

Bidayuh Proverbs with Animal and Plant Elements: A Reflection of Culture and Philosophy¹

Florence G. Kayad² and Mary Saman, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Date Received: 14 September 2021 Revised: 18 October 2021 Accepted: 26 October 2021

Abstract

Indigenous communities refer to animals and plants extensively in their folk proverbs. In this study an examination was conducted involving Bidayuh proverbs, with animal and plant elements, of the Bau Jagoi community in Sarawak, Malaysia by (a) categorising them according to the type and frequency of animal and plant elements used, and (b) analysing their implied and implicit meaning using inquisitive semantics approach. Data were collected from interviews with 12 Bidayuh informants aged 23 to 84 who lived in the same village. A total of 33 Bidayuh proverbs were elicited comprising 20 with animal elements and 13 with plant elements. The behaviours of the animals were associated with mostly negative behaviours in human whereas the characteristics of the plants were used to describe desirable human traits and appearance. The proverbs were also used to describe complex situations, teach moral values and good manners, express intense feelings, and give advice about life. Their deep meaning was related to the people's living environment and way of life, their thinking and ethics, their beliefs, and customary practices, which reflect their culture and philosophy.

Keywords: *Bidayuh proverbs, elements, inquisitive semantics, culture, philosophy*

Introduction

Proverbs are widely used common expressions by a society to communicate meaning and intention literally or figuratively. Mieder (2004, p. 3) defined proverbs as "a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorable form and that are handed down from generation to generation." Proverbs are a form of oral tradition of a society, and they serve many purposes such as imparting knowledge and life lessons, giving warning and advice, teaching moral values, expressing feelings and attitudes, and encouraging others. Ideas for folk proverbs are drawn from everyday experiences and common observations in various situations and contexts. Indigenous people who live close to nature such as in remote villages and forests generate creative proverbs by observing their natural environment, including animals and plants they encounter in their daily activities, to communicate their society's way of life, culture, and world view. Animals and plants are usually used symbolically or metaphorically in proverbial utterances. Despite the importance and prevalence of these natural elements in the formation of folk proverbs, there is little research and documentation in this field (Shamsutdinova et al., 2017).

The present study focused on proverbs of Bidayuh, the fourth largest ethnic group in Sarawak, a Malaysian state on the island of Borneo. Bidayuh are mostly found in the western end of Sarawak and they originally lived in the hinterland of Borneo as they were mostly swidden farmers and practiced communal living in a long house. As such, the traditional Bidayuh way of life, customs, and practices were impacted by the forest environment (Ridu et al., 2001). However, by 2010, only 25% of the Bidayuh population were still engaged in agriculture, of which 81.4% are Christians, and while most still live in rural areas, they have better access to nearby cities (Kheung & Aduce, 2018). This illustrates that modern Bidayuh are becoming more educated and working in various economic sectors. Furthermore, many younger generation Bidayuh, particularly those who are educated, do not speak Bidayuh at home (Kayad & Ting, 2021). One reason is because the Bidayuh language has

¹ This paper was first presented at the 3rd International Conference on Language Studies (iCLS 2021) held on 8–9 September 2021 at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Kota Samarahan, Malaysia.

² Corresponding author's email address: kflorence@unimas.my

many distinct varieties, which are mutually unintelligible (Noeb & Ridu, 2006). Since Bidayuh proverbs represents its oral tradition and the ideas for the proverbs are drawn from traditional living environment and way of life, those who no longer live in close proximity to the traditional environment may be unaware of their folk proverbs. Consequently, modern Bidayuh may not understand the Bidayuh culture and philosophy reflected through proverbs. To the authors' knowledge, there is little documentation of Bidayuh proverbs, much less study on their function and meaning. For folk proverbs to become an intangible cultural heritage, they need to be recognised and used widely in the society (UNESCO, 2003).

The objectives of the present study were to: (a) categorise Bidayuh proverbs according to the type and frequency of animal and plant elements used, and (b) analyse their implied and implicit meaning using inquisitive semantics approach. The findings of this study will add to the documentation of Bidayuh folk proverbs and offer insights for their meaning and interpretation.

