

# ETHNOSEMANTICS STUDY OF LEXICON “KUBURAN” IN THE TORAJA PEOPLE

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## ETHNOSEMANTICS STUDY OF LEXICON “KUBURAN” IN THE TORAJA PEOPLE

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**Abstract:** This research aims to explain the Toraja people's perspectives regarding the lexicon of *kuburan* existed in their area. This is a qualitative research using the ethnosemantic approach. Data related to the lexicon of *kuburan* in the Toraja people were collected by interviewing the natives and traditional leaders there. The data collected then were analyzed using the componential analysis to find out the features from each lexicon of *kuburan*, so then it can be discovered how the cultural influences of the Toraja people affect the various lexicons of *kuburan*. The result of this research shows that there are nine lexemes of *kuburan* known by the Toraja people, such as *liangsilli*, *liangerong*, *liangtoke*, *liangpak*, *tangdan*, *patani*, *lamunan*, and *pasillirankayu*. These nine lexemes can be classified based on their social stratification level, age category, and any shapes or positions of the grave. Generally, each lexeme has differences in their function and features. The Toraja culture considers death as the orientation in life. Hence, they relate many things to death, and one of them is grave.

**Keywords:** Lexicon, grave ethnosemantics, the Toraja culture, componential analysis

Language is one of the tools used to express everything in human's mind and thought. Language can be defined as the reflection of one's culture existed in society. Someone's understanding toward the culture shaped in the society can be obtained through the understanding toward the language used by the society. It is because the culture formed in human's mind can be understood through language. The linguistic meaning

from a language truly can be determined by the context of culture where that language exists (Clayton, 2017; Farr, Blenkiron, Harris, & Smith, 2018; Pennycook, 2017). Therefore, in a language especially in this case, a lexicon has various perspectives or perceptions from the speakers from the culture, ideology, and others. Thus, one of the ways to understand the culture of the society is by doing the research on language and its lexicons

(Costa & Pickering, 2018; Laplanche, 2018; Yusri & Hidayat, 2016).

To grasp a language, we need to learn the special criterion in that language to be set in the system of phonology, morphology, syntax, and other systems as a universal concept found in every language. These systems are essential to be considered since it is the easiest base to analyze the culture in the research related to the culture of the particular society, for generally according to (Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018) we can identify someone's behavior through her/his language. It can be denied that the phenomena of linguistics need to be viewed as part of culture, and we need to regard the existence of language as the explanation needed and related to cognition and culture.

The relation between language, cognition, and culture can be identified as something that can play the main role to preserve the culture, generally in oral and especially in written form. The identification of culture in a society can be seen from the language used. On the other hand, culture will associate to the concept and perception (Bender, Beller, & Medin, 2017; Donald, 2017; Holmes & Wilson, 2017; Phillips & Malhotra, 2017). The different concept itself can be shown with words and lexicons. Lexicons in a language have the symbol that gives arbitrary relation with its referent. These symbols are deployed in every individual to communicate the ideas to others (Koptjevskaja-Tamm, Rakhilina, & Vanhove, 2015). A different concept can cause a different word in producing the concept. This makes naming each category in every culture different even though the signified is the same.

One of the approaches employed to analyze the culture through language is using ethnosemantic approach. In explaining the data, one of methods which can be used in ethnosemantics is meaning component analysis. Xenia (2019) explains that the meaning of a lexeme can be identified based on the contrast with the other words' meaning, it was supported by some recent studies (Koptjevskaja-Tamm et al., 2015; Ver-hoeven, Steenge, van Leeuwe, & van Balkom, 2017; Williams, 2018). The meaning of a lexical feature can be formed by learning the feature itself with the contrast and other features and it is also emphasized by (Koptjevskaja-Tamm et al., 2015) that meaning can be determined through grouping and contrast.

