

# Local Wisdom and Metaphors in Banyumasan Short Stories

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**Abstract**—Local wisdom is essential for many to solve problems. In several Banyumasan short stories, which contain many metaphors, local wisdom functions to stimulate the readers in recalling old adages or proverbs that are still relevant in today's era. The local wisdom symbolizes moral values in the stories, and this matter is worth analyzing. By that, the present study was aimed at examining the correlation among the moral values in Banyumasan short stories. It was also designated to scrutinize the conceptualization of local wisdom as the effort to preserve the local culture of Indonesia. The study employed a referential identity method and an introspective reflective method.  
**Keywords:** local wisdom, metaphors, short stories, Banyumasan literature

## I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with a diverse society, making it the number one pluralistic country in the world. This archipelagic country has many large islands and thousands of small islands. Such diversity, thereby, leads to the use of local traditions in preserving the surroundings. According to the report by The World Conservation Union (1997)[1], around 4000-5000 of the total 6000 cultural heritages are indigenous society. This signifies that this society dominates 70-80% of the total population in the world; the majority of them live in some islands in Indonesia. As part of a multicultural and multiethnic nation, Indonesian people have their traditions and ethics in coping with a particular problem. The way they cope or address the problem is called local wisdom.

Local wisdom is defined as the principle of life and behaviors of the local community and their interaction with the surroundings [2]. Some examples of local wisdom include songs, proverbs, advice, and old books or manuscripts containing stories that correlate with daily life. Rasidin and Batubara (2009) [3] mention five forms of local wisdom, namely: (1) philosophy; (2) proverbs, metaphors, poems or verses, and folklores containing attitudes toward social life, advice, and teachings; (3) traditional ceremonies; (4) principles, norms, and regulations in a social system, and; (5) habits and behaviors in a social association. Simply put, local wisdom encompasses all noble virtues of a specific community that are developed and passed down through generations. The values, however, have dissolved due to the modern-day

development and advancement of technology, being replaced by new cultures.

From the recent situation in Indonesia, two factors contributing to the changes in socio-cultural values are external and internal factors. External factors comprise globalization, political de-idealization at the global level, the development of information and communication technology, neo-capitalism, and neoliberalism (which increasingly spur pragmatic, consumptive, and individual lifestyles). Internal factors are characterized by the loss of traditional and local values, including local wisdom.

Local wisdom has been the ideology, source of knowledge, and guideline in daily activities of local people; this notion accentuates the role of local wisdom as a solution to many problems and to fulfill the needs of society. In certain countries, local wisdom is termed as local knowledge or local genius. One example of the embodiment of local wisdom is a language. Rosyid [4] states that a language, as a tool of communication, has its cognitive function in expressing ideas or thoughts. People agree that a language is beyond a communication tool; it instead serves as a medium of cultural preservation. In other words, culture lies at the heart of many local languages. Among the uniqueness of a language are metaphors. This term is defined as one output of creativity in a language in terms of the aspect of meaning. Metaphors have a simple basic structure; it encompassed an object and other words or phrases attributed to the object as a comparison (Pateda, 2001: 234) [5]. Pateda (2001: 234) [5] clarifies that metaphors are basically a figure of speech functioned to compare an object with another object. In principle, the role of metaphors links with cultural elements. Metaphors represent a way of thinking, behavior, and social condition of a culture. Further, metaphors, if these are incorporated into other products of a language, such as literary works, can function as a medium to preserve the local culture.

Literary works are the expression of human. These reflect experiences, thoughts, feelings, ideas, motivation, and beliefs to a concrete, captivating description through the tools of a language (Sumardjo & Saini, 1988:5) [6]. In general, literary works are imaginative outputs of an individual outlined in written media. People attempt to deliver positivity and moral lessons through their literary

works. This message can be narrated explicitly by the author (which can be seen in the plot of stories) or implicitly through learning the stories or struggles of the character in the stories. In many classic literatures, incorporating local wisdom in its theme is a common practice. As a means of expressing cultural elements, literary works, especially Indonesian literature, can promote nationalism, humanity, and solidarity, and record the development of people or society in Indonesia (Muhyidin, n.d.).

Banyumasan short stories are among the options to help the efforts of preventing the loss of local wisdom in Indonesia. The stories from Banyumas are worth investigating, considering their uniqueness in social interaction patterns and the language aspects. One can say that studying short stories allow people to discover many aspects of the social life of a community in a particular area, including moral values, since every region has its moral system. In literary works, short stories often reflect the norms and social values of a certain society; the values also embody the perspective or ideology of the author of the stories. This notion later implies the function of short stories as a social document that contains moral values accentuated by the writers [7]. Such values are still influenced by society since the author is still part of a larger social community in his or her area. Nevertheless, examining the correlation among the moral values in Banyumasan short stories is still deemed crucial. On that ground, this research was designated to analyze the conceptualization of local wisdom as an effort to preserve the local culture of Indonesia.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research relied on a qualitative descriptive method. The rationale for selecting the method was because of the focus of the study in analyzing the cognitive conceptualization of the metaphors in Banyumasan short story entitled “*Nglempengaken Sing Padha Bengkok*” by Daning Darkam Anom Sugito. Procedures of the research involved data collection, data analysis, data interpretation, and drawing a conclusion. The documentation technique was employed in collecting the data from the selected short story. All data selected against specific criteria were inputted into a data card. The data were further analyzed using a normative analysis technique. Other methods used in the data analysis process included Sudaryanto’s referential identity method and introspective reflective method [8].