Literature Review

Proverbs with animal and plant elements play an important role in the life of indigenous folks. Pareek and Trivedi (2014) found that Indian folk proverbs of Rajasthan reflect the common folk's deep insight, common sense, and practical wisdom. Rajasthan folk proverbs with plant elements are used to show plant-animal associations, tell fortune, give advice, demarcate the regions, and forecast the weather.

Folk proverbs with animal and plant elements are commonly found in many cultures of the world and they play an important role in society. Lauhakangas (2019) noted that animal metaphors are used frequently in proverbs to reflect human behaviours, usually negative and unacceptable behaviours. This is affirmed by a study on folk proverbs of Semai, an indigenous tribe who live in the forests in West Malaysia (Nornis & Saamah, 2013). The 22 types of animals commonly found in Semai proverbs were domestic and wild animals they frequently encounter, impacting their daily lives. All except one Semai animal proverbs symbolised negative human traits and behaviour. It was noted that the Semai people were able to capture the behaviours of the animals vividly for comparison with human behaviours because they are keen observers of their natural environment. The animals and plants used in the Semai proverbs are those relevant to their ethnic way of life and world view. When compared to Malay proverbs and sayings reflecting the same concept, the animal and plant used in Semai proverbs may differ but the role and function such as to educate, to provide reminder and warning on customary practices and beliefs remain.

The type and function of animals used in proverbs from the same region may be similar or different according to determining factors such as physical environment, sub-cultural heritage, linguistics, and religious sub-cultures as noted by Salamh and Maalej (2018) in comparing animal proverbs of the two dialects of Arabic: Saudi Arabia and Tunisia. They found that most of the proverbs showed a negative evaluation of human behaviours and characteristics through the choice of animals and the selected target concepts. While the two Arabic dialects may use the same animal names, the focus differed. They noted that animal proverbs are salient in the socio-physical environment of Saudi Arabia and Tunisia.

Studies on proverbs focus on comparing proverbs across languages and cultures for purposes such as inter-cultural communication and cultural awareness, and language education. Comparative studies of proverbs would involve translation of proverbs across languages, which has been shown to be challenging as linguistic and cultural knowledge and skills are required. Zhang (2016) emphasised that because language and culture are intertwined, cultural context is important to understand a proverb. He compared Chinese and English proverbs to determine their cultural sources and cultural implications. It was revealed that both Chinese and English proverbs draw their sources from their respective living environments, literary traditions, religious beliefs, customs, and habits. Zhang (2016) called for a dynamic view of the culture transmitted in proverbs, as old proverbs may portray traditional and past cultural values rather than current ones. However, Shamsutdinova et al. (2017) showed that proverbs, even traditional ones, are still used widely at the

present time and in this technological era, and that they can be updated while retaining their original meaning. They compared proverbs in English, Arabic, and Tatar used in the press and found that proverbs appear in three main forms, namely in fixed form, in variation as an input for creating proverbial expression, and in a notably new form such as modified words and order. They concluded that traditional referents in proverbs and sayings may be adjusted to suit the needs of the context, situation, and purpose of communication. This proves that proverbs and sayings, even the traditional ones, are still relevant today but they need more effort to be appreciated.

The uniqueness of the language of proverbs: concise, symbolic, and expressively memorable, makes it a potential resource in education. Syzdykov (2014) compared English and Kazakh proverbs and sayings that are similar or completely different when translated and found that proverbs can be used as a stimulating resource in language teaching. Thus, the effort of translating and using the proverbs in the language classroom provides opportunities for teaching language skills and developing creativity, as well as cultural awareness. Folk proverbs are a rich resource of linguistic and cultural knowledge of a society. They demonstrate the ingenuity of the speakers in generating proverbs and sayings to reflect their wisdom, culture and philosophy in life. Knowing the function and meaning of folk proverbs will contribute to a better understanding of the people's language, their way of life and thinking, and beliefs.

