

Ethnography of Communication: Woman Role Representation in the Proverb “*Bapa’ Babu’ Guru Rato*” as Madurese Proverb

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ABSTRAK

Studi ini mengungkap kontekstualisasi peribahasa bapa' babu' guru rato (ayah, ibu, guru, penguasa) terhadap keterlibatan perempuan. Data dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan kerangka etnografi komunikasi, termasuk observasi partisipan, triangulasi, dan wawancara mendalam, serta dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan Miles dan Hubermann dengan perangkat lunak Nvivo. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa peribahasa tersebut menekankan tanggung jawab perempuan dalam pendidikan, kepemimpinan, dan pengelolaan rumah tangga untuk perbaikan masyarakat. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa peribahasa seperti bapa' babu' guru rato (ayah, ibu, guru, penguasa) memengaruhi sikap dan tindakan masyarakat, bertindak sebagai panduan budaya yang secara signifikan meningkatkan keterlibatan perempuan dan pertumbuhan sosial.

ABSTRACT

This study discerns the contextualization of the proverb bapa' babu' guru rato (father, mother, teacher, ruler), on women's involvement. Data was collected utilising ethnography of communication framework, including participant observation, triangulation, and in-depth interviews, and analysed using the Miles and Hubermann approach with Nvivo software. The findings show that the proverb emphasises women's responsibilities in education, leadership, and household management for societal betterment. The study suggests that proverbs such as bapa' babu' guru rato (father, mother, teacher, ruler) impact community attitudes and actions, acting as cultural guides that considerably increase women's involvement and social growth.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Culture is analogous to a pillar sustained by groups within a community as shared beliefs and characteristics. Examining a societal group's culture also entails examining its identity, because culture is an intrinsic feature of society that pervades all aspects of group behaviour and convention [1]. A

community's everyday practices might reflect its culture. Culture is typically seen as an element that separates one society group from another, as well as a uniting factor among distinct societal groups, since it spreads and changes during its life [2]. Interethnic relations theory identifies four social interaction processes: assimilation, acculturation, accommodation, and integration. However, the construction of societal culture is significantly impacted by the ideas or values of the society [3].

Local values are usually used as the foundation and reference point for a community when developing social components like social structure and customs. Local values shape a society's relationships and production. Local values are often based on the beliefs of the majority in the community. Gorddard [4] defines referenced beliefs as an individual's faith in their deity and their religious affiliation.

The Sumenep village, located in the easternmost section of Madura Island, belongs to the Madurese ethnic group and practises Islamic culture. According to Ratmawati (2019), the community's tradition refers to their ongoing culture. The Sumenep community upholds Islamic ideals via their behaviour and social conventions, which can be seen in their relationships. The Sumenep community's social structure reflects its Islamic heritage, with the Brahmin caste holding the top position. According to Desai and Dubei [5], Brahmins have better levels of education, money, and stronger social networks than other castes.

The Sumenep community preserves oral and non-oral traditions. Ratmawati (2019) defines oral tradition as customs passed down from primordial civilizations via storytelling and advice-giving, making them easily understood and remembered. Traditions distinguish one community from another, making them unique. The Sumenep community loves the adage *bapa' babu' guru rato* (father, mother, teacher, ruler), which is firmly founded in Islamic traditions and reflects the spirit of the culture. This adage literally means "father, mother, teacher, and ruler," referring to parents, educators, and governance [6]. Sukri [7] stated that the proverb declared implicitly the importance of women's participation in societal evolution, emphasising their intellectual and moral significance within historical and cultural contexts. This respect for women is based on Madurese ancestral norms that are firmly steeped in spiritual beliefs, notably Islamic teachings, as explained by Ariziq (2022). Despite this historical foundation, current Madurese culture has shifted its perspective on the proverb, perceiving it as a command for honour rather than a reflection of mutual respect and women's dignity. This transformation has significant ramifications for gender attitudes and women's engagement in the Madurese society, including Sumenep Region.

Sumenep Regency has the lowest Gender Development Index (GDI) score in East Java Province (81.88), according to statistics from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) for 2021-2022. Sumenep Regency continues to struggle with women's involvement in education, governance, and professions. This circumstance contradicts the presence of Sumenep Regency, which contains gender-contextualised proverbs that are widely spread, particularly in the field of education. Sukri [7] found that the popular interpretation of the proverb *bapa' babu' guru rato* (father, mother, teacher, ruler) prioritises respect for the figures over the importance of mutually beneficial relationships among the four figures. This strategy attempts to promote social change and enhance women's honour and integrity via moral and intellectual development throughout times of societal revolution.

