

Sound Symbolism in Indonesian and English

Dharmawati¹, Mulyadi²

^{1,2}University of Sumatera, Indonesia

Mulyadi.usu@gmail.com

Abstract

This study conducted on sound symbolism in Indonesian and English. The objective of this study is to map the sound symbolism in Indonesian and English in accordance with the typology of sound symbolism. This study is qualitative descriptive method by using the theory of natural semantic metalanguage pioneered by Wierzbicka (1996). The data was taken from text books and newspaper. The research stage in analyzing the data was carried out in some steps, namely data collection, data classifying, and data presenting. The result showed that from four types of sound symbolism, there are two types which have similar pattern both Indonesian and English, they are in coporeal sound symbolism and imitative sound symbolism.

Keywords

sound symbolism;
Indonesian; English;
natural semantic
metalanguage



I. Introduction

Language is a communication tool that has meaning and structure to express concepts or ideas. The concepts or ideas are expressed by symbols. Sound symbolism is a part of language which plays a very important role because the form is related to the meaning directly. It notices the iconic relationship between sound and meaning. Most of the words considered also consists of a conventional arbitrary element. It means that the words are dealing with what could be called by indexical and iconic symbols.

Sound symbolism in Indonesian language generally refers to the rules of English languages. In Indonesian, sound /a/ and /u/ can express 'high' meaning such as in puncak (hill), gedung (building). English words always create some meaning through sounds and symbols. In Indonesian For example in English, the phonestheme gl- in the words glimmer and glowe have meaning of light.

Sound symbolism have been conducted by some researchers. Mulyadi (2008) presented Sound Symbolism in Indonesian. The result showed the non-arbitrary relationship to the set of meanings, especially the sounds that represent the meaning of emotion based of the typology of sound symbolism. Hilke Elsen (2017) also investigated The Two Meanings of Sound Symbolism and the result showed that some sound symbolic effects natural/iconic or habitual relationships between sound and (facets of) referents interact but should be considered separately to gain a more realistic insight into the working of sound symbolism. Jonathan (2015) also explored Sound Symbolism in the Reduplicative Vocabulary of the Shijing. The result of the study showed that a cognitive linguistic perspective offers a tentative exploration of the role of such expressive or ideophonic vocabulary in producing particular poetic effects relating to point of view and to conceptual metaphor. And Maryam (2016) analyzed sound symbolism in three languages, and there are some different sound symbols categories and each has a special degree of iconicity/arbitrariness.

This study conducted by sound symbolism focused on comparative between Indonesian and English by using four types of sound symbolism. The objective of this study is to map the sound symbolism in Indonesian and English in accordance with the typology of sound symbolism.

II. Review of Literatures

The term of sound symbolism is used to explain a sound which reflects the properties of the external world. It is also called by a motivated expression and it also has direct relationship between sound and meaning. Sound symbolism is the term for a hypothesized systematic relationship between sound and meaning (Hinton, Nichols, & Ohala 1994). Abelin (1999) also defined sound symbolism as iconic relationship or indexical relationship between sound and meaning. There are four types of sound symbolism, they are cross modal imitation (vocal gesture), unimodal imitation (onomatopoeia), diagrammatic mappings based on relation (relative) and situational mappings (circumstantial).

Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) is a theory of semantic analysis. It supposes that a sign can be only investigated by its sign. This theory was introduced by Anna Wierzbicka (1991, 1992, 1996). In developing this theory, Wierzbicka was supported by her co-workers, particularly Cliff Goddard (1994, 1998, 1996a, 1996b, 2010). According to Goddard, (1994: 3), MSA theory, is very suitable for practical applications, because it has four basic principles to avoid the occurrence of blurring and rotation in the analysis of meaning. MSA describes and compares semantic core or commonly called by semantic primitives. The primitives drawn from a given natural language combine according to a subset of the morphosyntactic conventions of that language (Goddard & Wierzbicka, 1994, p. 12). In addition to the semantic primitives, other important concepts in the theory of NSM are allolexy, polysemy, and universal syntax of meaning. There are many approaches in the study of semantics and many of them offer their representational system or metalanguage in order to explain lexical meanings. Human creativity in using language is not only seen through new creation of words, but also through various meanings represented by a single phonological form. To provide basic human needs to interact with their surroundings, language is always changing and developing. The word semantics has ultimately prevailed as a name for the doctrine meaning, particularly of linguistics meaning. Semantic is the study of meaning. It is a wide subject within the general study of language. It is important for understanding language in social contexts, as these are likely to affect meaning, and for understanding varieties of English and effect of style (Tarigan, 2021). As the references the writer also tried to find previous study that discussed about the topic, but there was a little researchers that have observed this research. The first representation is as specifier, when it is placed in the front position. The second representation is as complement, when it is as a complement. In this part, the language development of children from an early age to the ages of four or five is discussed. This period is highlighted because it is in the early years children experience tremendous cognitive and language development. This development shows exactly how the language acquisition is being processed. By the end of their fourth and fifth year, most children will have acquired the basic grammatical structures, adult like articulation, morphological construction, and express a range of pragmatic intentions (syntax and semantic) and understand adult's utterances. Through these ages, children will step by step learn and acquire the four linguistic competencies (Tarigan, 2019).