Tosam (2014) argued that oral tradition such as folk proverbs are important sources of philosophy of a culture. He emphasised that while definitions of philosophy vary, philosophy is related to a way of life, and a form of thinking for guiding behaviour, broadening intellectual horizon, and scrutinising beliefs and values. He demonstrated how critical analysis of traditional values and ideals, some of which are embedded in proverbs can help in the understanding and resolution of contemporary issues. Thus, the aim of the present study was to analyse Bidayuh proverbs containing animal and plant elements to determine their implied and implicit meaning that reflect Bidayuh culture and philosophy as depicted in their customs and practices, values and beliefs, way of thinking, and ethics. An understanding of the functions and meanings of the Bidayuh folk proverbs will enhance understanding of Bidayuh culture and philosophy, which will in turn make documentation and dissemination of the oral tradition more meaningful especially to the younger generation.

Methodology of the Study

Data in this qualitative study on Bidayuh proverbs was obtained from interviews with 12 informants who were native speakers of the Bau Jagoi Bidayuh language variety. The sampling method was purposive and convenient sampling, making use of the snowball effect. The informants were selected based on the following criteria: they lived in the village and were active members of the community, they were willing and able to spend time to be interviewed, they were able to communicate and provide information in their native language to obtain the Bidayuh proverbs in their original form and language, and they were able to translate or explain the proverbs in their own language and, if necessary, in another language such as Malay or English.

The informants were community members of the second researcher's village, and they were recommended by her relatives. The village is about 50 km from the city and is surrounded by the forest and a river. Decades ago, before a road was built, villagers had to walk eight hours to reach the village. There were six female informants aged 23 to 80, and six male informants aged 29 to 84. Apart from a 55-year-old housewife and an 84-year-old man, who stated that they did not have any formal education, all the informants had a secondary school education. The interviews were conducted in the Bidayuh Bau Jagoi language and audio recorded with their consent. Open ended questions were used to elicit information on what Bidayuh proverbs involving animals and plants they could recall or use. They were also asked to explain the meaning of the proverbial expression and how it is used in a sentence. Interviews were conducted in a non-threatening environment, such as at the informants' place and at their convenience like in the evenings or during weekends. Data collection was considered complete when no new proverbs were elicited from the informants in the time given for the study.

The data were transcribed and analysed using inquisitive semantics approach (Jalaluddin, 2014) to interpret the meaning of the proverbial statements at multiple levels namely, logic, cognitive, and philosophy. The principle of relevance (Sperber & Wilson, 1986), which makes use of context and assignment of referent in the statements, facilitated the interpretation of implied meaning. In this approach, relevance is maximised with more cognitive effects for less processing effort. Bridging Cross Reference allows the dependence on context from antecedents found in the utterances, as well as additional premises obtained from the context. The proverbial utterances were examined further by probing the philosophy of the speaker as reflected in the choice of words or terms used, which can be related to various aspects including culture, geographical location, environment, and world view. In the inquisitive semantics approach, issues are defined in terms of what it takes to resolve them (Ciardelli et al., 2019).

Results and Discussion

A total of 33 Bidayuh proverbs were elicited from the 12 informants in the study: 20 with animal elements in and 13 with plant elements. The distribution of the proverbs according to type of animal and plant elements used and their frequency of use are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 *Distribution of Bidayuh proverbs and sayings according to animal and plant type*

Type of Animals	Type of Plants
Birds (11)	Leaves (3)
Crocodiles (2)	Sour/Dayak eggplant (2)
Dogs (2)	Tapioca (1)
Insects (2)	Banana stem (1)
Rat (1)	Coconut leave's rachis (1)
Goat (1)	Bamboo (1)
Mosquito (1)	Flower (1)
	Yam (1)
	Chili (1)
	Rattan (1)
Total: 20	Total: 13

While animal related proverbs were used more frequently ($n = 20$), they were less in types of animals ($n = 7$) compared to types of plants used ($n = 10$). Both domestic and wild animals were used to reflect and compare human conditions and behaviour. The plants ranged from local vegetables and fruits to flowers and wild plants (rattan and bamboo) to describe mostly appearance or condition for comparison. The animals and plants are familiar to the Bidayuh who lived in the village or who were familiar with the traditional Bidayuh living environment.

