



TARGET DOMAINS OF *AYAM* 'CHIKEN' IN INDONESIAN PROVERBS

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Abstrak: Makalah ini bertujuan untuk memerikan berbagai ranah target yang mungkin diacu oleh ranah sumber ayam 'chiken' yang terdapat pada peribahasa Indonesia. Dengan mengamati data yang dikumpulkan dari buku peribahasa Indonesia, ditemukan bahwa ayam sebagai salah satu binatang yang banyak dipelihara oleh orang Indonesia dapat dimanfaatkan secara metaforis untuk mengacu berbagai ranah target, seperti dari yang paling umum ke yang paling khusus: keadaan manusia, sifat manusia, masalah, keberuntungan, kebenaran dan kepalsuan.

Kata-kata Kunci: *peribahasa, metafora, ranah sumber, ranah target*

Abstract: This paper aims at describing the various target domains possibly referred by the source domain ayam 'chiken' found in Indonesian proverbs. By observing data mainly collected from Indonesian proverb book, it is found that ayam 'chiken' as one of the most popular animals raised by Indonesian people can be exploited to metaphorically resemble various source domains. Those are from the most common to the least, are i.e human state, human character, problem, luck, and truth and falsity.

Keywords: *proverb, metaphor, source domain, target domain*

A. INTRODUCTION

Human beings, as language speakers, always try in such ways to make all experiences they come across during their life time as concrete as possible. Accordingly, there are many linguistic formulas found in any language whose functions are intended for comparing certain entities which is difficult to perceive to other ones which are more familiar to do so. Those formulas are simile, metaphor, metonymy, proverb, etc. Proverb according to Hornby (2015, p. 1199) is a well known phrase or sentence that gives advice or says something that is generally true. Meanwhile, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian Big Dictionary) states that proverb is phrases or sentences which have fixed structures that are commonly used to analogize something. It contains comparison, advice, way of life, and behaviour conduct (Sugono et als. (2014, p.1055). Proverb can be classified based on various criteria. One of which is the word consisted by the



formula. As such, as far as Indonesian proverb is concerned, there are proverb of *air* 'water', proverb of *abu* 'ash', proverb of *padi* 'rice', and proverb of *ayam* 'chicken', etc. In this matter, air, abu, padi, and ayam constitute more familiar entities compared to anything the language speakers want to resemble. In metaphorical or figurative frame work, they are used as source domains of target domains the speakers intended to. This paper aims to describe various target domains possibly resembled by Indonesian words ayam 'chicken' found in its proverbs. This choice is underlain by the fact that Chicken is one of the Indonesian lexical items mostly used by its speakers for creating idiomatic expressions. More specifically speaking, there are not less than 60 Indonesian proverbs use this lexical unit for creating traditional proverbs (Chaniago & Pratama, 2004, p. 64-69).

Chicken is one of the most common animals raised by farmers in many parts of the world. It is exploited for its eggs, meat, and feather. Chicken egg and meat are consumed for source of animal protein, and its feathers are used for making duster and other handicrafts. In some parts of the world, this animal is raised for pet and rooster fight. In narrower scopes, Bali and Java, chicken are used for gambling medium (Setia, 1987; Geertz, 1992; Wijana, 2008, Wijana, 2021, Wasidi, 1980). The close relation between chicken and human life makes this animal to be the commonest comparison medium to various things and problems faced by them. This matter, in turn, is clearly reflected in the use of language one of which is proverb. Hai Yan (2016, p.21-30) notes that horse is the most common animal used constructing Chinese idiomatic expressions, while Indonesian people use chicken for conducting this purposes. Unfortunately, this issue has not been studied seriously by Indonesian linguists who pay attention to study of idiom or proverb.

B. PREVIOUS STUDIES

So far, the most comprehensive study regarding Indonesian proverbs, has been done By Arimi (2016). Arimi's study about proverb focuses on categorization, structure, and its vitality. Meanwhile, Wijana (2009) is a study on exploitation of proverbial expressions in creating sexual jokes. Rahyono (2015, 2016) studies proverb as one kind among various genres of Javanese formula (*unen-unen*) containing wisdom. He distinguishes Javanese proverb into categories: *paribasan* which does not contain comparison, *bebaskan* which contains comparison, and *Saloka* which compares human beings with other things. Hendrokumoro (2017) focuses his study about Javanese proverb on structure, meaning, and



communicative function. The study done by Wijana (2020, p.249–257) deals with the Javanese proverb interpretation in relation with disease avoidance in overcoming covid-19 pandemic. There is only one study dealt with Indonesian Proverb that try to observe the possibility of target domains might be referred by the word borne within. Wijana (2021a), tries to search various possibilities of target domains can be referred by Indonesian word *air* 'water'. In this paper, he found that water in Indonesian proverbs can be used to figuratively refer to various kinds of target domain. Those are work and activity, sadness and happiness, badness and goodness, help and things, event, place, personal relation, and words have been uttered. This study constitutes repercussion my endeavour in understanding Indonesian proverb by searching another Indonesian word, *ayam* 'chicken' which is also commonly used as source domain in Indonesian proverbial expressions.

C. THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

Like any other figurative expressions, metaphor, simile, idiom, etc., proverbs also contain comparison but in higher level. Metaphor, simile, and idiom contain it in word and phrase level, whilst proverb in sentence level. As far as figurative containing expressions are concerned, proverbs usually contain words exploited as source domain (vehicle) to refer to abstract conception constituting the target domain (tenor) of the comparison (Kovecses 2006, p.347; Wijana, 2016, p.57). Source domain is more familiar entities compared to its target domain (Foley, 2001, p.182). Because chicken is one of the most common live stocks to raise, this animal will become very popular to find in proverbs. Unfortunately, what target domains might possibly referred by this animal, up till now have not been revealed by the scholars. This is the main reason underlain this paper writing.

D. METHOD

Nearly all data presented in this paper are extraction of proverbs found in proverb compilation book entitled *7700 peribahasa Indonesia (7700 proverbs in Indonesian)* (Chaniago & Pratama, 2004, p. 64–69). Firstly, all proverbs containing or under heading of *ayam* 'chicken' are collected. Further, the literal meaning and figurative meaning of those proverbs are carefully observed for identifying the possible target domains referred by the source domain, the word *ayam* 'chicken' itself. Finally, those target domains are classified, and described beginning with the most common and followed with the less common ones.



E. RESEARCH FINDINGS

After having observed the data carefully, it is found that ayam 'chicken' are figuratively used to refer to various target domains in Indonesian proverbs. Those target domains are human state, human character, problem, luck, and truth and falsity. Everything concerns with these target domains will be consecutively describe in the following sections.

Human State

There are many states associated with human being can be the target domains of ayam in Indonesian proverbs. Rich people for instance can be described using phrase *ayam bertelur* 'chicken lays egg'. In (1) ayam represents a rich person, whilst in (2) does with someone who can not exploit their wealth.

1. Ayam bertelur di lumbung padi 'chicken lays egg in rice barn'
2. Ayam bertelur di lumbung padi mati kelaparan 'chicken laying egg in rice barn dies of hunger'

Meanwhile the poor person is figuratively represented by *ayam mengetas* 'scraping chicken' and *ayam makan rumput* 'chicken eats grass' as shown by proverb (3), (4), (5) below:

3. Bagai ayam tidak mengetas, tidak makan 'Like chicken, no eating without scraping'
4. Bagai ayam makan rumput 'like chicken eating grass'
5. Bagai ayam, kais pagi makan pagi, kais petang makan petang 'just like a chicken, morning scraping for morning, and evening scraping for evening'

A weak person is often symbolized by *ayam betina* 'hen', and opposedly a strong one is done by *ayam jantan* 'rooster' eventhough the masculinity is expressed implicatively by its ability or inability to fight in *gelanggang* 'arena'. Consider (6) to (10) below:

6. Digelepur ayam betina 'it is attacked by hen'
7. Dijadikan ayam betina 'It is treated as hen'
8. Dibuat bagai ayam betina, badan ditindih, kepala dipatuk 'It is treated as hen, the body is heaped on, and the head is pecked'
9. Ayam tangkas di gelanggang 'like agile rooster in fighting arena'
10. Baik membawa resmi ayam betina 'It is good for fighting hen'

Meanwhile, *ayam* 'chicken' in (11) and (12) represent a weak person that needs protection.



11. Bagai ayam kehilangan induknya 'like a young chicken loses its mother hen'

12. Ayam berinduk, sirih berjunjung 'chicken has hen, betel plant has abutment'

However, a hopeless person *ayam patah* 'broken legged chicken' sometime gets fortune, like described by (13) below:

13. Mana tahu ayam patah dapat manikam 'Who knows the broken legged chicken gets a precious stone'

A nice looking girl is sometime metaphorically described by *ayam* 'chicken', such as shown by (14) and (15) below which respectively illustrates a beautiful girl and a nice lady loved by two gentlemen.