The researcher is intrigued by using an ethnographic communication perspective to study the proverb *bapa' babu' guru rato* (father, mother, teacher, ruler) with a focus on gender issues embedded within it. This approach helps interpret communication patterns and interactions within specific communities. The choice of Sumenep Regency as the research area is based on its historical significance as a principality on Madura Island, and the fact that the proverb was coined by Bahaudin Raden Arya Kusumanegara, a descendant of Sumenep royalty.

Focusing on Sumenep is crucial as it represents the source of many social values of the Madurese people, aligning with the qualitative research paradigm's inductive nature. Ethnographers observe communication patterns, the meanings conveyed through interactions, and the context of these

interactions, which help shape communal values and codes [8]. This methodological approach enables a comprehensive understanding of how historical and social dynamics influence current communication practices in the region.

2. METHOD

The study process is undertaken independently, including field research and data gathering through interviews. This ensures data validity without biasing the researcher or informants. Sugiyono (2022) cites Bogdan and Biklen (1982) who define qualitative research as using a natural setting as the primary data source and the researcher as a crucial tool. Data gathering focuses on written language rather than numerical data, making it descriptive in nature. Qualitative research focuses on the process, not just the results, and analyses data using inductive methods to interpret key meanings.

In essence, the primary goal of research within the interpretive paradigm is to immerse oneself in the participants' perspectives and understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. As such, research inquiries are intentionally designed to be broad and all-encompassing, allowing participants the freedom to construct and articulate the meaning of a particular situation through interactive dialogues, discussions, or engagements with others. This dialogical process enables researcher to delve into the richness of human experiences and perceptions, offering a nuanced and comprehensive account of the phenomenon under study.

By embracing the interpretive paradigm, researcher acknowledges the significance of individual agency in shaping reality and meaning. This approach fosters a deep appreciation for the contextual nature of knowledge construction, recognizing that different social, cultural, and historical contexts can influence the interpretation and construction of knowledge. As a result, the interpretive perspective encourages researcher to adopt a more flexible and open-minded stance, facilitating a deeper exploration and understanding of the intricate and diverse fabric of human experiences and perspectives within the research domain.

In light of this, the researcher in this study employs a qualitative research technique with a unique research design, namely ethnographic communication, which is contextualised within the framework of female involvement. The researcher will perform field study, collecting data through open-ended interviews with specified qualified informants, and analysing the findings inductively. The ethnographic communication technique helps the researcher to obtain a thorough knowledge of how the Madurese community uses the proverb *bapa' babu guru rato* to communicate and express thoughts about women's involvement.

Language is described in communication as the core of interactions that are sewn into the fabric of communication connections, acting as the portal to human experience. Individuals use communication to shape society and culture. As a result, language has an indirect role in the evolution of human civilization. Based on this functional interconnectivity, it is possible to conclude that communication, language, and culture are vital aspects having the ability to change social or societal events, necessitating research into the contextual link between these three elements. Dell Hymes' 1962 scientific discovery of ethnography of communication, as reported by Saville-Troike [9], supports this perspective.

Ethnography's purpose is to comprehend the culture, its values, beliefs, and behaviours, as well as to offer a complete and nuanced account of the group under study. This involves identifying a culture-sharing group and studying how it develops shared patterns of behavior over time, such as in long-term immersion. Key data collection involves observing participants' behaviors during their engagement in various activities [10].

Hymes introduced ethnography of communication as a critique of linguistic anthropology, which he believed focused too much on the physical aspects of language without considering its meaning, context, and connection to culture. Hymes' ethnography of communication prioritises communication over linguistics. This approach holds that language gets meaning through efficient communication and

loses its value when not delivered well. The ethnography of communication takes a sociolinguistic approach, analysing language usage in context and connecting it to social and cultural values. According to Kuswano, ethnographic descriptions provide a worldwide perspective on a society's opinions and cultural values, which may be used to explain its members' attitudes and behaviours.

Ethnographers applying the ethnography of communication primarily focus on the following areas: (1) analysing the various forms of communication utilised by a specific group, (2) exploring the meanings and interpretations attributed to these communicative practices by the group, (3) identifying the temporal and spatial contexts in which these communicative activities occur, (4) understanding how these practices contribute to the formation and reinforcement of community among group members, and (5) examining the different codes and symbols employed by the group in their interactions [8].

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data processing seeks to capture and show discussions in organised interviews, including the research analysis unit. The SPEAKING Model by Dell Hymes was used to categorise research topics based on informant comments relevant to the research analysis unit. Dell Hymes' SPEAKING Model, defined by Littlejohn [8], includes indications such as setting, scene, participants, ends, actions, key, instrumentalities, norms, and genres. Each indication in this paradigm has its own concepts and goals.