III. Research Methods

This study used a qualitative descriptive method. The descriptive method was applied because the data analysis of this research is presented descriptively as Bogdan and Biklen (1982) stated that qualitative research is descriptive which the data is collected in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers. In conducting this research, the writer used Natural Semantic Metalanguage theory (NSM) introduced by Anna Wierbicka (1996). This theory is applied because the definition of a word is explained by NSM scientifically and the original meaning is also used as a universal meta-language. It means that word concepts are lexicised scientifically. The data was taken from text books and newspaper. The research stage in analyzing the data was carried out in some steps, namely data collection, data classifying, and data presenting.

IV. Discussion

In this section, it will highlight several points on sound symbolism in Indonesia and English. The theory used to investigate sound symbolism in Indonesia and English is Natural Semantic Metalanguage theory (NSM) introduced by Anna Wierbicka (1996). The result is be presented from different angles. It analyzed based on type of sound symbolism by Hinton (1994). He stated that based on the typology there are four types of sound symbolism, they are Corporeal Sound Symbolism, Imitative sound symbolism, Synesthetic Sound Symbolism, and Conventional Sound Symbolism.

4.1 Corporal Sound Symbolism

Corporeal sound symbolism is certain sounds. This describes sounds outside of language which are directly related to meaning by indicating the emotional or physical state of the speaker (Hunter, 2007). It has function to state of the internal speakers, physical, and emotional state such as sneezing, voice the feelings, interjection. The sounds are closely related to a state of emotional and physical in intonation. The Corporeal sound symbolism and their meaning is shown in the table below.

Table 1. The Corporeal sound symbolism in Indonesian and English

Indonesia	English	Sound
haachim	achoo	Sneezing
uhuk uhuk	cof cof	coughing
<i>zzzz</i>	<i>zzzz</i>	Snoring
haoh	huh	Yawning
aouh	au	Pain
ha	oh	Surprising
iis	hi	Disgusting
wah	wow	Amazing

From the table, it can be seen that coporeal sound symbolism produced by sound of human between Indonesian and English is about the same. The place and manner of articulation of the sounds of human correlates with the manner and place of the action of

human's embody. Interjection is also included in corporeal sound symbolism. The sound of interjection in Indonesian and English involves vocal /a/,/i/ and /o/.

4.2 Imitative Sound Symbolism

Imitative sound symbolism has direct relationship of sound and meaning. It is also called by onomatopoeia. Onomatopoeia is defined as a word that mimics the sound it names. It depicts one of the figures of speech or language features that imitate the natural sounds by words such as “crunch, gurgle, plunk, and splash” (Regot, 2015). It describes an object, movement, or situation so that it feels more alive and concrete.

Onomatopoeia in both Indonesian and English has an onomatopoeic type which forms a imitative word. Sound of animal is found both in English and in Indonesian, especially for the same animal. The example can be presented below.

Table 2. Imitative Sound Symbolism in Indonesian and English

Animal	Indonesian	English
Bee (<i>buzzing</i>)	Ngung	Buzz
Cat (<i>meowing</i>)	Meong	Meow
Cow (<i>mooing</i>)	Moo	Moo
Mosquito	Nging-ning	Buzz
Dog (<i>barking</i>)	Guk-guk	Bow-bow
Duck (<i>quacking</i>)	Kwek	Quack
Goat (<i>bleating</i>)	Mbeek	Baa

From the examples, we can take the conclusion that onomatopoeia in Indonesian is not far different from English. The imitation of insect sounds, the onomatopoeia in Indonesian is dominated by velar nasal sound [ŋ], while in English is dominated by fricative sound [z]. The physical aspect of sound is captured by the human sense of hearing is actually the sound produced by the vibration of the flapping of the insect's wings, not from the sound produced by the vocal cord organs. English can produce most of animal specific sounds. Some animals have the same and different sounds. The sound of the cat and cow produce sound that begin with /m/. In Indonesian, we know that verbs have an important role in producing some sentences. Although there is not available verbs for animals sound and there is animal sound which has no equivalent because of types of animal in Indonesia such as camel. This imitative sound symbolism or onomatopoeia has similar form in English and Indonesian that is made from the one, two or more syllable words and reduplicative words.

4.3 Sound of Things or Nature

Sound of things or nature can be produced by their own sound or helping the third person. The sound example can be seen below.

Table 3. Sound of Things or Nature in Indonesian and English

Sound	Indonesian	English
Heart beat	Dag dig dug	Lup dup
Horning	Tin tin	honk

Shoting	dor	bang
Train	Tut tut	Cho cho
Wind	sirr	wuizz

From the table above, it can be concluded that the things cannot produce their own sounds. It is needed the third person to help to produce the sound of things like the sound of train. They need the third person to produce 'tut tut' in Indonesian and 'tin tin' in English. It is different from the sound of nature. It doesn't need the third person to produce sound. Sound of nature produce sound by itselfs such as wind produces 'sirr' in Indonesian and 'wuizz' in English. The sound is not far from the nature characteristics. There is also reduplicative onomatopoeia, in words puff-puff, chitter-chatter, and moo-moo.