14. Bagai ayam mengarang telur 'like a chicken create its egg'

15. Ayam seekor bertambang dua 'One chicken has two ties'

Contrarily *ayam* 'chicken' can also symbolize unexperienced girl, such as *ayam gadis* 'young hen' which lays its egg in any place. This is intended to describe any person who does their work unsystematically or disorderly. A woman who has been disgraced by man is figuratively described by *ayam* 'chicken', while the man is done by *musang* 'fox'. Consider (16) and (17) below:

16. Bagai ayam gadis bertelur 'Like young hen lays egg'

17. Ayam telah dimusang 'the chicken is eaten by fox'

People with bad physical condition are analogically compared with *ayam*, such as shown by the following (18) and (19) below:

18. Bagai ayam mabuk tahu 'like chicken drunk of soya bean curd'

19. Bagai ayam dimakan tungau 'like chicken eaten by mite'

The last two proverbs both describe that the people are pale because of the disease effect. Finally, the sound of human breath because of any kind of out breath problem, such as asthma can be compared with the state experienced by *ayam* 'chicken'. See (20) below:

20. Seperti ayam termakan rambut 'Like chicken eating hairs'

Ayam 'chicken' can also represent human in state of getting happiness, such as illustrates by (21) below:

21. Bagai ayam mendapat ubi 'like chicken getting tuber'

Old person or male parent is sometime compared with chicken. In (22) the word *ayam* 'chicken' represents a male parent gives moral teaching to their child, and in (23) it is used to represent many children they possessed as result of polygami.

22. Bagai ayam patuk anaknya 'Like hen pecking its young'

23. Bagai bapak ayam 'Like a rooster'



There are still other emotional states experienced by human beings that can be metaphorically expressed by source domain *ayam* 'chicken'. A dangerous person is represented by *ayam bertaji* 'rooster with the spur on', easily amazed person by *ayam dibawa ke lampok* 'chicken brought to hay pile', and in relation with *musang* 'fox' and *elang* 'eagle', chicken 'ayam' is used to represent fear anxiety.

24. Bagai ayam lepas bertaji 'Like a released chicken with spur on'
25. Bagai ayam di bawa ke lampok 'Like a chicken brought to a hay pile'
26. Bagai ayam melihat musang 'Like chicken seeing fox'
27. Bagai ayam melihat elang 'Like chicken seeing eagle'

Human Character

Coexisting with *musang* 'fox', *ayam* 'chicken' can be intended to refer to 'a good person', while the wicked one is represented by *musang* itself. Consider (28) below:

28. Bagai, musang berbulu ayam 'Like fox in chicken clothing'

Proverb (28) is equivalent of (29) below in which *musang* is resembled with *serigala* 'wolf' and *ayam* 'chicken' with *domba* 'sheep'.

29. Bagai serigala berbulu domba 'Like wolf in sheep clothing'

Arrogant personality of someone is symbolized by the chicken crow or its ability to lay egg which is often not equal to that arrogance. Consider (30) and (31) below. Proverb (30) describes metaphorically the person's arrogance which is not compatible with what he has actually done. In (31) the arrogant person is busy talking about his low ability, but the real clever person always keeps silent, never shows their high ability.

30. Setiap ayam jago berkokok di atas gundukan kotorannya sendiri 'every rooster crows on the heap of its dropping'
31. Ayam bertelur sebutir ribut seluruh negeri, penyu bertelur seribu tiada seorang pun yang tahu 'A chicken usually makes noisy sound the whole country even just lays one egg, while the turtle always keep silent, and noone knows, even though it has laid a thousand eggs.'

In the following (32), the arrogant person often feels that they are the only person can perform the task or job.

32. Seekor ayam tak berkokok, hari tak siangkah 'If just only one rooster not crowing, won't the day become noon?'

Talkative person is often symbolized by *ekor ayam* 'cock tail' that always keeps snout or stuck out. See (33) below:



33. Muncung seperti ekor ayam 'stucked out like chicken tail'. Stuck out is an illustration of human mouth when it is used for talking or expressing unpleasant matter.

Human character is predestined and difficult to change. No matter how hard effort exerted to change it, the condition will be unchangeable. This fixed condition can be illustrated using ayam in Indonesian proverbs. Consider (34) and (35) below that say everyone will return to their origin or anyone will show their own character:

34. Asal ayam ke lesung, asal itik ke pelimbahan 'The origin of chicken is mortar, the origin of duck is garbage dump'
35. Ayam balik ke pelesungan, pipit balik ke penjemuran 'Chicken will return to mortar place, and sparrow to drying place.'

