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Sound Symbolism in Indonesian Language on Social Media

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Abstract

This research discusses sound symbolism in Bahasa Indonesia on social media through a study of natural semantic metalinguistics, which is grounded in the various types of sound symbolism in Indonesian. The objective of this research was to identify types of sound symbolism in bahasa Indonesia, describe the meanings of sound symbolism in Indonesian, and explain the extent to which Indonesian speakers associate certain sounds with specific meanings. This study employed a qualitative approach as a research procedure to produce descriptive data in the form of written and spoken. The data consisted of social media captions about sound symbolism. The sources of data included social media captions from Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter. The data collection techniques used included note-taking techniques to record data obtained from captions on social media and interview techniques conducted to gather data on the associative meanings of sound symbolism among Indonesian speakers. The analysis results indicated that there were four types of sound symbolism in the Indonesian language namely corporeal sound symbolism, imitative sound symbolism, synthetic sound symbolism, and conventional sound symbolism. corporeal and conventional sound symbolism contained emotional meanings that depict a direct relationship between sounds and the physical or emotional experiences of speakers. In the meaning of corporeal symbolism, expressive intonation was articulated by speakers to describe an exaggerated meaning of an object. This intonation appeared in adjectives, perceived as vocal elongation accompanied by the insertion of the vowel /u/, with interjection meanings divided into positive and negative meanings. Imitative sound symbolism (onomatopoeia) was formed from imitating sounds as well as sounds that produce movement. Synthetic sound symbolism with sounds /a/ and /u/ could also express high meanings; in synthetic sound symbolism, the vowel sound /u/ represents semantic components related to tall objects or people, as seen in words like bubung (roof) and gedung (building). Conventional sound symbolism included the phonestheme /-gel/, which means movement, as well as /-am/ and /-ang/, which have opposite meanings where /-am/ means dark and /-ang/ means bright.

Keywords: Sound symbolism; Meaning Assosiation; Natural Semantic Metalanguage

1. 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 refer 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 simbolism 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 investegated 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 cognitif 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.

This study conducted by sound symbolism focused on comparative between Indonesian and English. The objective of this study is to map the sound symbolism of Javanese language, both both segmental and non-segmental, in accordance with the typology of sound symbolism

2. Review Literature

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). 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).

Sound and meaning have a direct relationship that is very diverse and inseparable; without sound, meaning cannot be conveyed, and without meaning, sound will have no meaning. Sound symbolism involves six dimensions: innate, learning, icon, index, conventionalization, and sound symbolic category (Abelin, 1999). Sound symbolism is a standard component in language use and development (Erber, 2020). In this case, phonetic symbolism is understood as opposed to the common opinion of phonemes as meaningless language units. Besides providing the same explanation, the two notions of sound iconicity are the direct relationship between sound and meaning. Sound symbolism can be formed through experience (learning) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). The process of sound symbolism can be depicted in the following graph:
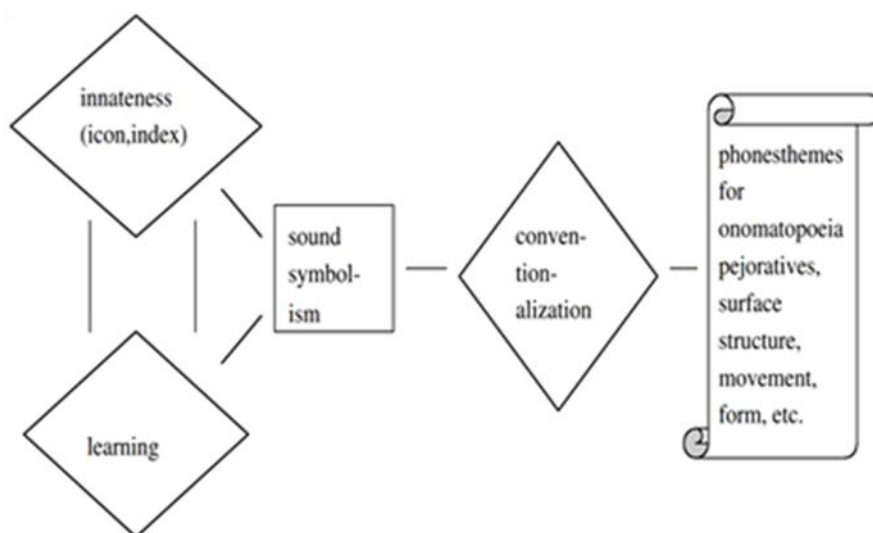

Figure 1. Sound Symbolism Process (Abelin, 1999)

The figure above explains the process of sound symbolism and the relationship between the various dimensions that make it up. It can be demonstrated that the relationship between expression (phonological form) and content (meaning) in sound symbolism can be due to both innate and learned characteristics. The tendency of symbolism to form can be influenced by learning, and what is influenced depends on the intrinsic capacity in the mind, for example, index (metonymy) and icon (metaphor), as well as onomatopoeia, which is an innate property in language as well as phoneme themes. The phoneme theme, meaning ray-related in English, is influenced by learning and may not appear in other languages. Sound symbolism is the result of innate capacities and learning. In language, sounds represent and convey meaning through words, sentences, and other activities in the language system. However, most words in a language do not directly relate sound and meaning. Instead, word meanings are usually conveyed through conventions and agreements among language speakers. Sounds do not have their meaning, but they do serve to reinforce

the speech they represent. On the other hand, word meaning is generally conveyed through convention and mutual agreement among language speakers. Sounds do not possess inherent meaning by themselves but contribute meaningfully by reinforcing the utterance they represent. Differences in sound can certainly influence meaning. For example, when spoken softly, the Indonesian word diam (silent) may refer to a calm or peaceful state of silence.

Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) is a theory of semantic analysis. It supposes that a sign can be only investegated 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. Sound symbolism studies the direct relationship between sound and meaning (Abelin, 1999; Crystal, 1987; Hinton & Ohala, 1994; Shrum & Lowrey, 2007; Sinohara, 2010; Haynei, 2014).

In studying the corporeal sound symbolism of the Indonesian language, where the explanation of the meaning produced by the NSM can be followed or understood easily by many people, primarily native speakers of the language concerned, starting from the meaning that exists in the metal-framed language derived from the language of nature. This research uses explication involving many words or phrases related to sounds produced from the human body, animals, and objects. Concepts and phrases have complex semantic meanings, including simple concrete concepts (Wierzbicka, 1996; 2007) and related natural and cultural resources (Wierzbicka, 1996). According to Goddard (2007), standard meaning has some universal syntactic devices (conceptual syntax) to analyze the definition of a concept. Universal syntax is a syntactic structure that exists universally in all languages and can be used to help explain a concept. In this research, the prime numbers used by Wierzbicka are used as a chart to explain Indonesian sound symbolism by adding several other prime numbers. The following table for analyzing sound symbolism in Indonesian shows the template used in this research.

3. Method

This study used a qualitative descriptive study. 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.

4. Result

Based on data analysis, it was found in social media that there are four types of sound symbolism which is explained in detail in the following section.

4.1. Corporeal Sound Symbolism

Body sound symbolism is a concept in linguistics that refers to the relationship between the sounds of language and the physical, emotional or bodily experiences they evoke. Physical states can be indicated by sounds such as coughing or hiccups. Emotional states can be indicated by pitch, range and variability, loudness, and tempo (Ostwald 1994).

4.1.1. Symptomatic Sound
Symptomatic sounds are sounds that refer to certain conditions or sounds produced by the human body or come from organs, such as breathing, heartbeat, and sounds produced by vocal organs, and can be seen in the Table 2.

In the data at Table 2, four consonant sounds are produced: the fricative /z/, /f/, and /h/; the trill /r/; the nasal /m/; and the plosive consonants /g/, /k/, /t/, and /p/. The sound phenomena are dominated by plosives.

4.1.2. Expressive Intonation
Expressive intonation in Indonesian sound symbolism is formed by inserting the vowel /u/ and lengthening vowels. This linguistic phenomenon is called vowel insertion. Vowel insertion occurs when a word is pronounced by adding a vowel that does not exist in the word

Table 1. Semantic Prime Numbers of NSM in Indonesian Sound Symbolism

Subtantives	Relational Subtantives	Descriptors
Body Someone's body, people's bodies part of someone's body a body of one kind, bodies of two kinds something bad happens inside someone's body someone feels something in the body	**Part** Part of someone's body this part, the same part, another part this other part this something has two/many parts	**Big** Something big a big place **Small** Something small a small place
Mental/ Experiential Predicaters		
Think Someone thinks about someone else/ something someone thinks something good/bad (about someone else/something) someone thinks like this: "- -" many people think like this: "- -"	**Know** Someone knows something (many things) about someone/something people can know this I know that ...	**Want** I want this someone wants something someone wants to do/know/say something someone wants someone else to do/ know/say something someone wants something to happen I want it very much
Feel Someone feels something (good/bad) someone feels something (good/bad) in part of the body someone feels like this someone feels something good/bad towards someone else/ something	**See** Someone sees someone/something (in a place) people can/can't see well in this place someone/people can/can't see this something	**Hear** Someone hears something people can feel something bad when they hear this word
Speech		
Say I say: ... someone says something (good/bad) (to someone) someone says something (good/bad) (about someone/something) someone says something like this... someone says something with words someone says a word to someone	**Words** Many words, other words, one word words of one kind say something with (not with) words, say something in other words say these words these words say something	**True** This is true, this is not true
Logical Consepts		
Maybe, Can Maybe it is like this, maybe it is not like this maybe someone else can do it Someone can do something someone can't do something someone can't not do something something (good/bad) can happen it can be like this: ...	**Because, If** If it happens like this for some time, .. if you do this, ... if someone does something like this, ..	**Not, Don't** Not good, not bad not like this I don't know someone can't do this
Action		
Happen Something happens something happens to someone something happens to something something happens somewhere (in a place)	**Move** Someone moves (in this place) something moves in this place parts of this someone's body move as this someone wants	**Touch** Something touches something else (somewhere) something touches part of someone's body someone/people can/can't touch this something
Space		
Above Above this place far above this place someone above other people	**Below** Below this place far below this place	**On One Side** On this side, on the same side, on one side, on two sides, on all sides
Inside nside this something inside this someone inside part of this someone's body	**Near** Near this place near someone	**Where/place, Here, Side** (in) this place, (in) the same place, somewhere else, (in) this other place in some places, in many places in the place where ...