The componential analysis of meaning can be deployed as the formula to determine and to arrange the definition of a lexicon. Every word, lexeme, or lexical sound has a meaning and the meaning aimed here consists of the number of components called semantic features and formed the whole meaning of a lexicon itself. To find out the differences between one meaning and another meaning, words or phrases need comparison. Through comparisons, we can identify the different meaning between a lexicon and other lexicons clearly. Based on the componential analysis or the identical features stated by (Fahmi Aajami, 2019) that the identical features consist of semantic features like the function, forms, colors, values in the society (measured by money or social award level), what it made of (materials), the parts of it (components), the position, the professions, marital status, and the status of the relatives and other identical items.

A meaning signed by every lexeme consists of the number of component that forms the whole meaning of that word. The component is the realization of semantic features of a lexeme that can be analyzed, explained, or mentioned one by one based on the definition that they have (Amer, 2018). According to (Amer, 2018), a component is a full meaning of a word that consists of some elements that has differences with the other elements. The meaning elements formed a lexeme is called semantic features. Semantic features show that every lexeme or the lexical feature consists of minimum one or some features that form a meaning or a word or a meaning of the lexical feature.

The study with ethnosemantic approach have been conducted by many researchers (Agyekum, 2017; Damayanti & Afidah, 2018; Ottenheimer & Pine, 2018; Watts, 2018). One of studies conducted Hidayah (2011), it is regarding the lexicon of woman in Arabic Language. One of problem statements in Hidayah's research is how the Arabians see a woman. Based on that research, it can be obtained that the riches of the lexicon of woman based on their physical traits in Arabic Language are caused by the factor of culture. The cultural factor related to the riches of the lexicon is influenced by the polygamy practices, slave trading practices, and *jawari* practices (beautiful slaves owned by the Arabic sovereigns).

Another study was conducted by Arif (2007) especially about the lexicons of camel in

Arabic Language. The result of his research shows that various lexicons of camel in Arabic Language represent the existed culture in the Arabic society. Camel was symbolized as wealth and prosperity for the Arabian, so they concern the condition of their camels even before their birth. The other representation of the culture related to the various lexicons of camel is the culture self-pride and wasting money that can also be seen from their hobby to fight and gamble. These culture influence them, and it causes the Arabic society know about the various lexicons for camel.

The variation of lexicons that has been explained before is classified based on the function or benefits from that lexicon. In the Arabic society, there various types of lexicons of 'woman' and 'came' as explained before. It is because the function of 'camel' or 'woman' is really important for the Arabic society. Different from Bahasa Indonesia, in Bahasa Indonesia, we do not have any lexicons of 'camel' and 'woman' as seen in Arabic Language because the culture if the Indonesians and the Arabians related to 'camel' and 'woman' is far different. Both researches using the ethnosemantic approach can be said having a few weaknesses. Because there are some obstacles like distance, time, and cost, it causes the previous researchers cannot observe and visit the country researched. Therefore, the data found are the lexicons of 'camel' and 'woman' in Arabic Language from the literature resources.

In this research, the researcher attempts to observe one of the local phenomena existed in Indonesia to describe how various lexicons found are influenced by the cultural factor by interviewing and blending in directly with Toraja societies. The phenomenon brought up to this research is the phenomena of the Toraja people. The Toraja is one of the ethnic groups based in South Sulawesi. The Toraja is popular with the funeral tradition. The Toraja people know many various lexemes related to death that definitely cannot be found in other society. One of the lexicons related to death in the Toraja people that has many variations is the lexicon of *kuburan*. In this research, the researcher attempts to analyze how the perception of Toraja people is seen about *kuburan* based on the lexemes regarding *kuburan*. From the analysis of this lexicon, it can be described the types of lexicon of *kuburan* in the Toraja people and how they see a grave from their perspective.