Similar to (34) and (35), (36) and (37) below also concerns with the same matter, predestined human character.

36. Ayam beroga itu meski diberi makan di pinggan emas sekali pun, ke hutan juga perginya 'A jungle fowl even though is fed with a gold plate will finally go to forest'
37. Ayam menetas telur itik, anaknya ke air juga perginya 'Like chicken hatching duck egg, the young will go to the water'.

Problem

Human life is full of problems. They must always take certain actions to cope with them. Some problems are easy to identify, and some of them are difficult to do so. As such, there are two kinds of human problem. Those are clear and unclear or dark problem. The clear one is metaphorically expressed by *ayam putih* 'white chicken', and the unclear by *ayam hitam* 'dark chicken'. See (38) and (39) below:

38. Ayam hitam terbang malam 'Black chicken flies at night time'
39. Ayam putih terbang siang 'White chicken flies at day time'

These last two proverbs have longer versions, as shown by (40) and (41) below:

40. Ayam hitam terbang malam, bertali ijuk, bertambang tanduk, hinggap di kebun rimbun 'Black chicken flies at night time, tie with palm fiber and horn, perches in a lush garden'
41. Ayam putih, terbang siang, hinggap di kayu merasi, bertali benang bertambang tulang 'White chicken flies at day time, perches on leafless wood, tied with string and bone'



ljuk 'palm fiber', *tanduk* 'horn', and *kebun rimbun* 'lush garden' metaphorically symbolized unclear or difficult solved problems. Conversely, *kayu merasi* 'leafless wood', *benang* 'string' and *tulang* 'bone' symbolized a clear and an easy problem. In some proverbs, *ayam putih* can also refer to 'an easy identified person'. Where ever they are, it is easy to recognize. See (42) below:

42. Seperti ayam putih 'like a white chicken'

Some problems faced by human beings are not easy to predict or account what will come next. With regard to this matter, ayam is used to metaphorically express. See (41) to (43) below:

43. Ayam sedang bersabung.

44. Bagai menghitung anak ayam sebelum ditetaskan 'Like accounting young chicken before being hatched'

45. Bagai menggantang anak ayam 'Like measuring young chicken'

Proverb (45) concerns with job or work that is very hard to realize because the instrument used to do is incompatible. Gantang is an instrument for weighing rice. Indonesian has alot of proverbs for expressing such a matter but using other source domains, water 'air'. See (46) to (48) velow:

46. Bagai mencincang air 'like to chop water'

47. Seperti menyurat di atas air Like writing on the water

48. Bagai membandarkan air ke bukit 'like flowing water to the hill'

Luck

Human beings are always expecting lucks and avoiding bad lucks in undergoing their daily life. With regard to luck, a lot of Indonesian proverbs exploit ayam 'chicken' for their figurative expressions, such as shown by the following examples:

49. Ayam ditambat disambar elang 'the tied chicken is swooped by eagle'

50. Ayam menang kampuh tergadai 'The chicken win, but the straps are pawned'

51. Ayam dapat, musang pun dapat 'get either chicken or fox'

Proverb (49) describes luck which dissapears swooped by something represent by elang 'eagle', (50) describes luck which is not eual to its expense, and (51) illustrates two fortunes gained with different source domains *ayam* 'chicken' and *musang* 'fox'.

Truth and Falsity



As an advice, alot of proverbs concerns with truth and falsity. As far as animals used as metaphorical source domains are concerned, the truth often relates with the sound of those creatures. With regard to *ayam* 'chicken', the Indonesian language uses verb *menciap* 'chirping'. As such the chicken and the sound it poroduces can be used to symbolize truth. See (52) below:

52. Seciap bak ayam, sedencing bak besi. 'Chirping like chicken, jingling like iron' Proverb (52) is used to represent agreement has been achived among the people for carrying certain purpose. Idiomatic expressions like (53) and (54) below use describe falsity.

53. Hangat-hangat tahi ayam 'warm like chicken shit'

54. Tidur-tidur ayam 'pretending to sleep'

Proverb (53) can also be used to describe an event which is boisterously talked, but longer and longer will be forgetful.

F. CONCLUSION

Ayam 'chicken' as one of the most familiar animals to raise can be found Indonesian proverbs. This animal is exploited as source domain of various interrelated target domains. Those target domains are human state, human character, problem, luck, and truth and falsity. Because language is human institution, most of the target domains referred by *ayam* 'chicken' related to human state and human character.

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