The study discovered that all structured interview transcripts provided information and concepts about the SPEAKING Model in the *bapa' babu' guru rato* (father, mother, teacher, ruler) proverb. During the structured interview, the researcher asked situational questions to key informants until they felt they had conveyed all relevant information, including the proverbial wisdom of *bapa' babu' guru rato* (father, mother, teacher, ruler) in profound detail.

The data analysis highlights how structured interviews with informants covered the study analysis unit using classification methods. Researchers categorise informant remarks based on the research analysis unit's concepts. Based on interviews, the researcher determines the current classification of women's roles and involvement in a society, particularly Madurese.

3.1. Women Role Representation in the Proverb *Bapa' Babu' Guru Rato* (father, mother, teacher, ruler)

The proverb *bapa' babu' guru rato* (father, mother, teacher, ruler) includes messages about gender equality and women's responsibilities in society. Researchers discovered two communication components in this proverb on gender equality, namely women's roles and involvement in society: act sequences and norms. The adage *bapa' babu' guru rato* (father, mother, teacher, ruler) emphasises women's rights to education, professional vocations, leadership, decision-making, and social participation.

The discussion on the norms component in the proverb *bapa' babu' guru rato* (father, mother, teacher, ruler) related to gender equality issues undoubtedly reinforces the previous analysis on act sequences regarding gender equality and the role of women. In the norms component, the focus will be on the existence of social rules that construct the interpretation of messages in communication events using the proverb *bapa' babu' guru rato* (father, mother, teacher, ruler) in relation to women's issues in the communication events involving the proverb *bapa' babu' guru rato* (father, mother, teacher, ruler). If researcher can formulate that there are social rules in Sumenep society that construct the interpretation of messages in communication events using the proverb *bapa' babu' guru rato* (father, mother, teacher, ruler), then the communication events involving the use of the proverb *bapa' babu' guru rato* (father, mother, teacher, ruler) do indeed address or relate to gender equality issues, especially the role of women in the social context.

Women have a crucial role in advancing social change and deserve respect, admiration, safety, and access to education. Women's dignity in the Sumenep community is determined by their actions and personalities. In Sumenep society, women who choose to be "mothers" are viewed as having larger

societal duties and hence deserve more respect. Researchers discovered societal norms that shape interpretations of the adage *bapa' babu' guru rato* (father, mother, teacher, ruler) on gender equality and women's roles in society.

The people of Sumenep, in a spiritual context, indeed believe that a mother is their spiritual figure. This belief signifies that her approval and peace of mind are crucial for the journey of their children's lives. This sentiment is implied more explicitly in another Madurese proverb that states, *pangeran katon* (mother as an angel in earth), analogously believed by Madurese society to portray a mother as a representation of an angel who deserves respect due to her closeness to the compassion of God.

Therefore, the proverb *bapa' babu' guru rato* (father, mother, teacher, ruler) is, in fact, not solely about the structure of respect in Sumenep society but is more related to the structure of social responsibility for the sustainability of life and the overall quality of individuals in the community. The proverb *bapa' babu' guru rato* (father, mother, teacher, ruler) refers more to the social roles of each of these social figures, affirming their right to social respect.

In Sumenep society, women are addressed differently, with some prioritising education and religious ideals while others do not. Sumenep culture honours and respects women who uphold social and religious standards. Sumenep society values education and information as means for self-preservation, transcending gender boundaries. This is especially true for women. The study discovered that the phrase *bapa' babu' guru rato* reflects gender equality and encourages women's involvement in society.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on this research, a finding emerges that supports the conceptualization that within Dell Hymes' theory of communication components, there exists a interdependence among each component to reveal the contextualization of a communicative event, particularly the act sequence and norms components. These two components hold the potential to construct meaning within the messages conveyed during the communicative event. Through the application of an analysis of these components, the researcher discerns that the proverb *bapa' babu' guru rato* contains a contextualization of messages, indicating the cultural openness of Madura towards the participation of women within the Sumenep community. The researcher advocates for future investigations with a thematic emphasis on the utilization of communication ethnography theory in the examination of gender within proverbs. This recommendation is made to apply a critical paradigm in communication, aiming to yield more constructive research findings regarding the social dynamics of the community. This research is being undertaken as an academic contribution to the preservation of local values, particularly in the resolution of social crises and issues, including women's participation and gender equality. By doing this research, the researcher hopes to highlight the importance of emphasising local value as a problem-solving tool, as well as the desire to improve future folklore research or literacy in order to preserve its original history and provide a foundation for future learning.

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