## METHOD

This is a qualitative research that deployed the ethnosemantic approach. Through this approach, later we can see the classification of lingual forms on the lexicon of *kuburan* in the Toraja people, and we can also understand the perception of the Toraja people toward grave. Ethnosemantics is one of the approaches that analyzes the relation between language and culture specially to describe how a language is practiced in daily life as a tool to communicate and to socialize. In this case, the language research does not only analyze the structure, but also the function and usage in the context of social culture. Data in this research are the lexicons of *kuburan* existed in the Toraja people. The data collection technique used is deep interview with the natives and the traditional leaders in the Toraja people.

**Table 1. The Description of Research Respondents**

No.	Age	Mother Tongue	Domicile
1.	56	Toraja Language	Makale
2.	62	Toraja Language	Rantepao
3.	50	Toraja Language	Rantepao
4.	58	Toraja Language	Baruppu
5.	63	Toraja Language	Makale
6.	56	Toraja Language	Rantepao
7.	53	Toraja Language	Baruppu
8.	55	Toraja Language	Baruppu
9.	59	Toraja Language	Gandang Batu
10.	62	Toraja Language	Gandang Batu

In this research, the respondents are chosen using purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The main consideration to determine the participants here is the people who have Toraja Language as their mother tongue, and have lived in a long time in Toraja at least 50 years. Snowball Sampling is one of the techniques to take the sample of data sources that are little at first but the bigger gradually. On the first step, the researcher determines the key informant that later will determine the other data sources. The number of respondents in this research is 10 people as the native speakers and the traditional leader that have live in Toraja since they were born. Below is the description of general information regarding the research respondents in this research.

Based on the table 1, it can be identified that from these ten respondents, all of them speak

Toraja language as their mother tongue and have lived in Toraja for more than 50 years. Therefore, it can be concluded that all of the respondents are proper to be chosen as the respondents that relate to the focus of the research proposed here. Moreover, after the data were collected as the lexicons of *kuburan*, the data then were analyzed. The technique of data analysis used is the componential analysis of meaning which aims to describe the meaning of a lexeme assuming that the meaning of each lexeme can be analyzed based on the semantic features from general to specific. Through this general meaning, it then shows the particular differences from each lexeme in lexicons.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Findings**

After doing a systematic and scientific analysis, it found some of lexemes in the lexicon of *kuburan* in the Toraja people. These lexemes are used to symbolize some types of grave in the environment of the Toraja people. The lexemes *kuburan* in the Toraja people explained previously will be described more below.

**Table 2. The Lexicon of *Kuburan* in the Toraja People**

No.	Primary Lexemes	Secondary Lexemes
1.	<i>Liang</i>	a. <i>Liang Silli</i> b. <i>Liang Erong</i> c. <i>Liang Toke</i> d. <i>Liang Pak</i>
2.	<i>Tangdan</i>	-
3.	<i>Patani</i>	-
4.	<i>Lamunan</i>	-
5.	<i>PassilliranKayu</i>	-

As mentioned in the table 2, we can see some of the primary lexemes of *kuburan* in the Toraja people, such as *liang*, *tangdan*, *patani*, *lamunan* and *passillirankayu*. moreover, we can also find some of the secondary lexemes from the lexeme *liang*, namely *liangsilli*, *liangerong*, *liang toke* and *liangpak*. The secondary lexeme in this case is the derivative parts of the primary lexeme. On the data above, the lexeme *liang* has the secondary lexeme, but the lexemes *tangdan*, *patani*, *lamunan*, and *passilliran kayu* do not have secondary lexemes.

Each lexicon of *kuburan* is divided based on the social stratification level, age category of the corpse buried, and the position of the grave. The differences of each aspect can be viewed in the table below.