The animal related proverbs could be categorised according to their functions concerning behaviour, appearance, and senses as listed below:

Behaviour:

1. *Towoh in sikukuak* (Laughing like a *sikukuak*—bird of omen)
Ungraceful behaviour of women who laugh or talk too loudly.
2. *Busit in bobak konang* (Talkative like a magpie)
Hyperactive behaviour like an inquisitive and talkative child.
3. *Mun siyuak ja, jam bitokak jam bituluah* (Like a hen cackling when laying eggs)
Negative behaviour of women who make a big fuss when doing chores.
4. *Kutiang sowok bisawot- bisawot* (Tailorbirds calling incessantly)
Negative behaviour of gossiping and slandering, usually of womenfolk.
5. *Kodak tikuwan tanon tanduk a* (Like a hornbill showing its horn/casque)
Negative behaviour of boastfulness.
6. *Bobak kutiang* (Tailorbird mouth)
Negative behaviour of talking recklessly (lest the evil spoken will happen).

7. *Man mun bu'ai* (Eating like a crocodile)
Negative behaviour of a being greedy or clumsy.
8. *Akan mun kosuang madas* (Just like a dog)
Negative behaviour of being stubborn or unashamed.
9. *Kosuang lamang* (Restless dog/dog in heat)
Negative behaviour of uncontrolled passion (usually among young people)
10. *Sinok raja koming* (Huge goat)
Negative behaviour of an unhygienic person who does not like to take a bath.
11. *Bidaluag in sidonging* (Noisy like a mosquito)
Negative behaviour of nagging and speaking senseless or hurtful things.
12. *Jaat-jaat bu ai, ja at iyoh aluak ponai lagi jaga onak a* (Even a ferocious crocodile can take care of its baby)
A surprising, good behaviour in a bad person: a reminder that everyone is capable of doing good.
13. *Silow ponu mun siguduah* (Walking slowly like a millipede)
Behaviour—doing things slowly can be good (perseverance) or bad (missing deadlines).
14. *Sikolah duoh badong* (Going to school with a beetle)
Behaviour—while it is admirable to attempt the impossible, it can be futile.

Behaviour/Appearance:

15. *Mun tukuk sisip* (Mouth like hummingbird beak)
Negative behaviour of sulking for a long time.
16. *Siyuak mutut* (Chicken farting)
Looking sickly and unspirited.
17. *Mun monig* (Like a flowerpecker—tiny bird)
Small (petite) in size but smart and lively.

Appearance:

18. *Kodak itik ponu* (Like a duck walking)
Funny way of walking due to big heavy buttocks; effeminate man.
19. *Mun jipon babu* (Like rat teeth)
Appearance—bad teeth but don't judge people by their looks.

Appearance/Senses:

20. *Boton buak* (Owl eyes)
A person with big eyes; good and sharp eyesight.

From the literal meaning, most of the animal related proverbs focus on the negative behaviours of certain animals, which can be compared to negative behaviours in humans. The main purpose of the comparison is to remind human beings to avoid such negative behaviours. The implied meaning is to practice good manners and acceptable behaviour that reflect the moral values of the community. Nonetheless, from the Bidayuh perspective, there is a good side of a seemingly negative behaviour in (2), (13), and (14). For instance, in (13) a person who is slow moving can be considered foolish or diligent, depending on the context and outcome. Using animals to imply undesirable looks, such as having bad teeth (19), moves the focus from the target person to the animal for an impersonal effect, in line with Bidayuh ethics of being discreet to save face. The following is an example of how the implied and implicit meaning of an animal related proverb is analysed using the inquisitive semantics approach to reflect Bidayuh culture and philosophy:

Doik gik nya'a muji ulah mu kodak tikuwan tanon tanduk a
No people praise behaviour your like hornbill saying horn its

Nobody approves of your behaviour (which is) like a hornbill showing its horn.

Literally, this proverbial statement means that showing off is not an acceptable behaviour. Using Bridging Cross Reference, the hornbill's behaviour is connected to the antecedent, which is the addressee's behaviour. The information that "nobody approves" reinforces the interpretation that it is a negative behaviour. Thus, the imagery of a hornbill flaunting its horn depicts boastfulness, which is a detestable behaviour in a human and, in this case, a member of the Bidayuh community. To probe further why the hornbill and not any other bird is used in the comparison, analysing and connecting other aspects such as scientific information on hornbills (biology, geography) with Bidayuh culture and way of life will facilitate a deeper understanding of the folk proverb.