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In addressing everyday problems, people often refer to their local knowledge or local wisdom. As a pluralistic nation, with its diverse tribes, cultures, and customs, Indonesia has varied local wisdom, which takes in the form of Malay proverbs, *parikan*

(modern Javanese proverbs), and other sayings from other tribes in Indonesia. Local wisdom can serve as a medium of character education for people. Overall, the local wisdom in the selected Banyumasan short story is categorized into two: proverbs and life ideology. The metaphors in the short story function to give aesthetic values of the short story, thus attributing an abstraction of in-depth meaning and actualizing the main ideas.

The title of the short story, *Nglempengaken Sing Padha Bengkok*, (Indonesian translation: *Meluruskan yang Bengkok*, English translation: Straightened out everything crooked) is a metaphor itself. The phrase “*Meluruskan yang Bengkok*” is commonly used to refer to iron or wire, which are the objects that can be bent and straightened. In the context of the short story, however, people are the crooked things or something that are bent. The metaphors symbolize a value in the local wisdom, specifically how to behave in social life. Things have gone wrong if a person feels that s/he something needs to be set right. The benchmark of this situation is social norms. On the whole, the selected short story has many proverbs and advice inspired by social norms. Provided in the following are some proverbs in *Nglempengaken Sing Padha Bengkok*.

The first proverb is “*botenusah perek-perek. Kados merek "kebogupak" ora wurung kecipretan belet*” (Indonesian literal translation: “*Jangan dekat-dekat kerbau yang berlumpur, nanti terkena lumpurnya*”, free translation: be selective in choosing friends). Many young generations have begun to forget this advice. Today’s generations are becoming more permissive for the sake of tolerance. As a result, they are no longer selective in choosing their friends and are more susceptible to negative behaviors. Of the examples is the wrong association. Reckitt Benckiser Indonesia [9] conducted a survey on the use of contraception among 500 teenagers in five large cities in Indonesia. The study reports that 33% of the total participants admitted that they had sexual intercourse. It is revealed that 58% of the teenagers who initiated sex were 18 to 20 years old. To worsen, the participants of the survey were those who were not married. Such a crisis blames the wrong association and the misinterpretation of being tolerant by the teenagers. For this reason, reintroducing the proverb *botenusah perek-perek. Kados merek "kebo gupak" ora wurung kecipretan belet* is deemed essential.

Provided below are the second proverbs.

1. “*Aja gampang nyalahna wongliya*”. 2. *Aja gampang mbeneraken salahe dhewek. Tembung sanese "ngilo githok". Indonesia mawas diri. Jawine anggane nyerat "diri" nganggeh ampun kesupen.*” English translation: It is easier to blame than do better. The phrase “*mengaca diri*” (Indonesian translation: “*mawas diri*” or self-awareness reminds people to be aware of everything that we have done. Such behavior encourages people not to blame others for

ones' actions. This proverb links with the next proverb: 1. "Sekabehe temindak bener, marakena slamet, seger, waras." 2. "Brayan ngreksa kawilujengan." 3. "Nglempengaken sing padha bengkok." 4. "Mbrenaken sing padha salah." 5. "Sing nisthakena dadi utama." 6. "Sing rusak dadi mulya." Translation: Truths bring salvation to people and it straightens something crooked since redressing wrongdoing has been a common practice. In the philosophy of Javanese people, especially Banyumasan people, act carefully is the key to achieve a peaceful life, not only for oneself but also for other people. One example of the violation of this principle is the wrong association. There is a growing trend in this negative behavior. Many people have looked down on those who are not into such a bad association, despite the risks behind the wrong association (such as venereal diseases and unwed pregnancy). All of these have a long-term impact on teenagers who choose to get married after committing such detrimental acts. This is because many of them are not prepared emotionally. Consequently, the rate of domestic violence and poorly educated children has increased. This condition will put the young generation, the future of a nation, at risk. The generation will, in turn, become a burden. By that, the research urges many to reflect on the advice seen in the proverb "Nglempengaken Sing Padha Bengkok" as a means of character education.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

There are several local wisdom represented in some proverbs in "Nglempengaken Sing Padha Bengkok" by Daning Darkam Anom Sugito. The first proverb is "Jangan dekat-dekat kerbau yang berlumpur, nanti terkena lumpurnya" (free translation: be selective in choosing friends). The second proverb is "Aja gampang nyalahna wongliya" (free translation: it is easier to blame than do better). The third proverb is "sing rusak dadi mulya" (free translation: truths bring salvation to people, and it straightens something crooked since redressing wrongdoing has become more common). It is important to reintroduce these old sayings to the young generations to prevent them from the wrong

association. For this reason, local wisdom, including the old sayings and proverbs, can be an alternative to character education programs.

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