**Table 3. The Classification of Lexicons Based on the Social Stratification Level**

No.	Lexeme	Social Stratification Level	
		Ordinary People	Nobility
1.	<i>Liang Silli</i>	+	-
2.	<i>Liang Erong</i>	+	+
3.	<i>Liang Toke</i>	-	+
4.	<i>Liang Pak</i>	-	+
5.	<i>Tangdan</i>	-	+
6.	<i>Patani</i>	+	+
7.	<i>Lamunan</i>	+	+
8.	<i>PassilliranKayu</i>	+	-

Table 3 informs that the Toraja people divide the lexicons of *kuburan* based on the category of social stratification level. There are some lexicons of *kuburan* that were specialized to the nobility like *Liang Pak*, *Liang Toke*, and *Tangdan*. Meanwhile, the lexemes *kuburan* for the ordinary people are *PassilliranKayu* and *Liang Silli*. Moreover, the lexicon of *kuburan* like *Patani*, *Lamunan*, and *Liang Erong* are used to the ordinary people and nobility that depend on the economical income.

**Table 4. Classification of Lexicons Based on Age Category**

No.	Lexemes	Age Category	
		Infant	Kids, Teenagers, and Adults
1.	<i>Liang Silli</i>	-	+
2.	<i>Liang Erong</i>	-	+
3.	<i>Liang Toke</i>	-	+
4.	<i>Liang Pak</i>	-	+
5.	<i>Tangdan</i>	-	+
6.	<i>Patani</i>	-	+
7.	<i>Lamunan</i>	+	-
8.	<i>PassilliranKayu</i>	+	-

The Toraja people also divide the lexicon of *kuburan* based their age category. For the Toraja people, the grave of infants must be separated from the grave of kids, teenagers, and

adults. *Lamunan* and *Passiliran Kayuare* designed for the infants that passed away before their teeth grow. Meanwhile, for the other lexemes of *kuburan* aimed for the other ages like kids, teenagers, and adults.

**Table 5. Classification of Lexicons Based on the Position of the Grave**

No.	Lexeme	The Position of the Grave	
		On the Ground or in the Ground	On Higher Position
1.	<i>Liang Silli</i>	+	-
2.	<i>Liang Erong</i>	+	+
3.	<i>Liang Toke</i>	-	+
4.	<i>Liang Pak</i>	-	+
5.	<i>Tangdan</i>	-	+
6.	<i>Patani</i>	+	+
7.	<i>Lamunan</i>	+	-
8.	<i>Passiliran Kayu</i>	-	+

On the table 5, we can also identify that the Toraja people divide the lexicon of *kuburan* based on the position of the grave itself. There are some graves that have the position on the ground or in the ground like *Liang Silli* and *Lamunan*, and there is also placed on the highest position like *Liang Pak*, *Liang Toke*, *Tangdan*, and *Passiliran Kayu*. Moreover, *Liang Erong* and *Patani* are placed on the ground on the highest position. For the further explanation regarding the lexicon of *kuburan* in the Toraja people, it is described below:

### **Liang**

*Liang* in this case is interpreted as hole. *Liang* is a kind of grave that lies in the cave. The meaning of *Liang* here is classified as literal meaning because it directly refers to its referent, a big hole which is in Toraja Language is referred as *Liang*. This grave is naturally formed and sometimes is intentionally created by human by carving it on stone walls. The grave type of *Liang* is usually functioned for several corpses, in other word one grave functions to contain one family or certain community. As explained before, *Liang* lexeme has several secondary lexemes. These lexemes are divided based on their shape or layout, some of them are as follows.

### **Liang Silli**

*Silli* in this case is also included as literal meaning which is interpreted as seen or unhidden. *Liang Silli* is a kind of grave which the entrance or in other word the place to put the corpse inside the cave located at foot hills or rock mountains so that grave is visible or unhidden. The corpses in *Liang Silli* can be seen directly in other word unhidden because the corpses don't use any kind of coffin. Therefore, this kind of burial is called *Liang Silli*. Such form of burial is usually assigned for societies born from *tanakkua-kua*, a descendant of societies with middle to low social level.

