

CECEK IN CULTURAL INTERPRETATION AMONG BALINESE COMMUNITY

Komang Puteri Yadnya Diari
STAHN Mpu Kuturan Singaraja
E-mail: triya1408@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The linguistics study is currently developing, and now it also covers elements of cultures. In the study of cultural linguistics, linguistic symbol is always associated with the elements of culture itself, such as religious system, knowledge system, equipment system, livelihood system, social system and the art system. One of linguistic expression in Balinese culture is cecek which is not only considered as animal, but also associated with the religious system of the Hindu community as a symbol of beginning of knowledge. This research will explore further the cultural interpretation of Cecek among Balinese people especially related with the correlation between the study of language and culture. To obtain the data, interview method was used, where the data collected from the informants before drawing a conclusion.

Keywords: Cecek, Cultural Interpretation, Balinese Community

I. INTRODUCTION

Grammatically, language is a meaningful array of sound units, ranging from the smallest sounds of language, to the level of discourse which is in the highest hierarchy of sound in language aspect (Jendra, 1980: 3).

Language is indeed a symbol that not only has word meanings, but also cultural meanings. The Balinese people, known for their cultural richness that live side by side with their tradition and Hinduism, naturally have linguistic expressions which have cultural values. They are conveyed through media of language, in form of words, terms, phrases and so on.

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livelihood system, social system and the art system. One of linguistic expression in Balinese culture is *cecek* which is not only considered as animal, but also associated with the religious system of the Hindu community as a symbol of beginning of knowledge

Linguistic expressions in the form of *cecek* words will be discussed further in this research, with the aim to enlighten the community that *cecek* does not only symbolize *linggan* of Ida Sang Aji Saraswati but also has deep religious meaning.

II. DISCUSSION

Cultural linguistics is an interdisciplinary field that studies the relationship between language and culture in a society. Cultural Linguistic views language and culture as two sides of a coin, one cannot exist without the other, or at least, describing one by ignoring the other is definitely incomplete. It

can be said like that because language from an anthropological perspective is part of culture (Koentjaraningrat, 1983: 182). In contrast, culture is generally inherited more carefully through language; meaning that language is the main vehicle for inheritance, as well as the development of culture. Duranti (1997: 27) even explicitly says that describing a culture is the same as describing language.

Balinese people who live in peaceful “santih” with the existing diversity, of course cannot be separated from the role of culture and religion that have strongly rooted as a guidance of their lives. Balinese do not only live a life based on logic, but always walk hand in hand to follow the value of feelings, which is carried out as a belief. That belief gives faith which of course is inseparable from the religion as its breath, namely Hinduism itself.

For Balinese people, one of the beliefs which start from a linguistic symbol is the existence of *cecek*, which in Indonesian means gecko. It symbolizes *Lingga* or the holy place for Ida Sang Aji Saraswati or holy vehicle of Goddess Saraswati which in the belief of Hindus is a Goddess of Science and Education.

Cecek in the perspective of Balinese culture is not only interpreted as a cultural symbol of animal but also with a symbol of dot which often correlated with the starting point of the birth of a knowledge. Thus, *cecek* whether it means both gecko and dots, are still very closely related to each other.

Cecek in the context of the “dot” in Balinese script is also symbolized by *carik* (). It is usually used in the end of each script which is interpreted that everything must end with the basis of knowledge, because everything that exists must also be started with knowledge. In this case, the check or dot is interpreted as the beginning of the scratch of knowledge. So knowledge should be a beginning and end in the journey of life. It is also related with science is a symbol of truth, so that everything in this

world always begins with truth and also ends based on the foundation of truth.

In addition to the beliefs conveyed previously, another thing that becomes a cultural belief for Balinese people is that it is not allowed to kill the gecko. This certainly departs from the belief that gecko is a symbol of knowledge, and knowledge is symbol of the truth that is Goddess of Saraswati Herself. Gecko is considered as holy and sacred for the Balinese Hindu community. There is even a belief that whenever we talk and there is no voice from the gecko, it is believed that what is being said has no value and vice versa, if the gecko sounds when someone speaks, it indicates that what is conveyed contain truth in it. In a Balinese song, from a local Balinese band there is a lyric, “*yening cecek masuara punika raos is patut, yening nenten masuara punika raos mogbog*” which means that when gecko sounds it indicates that the words delivered are true and if there is no sound then what is conveyed is lies. (interview, 10 October 2018).

As reported in <http://wacanabali.blogspot.com>, while talking at night with someone about something, then gecko’s voice is heard, Balinese believe that what being said is a truth. Balinese people believe that gecko is witness of all events in the world. This symbol also create an expression, when gecko sounds Hindu society in Bali will say “*Singgih durusang Sang Aji Saraswati*” which means “yes please continue *Sang Aji Saraswati*” accompanied by *pangastawa* or prayer that what is planned will be successful under Goddess Saraswati’s grace.

Furthermore, based on previous explanation, symbol of *cecek* plays an important role for Balinese people. *Cecek* also has a special place in ritual ceremony namely Saraswati day which falls on the day of *Saniscara* (Saturday) *Umanis Watugunung*. This celebration falls once every 210 days

which is believed to be a celebration of science. Balinese Hindu community will present some religious offerings in form of *Banten Saraswati*, which contain cake *Cecek* or a gecko along with its eggs-shaped cake made from rice flour as a symbol that knowledge will give birth to other knowledge, and it has become a nature of knowledge that will never end.

Balinese people interpret these linguistic expressions uniquely and cannot be judged logically. However, the sense of value in these symbols provides noble knowledge and lessons. In accordance with the teachings of Hindu, all creatures that exist are the same as us, *Tat Twam Asi*. This belief implies that small animals such as gecko also deserve to be respected, so that no Balinese would want to harm or kill small animals even if it may not be valuable to some people.

Apart from that, *cecek* in the sense of a “dot” is often considered invaluable and is only a small meaningless punctuation. However, through the cultural linguistic symbol, a message is delivered which is never underestimate knowledge, because later it still has a role and can be a beginning of something big.

III. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, a conclusion can be drawn that linguistic expressions symbolized by *cecek* have cultural perspective meaning. First, *cecek* in the sense of gecko is a symbol of Dewi Saraswati which is the Goddess of Knowledge. It is also believed that gecko symbolizes truth. Furthermore, the symbol of *cecek* in terms of “dot”, as well as *carik* in Balinese script, is believed by Balinese Hindu society as a symbol that everything begins and ends with knowledge, and knowledge is the truth itself.

Finally, that is all what the article want to deliver. Hopefully what is delivered can be beneficial and the shortcomings of this article can be used as a reference for a better knowledge or view.

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