Tikuwan is the Bidayuh name for the rhinoceros hornbill (*Buceros rhinoceros*), a very large species (c.90–100cm) of forest hornbill found on the Borneo Island. This majestic bird has a pitch-black body and neck that holds an enormous bright orange bill with a prominent red horn-shaped casque. It is the state bird of Sarawak and a protected species. Rhinoceros hornbills are usually seen in pairs, and smaller birds, including smaller hornbill species, will not eat together with them. Bidayuh people who live in villages close to the forests recognise and revere this bird for its beauty and uniqueness; its tail feathers are prized possession and cultural adornment worn during special occasions and rituals. However, the image of the iconic bird flaunting its horn, particularly in a congregation with other birds that are smaller and less impressive, signify unnecessary boastfulness. In this context of the forest and other birds, the great hornbill has a flaw, which is a tendency to flaunt itself. Moreover, according to a Bau Jagoi fable, the hornbill was a proud bird that refused to mingle with other animals in the forest. The other animals disliked the hornbill because he would boast of his beauty and greatness by flaunting his horn during their gatherings. Flaunting the obvious reflects boastfulness, which is unacceptable in the Bidayuh culture and way of life that emphasise the values of humility and kindness.

In the traditional setting, Bidayuh live a communal lifestyle, everyone must respect one another and help each other, especially the poor and the weak in the community. Similar to the Kom people in Africa (Tosam, 2014), Bidayuh practice communitarian ethics whereby a person is essentially interdependent and is expected to live, interact, and share with other members of the community. Although according to science, it is natural for hornbills to keep to their own species and that other birds prefer not to eat at the same time with them, Bidayuh ethics require members of the community to practice communal living values, such as humility and consideration. As exaggeration is usually employed in proverbs, the hornbill is the most obvious and effective type of bird to convey this proverbial message.

Next, plant related Bidayuh proverbs can also be categorised according to their functions concerning behaviour, appearance, and senses as listed below:

Behaviour:

1. *Kodak boid duoh bunyuah* (Like betel leaf and chalk)
Positive behaviour: good collaboration is productive and effective.
2. *Bilayar kodak down kapal* (Sailing like kapal leaf)
Positive behaviour: the importance of perseverance in any situation in life.

Appearance (for warning or advice):

3. *Bogok lolu down koyuh* (Many traces/marks of leaves)
Warning: beware of unseen dangers; to be careful and vigilant.
4. *Idip di tijuk saang* (Living at the tip of chilli)
Being in a difficult situation such as making a difficult decision.
5. *Mun tiung moduak* (Like rotten sour brinjal—*Solanum lasiocarpum* Dunal.)
Reminder that beauty is fleeting.
6. *Kodak buak tiung duoh abu* (Like sour brinjal and *abu* fruit—looks like brinjal)
Reminder that looks can be deceiving.

Appearance:

7. *Mopuk suik mun isin banuak* (White like the flesh of tapioca root)
Flawless beauty: ideal smooth skin and white complexion of a woman.
8. *Tulang umbut* (Inner stem of banana tree)
Soft and gentle; usually to describe a woman.
9. *Mun ilieng butan* (Like the rachis—thin stalk of a coconut leaf)
Skinny but not necessarily weak.
10. *Bunga kupuak* (Village flower—beauty)
Most beautiful woman in the village.
11. *Trodan jadin jojok* (Wild creepers with thorns that can be smoothed as material for making baskets)
Positive transformation, particularly related to raising children: a weakness or poor attitude can be changed/improved.