### **Liang Erong**

*Erong* in this case is also included as literal meaning which is interpreted as coffin or the like. *Liang Erong* is a kind of grave like *Liang Silli*, but the difference is the corpse uses coffin or in this case *Erong*. The corpses which will be put inside the cave must use *Erong* vessel. Those *Erong* are arranged in such a way based on the consideration of social stratification which is marked by layout, that is the high social stratification are put on the higher place, and otherwise, the *Erong* of societies who only came from low circles, are put on the lowest place. Social stratification in this case is not only marked by its *Erong* layout, but also can be marked by the shape of *Erong* itself. *Erong* that has boat and buffalo shape are for high nobles, then, pig and chicken shape for common and middle societies.

### **Liang Toke**

*Toke* in Toraja language is interpreted as hanging or hung. The meaning of *Liang Toke* is also literal meaning because it refers to its referent. *Liang Toke* is a kind of *Liang* which is put by hanging it on the cave palate. The shape of *Erong* used is specified for boat shape because the one buried this way are high nobles only.

### **Liang Pak**

*Pak* in Toraja Language is a board-shaped stone. The meaning of *Liang Pak* in this case is also literal meaning. *Liang Pak* is a kind of *Liang* created from stone carving product and has the form like board. Inside *Liang* is a big cavity with various measures depend on the needs and capabilities of each family. Burial shape of *Liang Pak* is used to be assigned for high nobles only.

### Tangdan

*Tangdan* is a model of grave that has the form Toraja custom house (Tongkonan) which is usually put on the peak of the hill the place which is intentionally exalted. The materials of *Tangdan* building all are from woods like the custom house building in common. The corpse in the *Tangdan* is put in the room consists of only one chamber with the wall is tightly closed. In the past that grave shape is assigned for high nobles only.

### Patani

*Patani* is a shape of grave which is similar to *Tangdan*, a grave shape that resembles house building. However, the difference lies on the material *Patani* uses. Besides the woods, it also uses cement material. As the time and technology progress, the materials to create this grave shape doesn't use woods anymore, but changed to stone material-based building with the mixture of gravel and other building materials. The location of *Tangdan* is usually put on the peak of the hill while *Patani* is put anywhere depend on the family deal. *Tangdan* in the first place is just for nobles although in the present time there is no such requirement while *Patani* is used by anyone who is economically capable.

### Lamunan

*Lamunan* is a shape of grave by putting in the corpse inside the ground. *Lamunan* is used only for baby who dies before his teeth grow, that is by putting in the corpse inside the pottery then planted inside the ground around the home. *Lamunan* is assigned for nobles and common societies.

### Passilliran Kayu

*Passilliran Kayu* is a shape of grave lies on the wood tree especially for baby who dies before his teeth grow. Wood tree used is from Banyan tree and jackfruit, or other trees that have white-colored sap assuming that the white-colored sap produced by that tree can be a substitution of the baby's breast milk. The corpse is put on the pierced stem then the corpse is put inside and covered with fibers. *Passilliran Kayu* is assigned for societies came from tanakkua-kua only.

### Discussion

The Toraja people define death as a shift of place and status from soul realm to spirit realm. The success of wraith shifts from soul realm to spirit realm is definitely guaranteed with things that can support the wraith journey until reaching its destination. The success guarantee of that wraith journey is done through death ritual. Therefore, things related to the death ritual must be noticed as detailed as possible by the family or relatives whose the person is dead. Therefore, the life of the Toraja people are death-oriented. One thing cared in this matter is that the grave or the place where the corpse buried.

Panyaathisin (2009) and Kephart (2006) explains that words that refer to something that has an important role in a society's culture and life will tend to be more varied lexicon compared to other words. Findings of this study is related with the previous studies. For the Toraja people, grave has an important role as one thing that supports the wraith journey from soul realm to spirit realm. Because its role and function are very important, we can find many various lexicons of grave in the Toraja people which are definitely not found in other people.

