama']	LM= Like a dog's tail is cutting down NLM= always doing something in hurry
20	Ya genit lemunya tia [ya g'3nit l'3munya tia]	LM= Her/his grease is itch NLM= cannot stay cool
21	Ipinya wah dait mekah [ipinya wah dait m'3kah]	LM= Her/his dream has come to Mecca NLM= sleep well
22	Mbuang basongang jamaq ['3mbuaŋ basongaŋ jama']	LM= Throw out just like the useless dog NLM= person who is chased away by their friends when she/he no longer needed

23	Tindo'an manuk [tindo'an manuk]	LM= Like the chicken's sleep NLM= too early to sleep
24	Ujan doang beq jambah ta isiqnya [ujan doang be' jambah ta isi'nya]	LM= Always rainy thus we become sprout NLM= always rain
25	Ktiaq bae tan anaknya, mbe kek lain aeq mengoron [ktia; bae tan anaknya, '3mbe ke' lain a'3' m'3ngoron]	LM= Of course, she/he is acting like that, where does the water flow? NLM= the behavior of children that follow their parent.
26	Ya njauq pelemban polak [ya 'njau' p'3lemban polak]	LM= He/she brings the broken stick NLM= imitating the parent attitudes (for children)
27	Lelampannya maraq tau menagih [l'3lampannya mara' tau m'3nagih]	LM= His/her walking is like he/she is collecting the debt NLM= walking very fast
28	Tuq biur maraq manuk enang siq inanya [tu' biur mara' manuk enaŋ si' inanya]	LM= It is very noisy is like chicken left by its mother NLM= too noisy and disturb other by that noise
29	Melengo doang ya nganti kepeng geran leq langit [m'3l'3ngo doang ya ŋanti kepenŋ g'3ran le' langit]	LM= Just stay waits for money falling down from the sky NLM= People who do not want to go for working and looking for job but want to be a rich person are a bad dreamer
30	Koatnya pada mensual maraq senduk dait periuk [koatnya pada mensual mara' s'3nduk dait p'3riuk]	LM= They are often fighting like spoon and pan NLM= cannot live in peace; always fighting (for children)
31	Mun ya ling ya, mbedilin dik deqnya truq berubah angennya [mun ya liŋ ya, 'mbedilin di' de'nya teru' berubah aŋennya]	LM= If he/she said like that, even you shot, his/her mind will never change NLM= stubborn

Source of the data: Kakong speakers

### 3. Types of Sasak Figurative Language

The Sasak figurative languages can be classified into some categories based on the type of figurative language itself such as simile, metaphor, personification, and so on. Below are those classifications:

- a) The case of similes spread in numbers 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 18, 27, 28, and 30. They all use the word *maraq* 'like/as' to compare two different things. Most of the use of similes are to criticism someone's habits or behavior.
- b) The case of metaphors can be seen in numbers 3, 23, 25, 26, and 29. The metaphor is same as simile, in which they compare two unlike things, but it does not use word 'like or as'. Those two things are compared directly. The use of metaphor is usually to criticize someone or insult his or her bad behavior.
- c) Metonymy is just found in number 11. It is also to compare two things but they closely relate to the things that they are actually meant
- d) The case of personification can be seen in numbers 19, 22, and 23. Kakong community usually gives animal attributes for the human. It is used for insulting their habit.
- e) Hyperbole is usually used to give more effect for something to make it more touched. It is found in number 21, 24, and 31.
- f) The case of the idiom can be seen in numbers 12, 14, 15, 16, 20. It has imaginative meanings. It is usually used for giving advice and criticizes someone.
- g) Allegory is a story, play, poem, picture or other work in which the characters and events represent particular qualities or ideas, related to morals, religion or politics. The case of simile can be seen in number 1. It is used one of the characters of the Sasak popular play called *Cupak Gerantang*.
- h) Antithesis is the figurative language that contains the opposite meaning of the reality. It is found in number 5.

### 4. Functions of Figurative Languages

The classification of those figurative languages can be divided into some categories based on the functions of each figurative language listed; those are the moral value, social life, and advice.

#### a) Moral Value

The figurative languages contain moral value spread in numbers 31. The completely figurative language mention is used to criticize someone's habit and it contains the moral value related to how to behave in the social life. This is in line with Wardhaugh (2006) who states that linguistic structure and behavior may influence the social structure. In this case, the social structure influences the use of figurative language to criticize someone's habit in an indirect way.

#### b) Social Life

The numbers of figurative languages related to social life spread in numbers 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 23, 24, and 30. They are all usually used for maintaining the social relation among the community. The language use does not necessarily important as close as possible since it is understood by the interlocutor, it can be used in Kakong community.

#### c) Advice

The figurative languages that contain the advice usually talked about the wrong behavior and with figurative language, it is represented for giving advice. It spreads in numbers 1, 3, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, and 29.

By looking at the function of figurative language above, it indicates that language used is orienting to the effect. This is supported by Hasan (1985) who state that one of the language functions is the interactive uses; addressed and involved the interlocutors in understanding and considering the meaning linked to their life in a community. In conclusion, the functions of figurative that commonly used are to maintain social relation since its functions are majority use in social life, to give advice and contain the social value.

### E. Conclusion

After looking at the figurative languages commonly used by Kakong Community, the conclusion and implication can be drawn as follow: first, the types of figurative languages commonly used by the Kakong community are similes, metaphors, and idioms. Second, the functions of those figurative languages are to criticize, to insult, and to give comment to something. Third, using figurative language is more preferable for Kakong community when giving advice, suggestion, and criticism because they are considered more polite than direct language. Fourth, Kakong people have the obligation to save their language. Fifth, preserving figurative language as one of the old culture heritages needs to be considered by extending further research. Seven, people of Kakong village should be proud of having figurative language and they are supposed to use them continually. The last, the hidden values in figurative languages need to be understood to get a better relationship in social life.

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