Senses:

12. *Nyam tilobied toling* (Feels like cut by sharp bamboo)
Excruciating pain.
13. *Tiik-tiik kuduk* (Itch from yam)
An intense and persistent itch

From the literal meaning, most of the plant related proverbs focus on appearance for the purpose of describing a complex situation or ideal condition that warrants advice or warning. For example, in (6), the fleeting nature of beauty is described vividly by the changes in the local eggplant from smooth bright skin when ripe to shrivelled dry skin when rotten. Such an image of a vegetable that is easily planted and commonly eaten by Bidayuh is a practical reminder that outer beauty does not last and so the implied meaning is to be humble, which reflects inner beauty. For the Bidayuh, ideal physical beauty is described as having a white smooth complexion like the flesh of the tapioca root (no 8) and an exotic local flower (no 11). While the latter is universal, the former is unique to traditional Bidayuh culture where tapioca is a staple food when rice is scarce. Unlike animal related proverbs, Bidayuh proverbs with plant elements denote the positive characteristics of plants for humans to emulate. For instance, the characteristics of leaves (no 1–2), as they interact with other natural elements, reflect the positive attitude and behaviour human beings should have to succeed. Further, plant elements can be used to describe intense feelings such as pain (no 12). Bidayuh who experienced a cut by wild bamboo or an itch from yam can appreciate the intensity of the feeling described by the use of such an image. The following is an example of how the implied and implicit meaning of a plant related proverb is analysed using the inquisitive semantics approach to reflect Bidayuh culture and philosophy:

Nakit-nakit ngek ponu neh ngan mu' u noh mala jak a doik tronah mun idip mu,
Careful walk because you always no direction in life your
nak ngek pu'an a bogok lolu down koyuh bih.
not know many traces leaves

Walk carefully as you tend to lack direction in your life, watch for traces of leaves.

Literally, this proverbial statement serves as a warning about hidden dangers along life's path. The danger signs are provided by the (many) marks or traces of leaves. Using Bridging Cross Reference, the image of many traces of leaves can be connected to the premise of walking carefully along life's path. To understand why leaves, and not any other plant parts, are used to symbolise danger signs, relevant aspects such as geographical (natural) environment, local customs and practices are considered. Traditional Bidayuh communities live in villages close to the forests where they hunt for food or plant crops like hill paddy, or even enjoy a bath in the river. Thus, the natural

environment is part of their daily life, making them keen observers of nature. For example, a pile of leaves in their path or in the water is recognised as a potential hiding place for harmful animals such as snakes. The customary practice in such situation would be to avoid the pile of leaves and take a different path or move to other areas of the river. This practice shows that they are not only aware of the danger signs provided by nature, but also keep the harmony with nature by not disturbing the potential harm that lies under the pile of leaves. The underlying philosophy is to “live and let live” in that even if the animal under the pile of leaves is dangerous, there is no need to ‘disturb’ it as there is enough room in nature for all living creatures. Besides, when left alone, the animal under the pile of leaves cannot pose any danger to the human being. Traditional Bidayuh belief is animistic whereby all living things including plants and animals have a spirit and so the philosophy is mutual respect. In other words, a peaceful co-existence among all living things is emphasised. This seemingly simple proverbial expression, which describes a condition of leaves, reflects the people’s living environment, their daily activities, their practical wisdom, their customary practices, and their world view.

The study corroborates other studies on folk proverbs (Nornis & Saamah, 2013; Pareek & Trivedi, 2014) whereby the negative and positive behaviours of the animals and characteristics of the plants are associated with desirable and undesirable behaviours in human. Furthermore, the symbolic use of animal and plant elements in folk proverbs provides vivid and creative reflections of folk wisdom and way of life. The implied and underlying meaning reflects the culture and philosophy of the community. Although the animal and plant elements found in the proverbs are more relevant to the traditional setting, the culture and philosophy as reflected in the moral values, ethics, way of thinking, and customary practices are timeless (Tosam, 2014). The practical wisdom, such as being vigilant and the virtue in respecting all living things, is relevant for peace and harmony in the contemporary globalised world. Thus, Bidayuh proverbs can facilitate the younger generation of Bidayuh to know their language and understand their culture and philosophy, which form a part of their Bidayuh identity.