Similar finding was revealed by Hamill et al. (2000) and Bakker (2010) conducting relation of language, culture, and society. Some cultures of societies is described through their languages. Plenty of Lexicons "Kuburan" is one of ways of Toraja society in making its culture still exist. Finding of this study found that relation of language, society and, culture is really closed and related.

The difference of finding of this study with the previous studies (Agyekum, 2017; Panyaathisin, 2009; Kephart, 2006; Erom, 2016) is in function and characteristic of lexicon. Every lexicon of grave has function and characteristic with other grave lexicon. Grave lexicon in the Toraja people can be classified based on three aspects, among them is based on social stratification level, based on the age of person who dies and based on the location or the position of grave.

Grave lexicon in the Toraja people can be classified based on the social stratification level of societies. Social stratification level of The Toraja people is divided into two, nobles and commoners. As explained before that there are some grave lexicons that are truly specified for

nobles such as *Liang Pak*, *Liang Toke*, and *Tangdan*. Meanwhile, grave lexicons for commoners is like *Passiliran Kayu* and *Liang Silli*. They distinguish the graves between nobles and commoners because they think that a person from noble ancestry must get a proper place after he dies and is definitely distinguished with others' grave from commoners.

In addition, there are grave lexicons like *Patani*, *Lamunan*, and *Liang Erong* which can be occupied by commoners and nobles depend on economical capabilities form societies. However, they still give distinguishing feature between middle to low commoners, middle to high commoners and nobles. Distinguishing feature meant in this case are like the shape of coffin, the location of coffin, and other distinguishing feature.

In addition to social stratification level, grave lexicons in the Toraja people are also distinguished based on the age of the dead person. For the Toraja people, the grave for babies must be separated from grave for children, teens, and adults. *Lamunan* and *Passiliran Kayu* is addressed for baby who dies before his teeth grow. Meanwhile, other grave lexicons are addressed for other circles such as children, teens, or adults.

For the Toraja people, when the infants die before their teeth grow is considered as the things that are pure and clean, so they are separated from other graves. They don't bury those babies in the ground or in the stone cave, but they bury them in the tree. The higher the babies placed in the tree, the higher the social stratification level of the babies.

The Toraja people also classify grave based on the location or position of the grave. There are some graves which the position is on the ground surface or inside the ground like *Liang Silli* and *Lamunan*, and there are also the one positioned as high as possible like *Liang Pak*, *LiangToke*, *Tangdan*, and *Passilliran Kayu*. Meanwhile, for *Liang Erong* and *Patani* can be placed on the ground surface and positioned as high as possible.

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 The Toraja people think that the higher the degree or level of social stratification, the higher the position of the grave. Therefore, as explained before that there are some graves which can be occupied by commoners and nobles, but there is still the distinguishing feature. For example, *Liang Erong*, if came from commoners the *Liang Erong* is only put on the ground surface, but if came from noble families the *Erong* are put as high as possible.

Finding mentioned previously shows that every lexicon of grave has function and characteristic with other grave lexicon. It means that the lexicons are not only varies, but each variation has a specific meaning which has a different usage.

## CONCLUSION

After conducting scientific review, we can conclude that there are nine grave lexicons known by the Toraja people such as *Liang Silli*, *Liang Erong*, *Liang Toke*, *Liang Pak*, *Tangdan*, *Patani*, *Lamunan* and *Passilliran Kayu*. These nine lexicons are classified based on the social stratification level, age category, and the shape or position of the grave. Based on that phenomenon, it can be said that language and culture are a unity which may be said influencing each other.

Based on the interviews with respondents, we can explain that the variety of grave lexicons in the Toraja people is a reflection of a culture which has existed in the Toraja people. The variety of grave lexicons in the Toraja people is due to cultural factor of the Toraja people who consider death is a life orientation. Therefore, things related to the death ritual must be noticed as detailed as possible by the family or relatives of the passed away person. One that must be cared in this case is the grave or the place where the corpse buried. Every grave lexicon in the Toraja people can be classified based on the condition, function, or benefit of that grave.

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