4.4 Synesthetic Sound Symbolism

Synesthetic sound symbolism is the imitation with speech sounds of nonacoustic phenomena (Hunter, 2007). Synesthetic sound symbolism is actually symbols of non-vocal concepts such as movement, size, form, etc. This type has indirect relationship between sound and meaning. Words of this category were classified into different groups concerning their meaning.

In Indonesia, sound symbolism is found to indicate of size like 'Besar' (big) is formed in semantic component 'benda atau orang ini besar' (this thing or person is big) / this person is big' is presented by vocal /a/, example bapak (father), badak (rhino), banyak (many/much). And sound symbolism is also found where vowels ending /i/ and /e/ which is usually used to indicate small objects or the concept of 'kecil' (small), example titik (full stop/period), bintik (freckle), adik (little brother/sister). In the theory of MSA the sound /u/ contains a semantic componen which is addressed to 'panjang' (long) in 'benda ini panjang' (the thing is long), example tanjung (cape), mancung (sharp nose), kalung (necklace). And the sound /a/ is also addressed to 'tinggi' (tall), for example puncak (top), ombak (wave), lonjak (high), and example:

1. Banyak spesies gajah di Tangkahan, Sumatera Utara. (Most of elephants species are in Tangkahan, North Sumatera)
2. Kami akan mendaki puncak gunung Sibayak (We will claimb the top of mount Sibayak)

The word gajah (elephants) in sentence (1) is addressed to big and large animal. And the word puncak (top) in sentence (2) has meaning as the highest position or part from the surface of something.

Synesthetic sound symbolism in English show that the combination 'gl' expresses the idea of smoothness or shiny, as in the words: glow, gleam, glimmer, glare, glisten, glitter, glacier, dan glide, examples:

1. She used to like putting glitter on her lips
2. My mother has a healthy glow in her cheeks

The examples sentence 1 and 2 has two different words with the same meaning, that is shine with reflected ligh or bright

There is combination 'sw'. The combination conveys the idea of a long movement, such as related to a long movement, as in the words: sweep, swing, swipe, swoop, swish, sway, examples:

1. My son, Kaka sweeps his room every morning
2. You must swipe card to open this door

The sentences use verb sweep and swipe. These verbs indicate the activity which do in long movement by using tools. The vowel /o/ or /u/ represents objects that are round,

long, large or cylindrical. Words like gun, motorway, thumb, crank, bedwetting, weevil, and bottle have the meaning of round and long.

A rhyme-‘ump’ conveys the idea of a rounded or at least non-pointy, as in the words: hump, lump, bump, mumps, plump, rump, and stump. Example bump, it refers to something weight or slow moving but it is no contacting of a surface. However, all words that have rhyme-‘ump’ have the same meaning or correlation like Trump because the word Trump is the name of the person, example:

By having explanation, it can be concluded that in synesthetic sound symbolism no correspondence is exactly seen between their concepts and symbols.

4.5 Conventional Sound Symbolism

Conventional Sound Symbolism is conventional and arbitrary. This is the association of certain phonemes, consonant clusters, or syllables with particular meanings (Hunter, 2007).

Indonesian language has a limited vocabulary and it is formed by consonant clusters, except borrowed words. Indonesian structure is usually formed by patterns vowel-consonant (VC), consonant-vowel (CV), and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC).

Phonestheme /gel/ has semantic component ‘movement’ such as ‘gelombang’ (wave), ‘gelagat’ (sign), ‘gelora’ (enthusiasm), ‘geleng’ (nod). There is syllable /bu/ has semantic component ‘kebundaran’ (roundness) as in words ‘bumi’ (earth), ‘bukit’ (hill), ‘bulat’ (round).

In conventional Sound Symbolism, English syllable allows several patterns of consonants and vowels, by patterns vowel-consonant (VC), vowel (V), consonant-consonant-vowel (CCV), consonant-vowel (CV), and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC). The senses of conventional sound symbolism in English carrying through the consonant clusters. The cluster /sp/ has semantic component ‘breathe noise through nose’ such as sniff, snap, snort. There is cluster /sp/ that has semantic component ‘water dispersion’ in words spray, splay, splatter. And cluster /gr/ has semantic component ‘harshness; dissatisfaction’ such as in grunter, grown. By having this explanation, it is known that Indonesian and English have limited cluster.

V. Conclusion

Sound symbolism in Indonesian and English is analyzed by four types, they are Corporeal, Imitative, Synesthetic and Conventional Sound Symbolism. In corporeal sound symbolism produced by sound of human between Indonesian and English is about the same and in imitative sound symbolism, both Indonesian and English have the same forms onomatopoeia that is made from the one, two or more syllable words and reduplicative words. For synesthetic sound symbolism both Indonesian and English show that phonetically natural words are systematically related to the expression of size. Indonesian syllable is arranged by VC, CV, and CVC. English syllable is arranged by VC, V, CCV, CV, and CVC.

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