Conclusions

As in other indigenous cultures around the world, animal and plant elements are widely used in Bidayuh proverbs to teach good behaviours and moral values, to give advice, warning and encouragement concerning life’s journey, and to express strong feelings. The inquisitive semantics approach is useful to uncover deep meaning of the proverbs and sayings, providing insights into the people’s way of life, customs and beliefs that reflect their culture and philosophy. However, the study would benefit from a more detailed description of the animal or plant used in the proverb, particularly the ones that are seldom encountered by modern Bidayuh such as hornbills and *trodan*. Directions for further studies include documenting and analysing Bidayuh proverbs from other Bidayuh sub-groups such as Rara and Serian for comparison. Bidayuh proverbs can also be compared to proverbs from dominant language cultures such as Malay and English. In the comparative study process, Bidayuh proverbs can be translated and used to teach language and culture in formal and informal settings. Lastly, folk proverbs should be safeguarded as an intangible cultural heritage through proper documentation and dissemination.

Acknowledgement

This paper is an improved version of an article entitled “Examining Bidayuh proverbs and sayings with animal and plant elements: An inquisitive semantics approach” presented at the International Conference on Language Studies (iCLS 2021), 8–9 September 2021, Kota Samarahan, Malaysia.

References

- Ciardelli, I., Groenendijk, J., & Roelofsen, F. (2019). *Inquisitive semantics*. Oxford University Press.
- Jalaluddin, N. H. (2014). *Semantik dan akal budi Melayu* [Malay semantics and common sense]. Penerbit UKM.
- Kayad, F., & Ting, S. (2021). Attitudes towards Bidayuh language kindergartens in Sarawak, Malaysia. *International Journal of Social Science Research*, 3(2), 14–26.

- Kheung, L., & Aduce, S. (2018). The demographic profile and sustainability growth of the Bidayuh population of Sarawak. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 8(14), 69–78.
- Lauhakangas, O. (2019). The functions of animal metaphors in proverbs. In R. Soares & O. Lauhakangas (Eds.), *12th interdisciplinary colloquium on proverbs, ACTAS ICP18 Proceedings* (pp. 582–594). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337593008_THE_FUNCTIONS_OF_ANIMAL_METAPHORS_IN_PROVERBS
- Mieder, W. (2004). *Proverbs: A handbook*. Greenwood Press.
- Nornis, S., & Saamah, M. R. (2013). Haiwan sebagai perlambangan dalam peribahasa orang Semai [Animals as a symbol in the proverb of the Semai people]. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 13(1), 83–98.
- Pareek, A., & Trivedi, P.C. (2014). Common folk proverbs in relation to environment and plants in Rajasthan, India. *Journal of Indian botanical Society*, 93(1 & 2), 100–104.
- Ridu, R. S., Jitab, R., & Noeb, J. (2001). *King Siliman and other Bidayuh folk tales*. University Malaysia Sarawak: The Institute of East Asian Studies.
- Ridu, R. S., Jitab, R., & Noeb, J. (2006). Language development in Bidayuh: Past, present and future. In C. R. Rensch, C. M. Rensch, J. Noeb & R. S. Ridu (Eds.), *The Bidayuh language: Yesterday, today and tomorrow* (pp. 1–27). Dayak Bidayuh National Association.
- Salamh, S. B., & Maalej, Z. A. (2018). A cultural linguistics perspective on animal proverbs, with special reference to two dialects of Arabic. *Arab World English Journal for Translation & Literary Studies*, 2(4), 21–40.
- Shamsutdinova, E. K., Martynova, E. V., Eremeeva, G. R., & Baranova, A. R. (2017). Proverbs and sayings related to animals in Arabic, English and Tatar Press. *The Turkish Online Journal of Design, Art and Communication TOJDAC, Special Edition*, 799–804. <https://doi.org/10.7456/1070ASE/085>
- Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (1986). *Relevance: Communication and cognition*. Blackwell.
- Syzdykov, K. (2014). Contrastive studies on proverbs. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 136, 318–321.
- Tosam, M. J. (2014). The philosophical foundation of Kom proverbs. *Journal on African Philosophy*, 9, 1–27. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mbih-Tosam/publication/281115695_The_Philosophical_Foundation_of_Kom_Proverbs/links/5d4f9b27a6fdcc370a8c30b4/The-Philosophical-Foundation-of-Kom-Proverbs.pdf
- UNESCO. (2003). *Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage*. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001325/132540e.pdf>
- Zhang, X. (2016). Language as a reflection of culture: On the cultural characteristics of Chinese and English proverbs. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, 25(3), 275–291