Table 2. Symptomatic Sounds

English	Indonesian	Sound Symbolism	Consonant sounds
Sleeping	Mendengkur	*Zzzz*	Fricatives /z/
Whistle	Bersiul	*fiuu fiuu*	Fricatives /f/
Cough	Batuk	*Uhuk uhuk*	Fricatives /h/
Snore	Mengorok	*Krok krok*	Trill /r/
Sneeze	Bersin	*Hacim hacim*	Nasal /m/
Mumbling	Bergumam	*Hmm*	Nasal /m/
Clearing the throat	Berdehem	*Ehem*	Nasal /m/
Heart rate	Detak Jantung	*Dag gali gali*	Plosive /g/
Hungry stomach	Perut lapar	*Krucuk krucuk*	Plosive /k/
Fart	Buang Angin	*Tut tut*	Plosive /t/
Joint	Sendi-sendi	*Kretek.. Kretek*	Plosive /t/
Drinking Sound	Suara Minum	*Gluk gluk*	Plosive /k/
Swallowing saliva	Menelan Ludah	*Glup*	Plosive /p/
Burp	Bersendawa	*Heiik*	Plosive /k/

4.1.3. Interjection

Interjections in Indonesian can be divided into several aspects, with various expressions according to the emotional aspects of the speakers. The data can be seen in the table below.

Table 3. Interjection

Type	Interjections	Expression
Vocative	Hei,hoi, sst, ayo, halo, eh, wahai, hai, halo, woi, psst, mari	regards
Emotive	Hus	warning
	Wah, wih, ai, aduhai, yahud, hm, asyoi, amboi, wah, astaga,	Admiration
	Aduh, ah, buset, yah, brengsek	Distracted
	Hore, teguk	happy
	Syukur, alhamdulillah, puji syukur	gratefully
	Oh	kink
	Aih	startled
	Hai, adalah, ah, cih, cis, ih, idih	disgusted
Cognitive	Ah, huh	annoyance
	Hmm, aah	serious
	Ya, wah	surprised
	HAI	confused
	Ha, hah, ops	shock
	Tidak	conclusion

Based on the table 3, it can be concluded that interjections in Indonesia are classified based on a semantic point of view, Wierzbicka (1999:276 in Goddard, 2013:2) has categorised interjections or interjections into three categories, namely: (a) vocative interjections, (b) emotive interjections, and (c) cognitive interjections.

4.2. Imitative Sound Symbolism

Imitative sound is known as onomatopoeia. This type of sound symbolism includes several sound origins as shown in the following image.
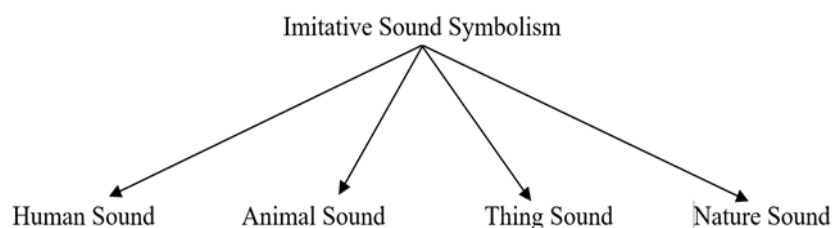
Figure 2. Types of Imitative Sound Symbolism

Human Sound		Animal Sound	
Menangis (cry)	[hik hik]	Kucing (cat)	[meong]
Tertawa (laugh)	[hahaha]	Kambing (goat)	[mbek]

Thing sound		Nature Sound	
Tembakan (shouting)	[dor dor]	Angin (wind)	[wussh]
Ketukan pintu (knocking)	[tok tok tok]	Hujan (rain)	[tik tik tik]

In an utterance there are elements that can be segmented and are called segmental sounds, namely vowels and consonants. There are also sounds that cannot be segmented and are called suprasegmental sounds which contain: stress, pitch and sound pauses. Based on analysis data, the symbolism of artificial sounds is formed by nasal consonant sounds, fricatives, nasals and plosives, but the symbolism of artificial sounds in Indonesian is dominated by plosive sounds (pops) which come from phonemes which are realized using air bursts, because they are blocked by the tongue at the places of articulation in the mouth. These plosive consonants in Indonesian are /k/, /g/, /c/, /j/, /t/, /d/, /p/, and /b/.

4.3. Synthetic Sound Symbolism

Synthetic sound symbolism is closely related to the characteristics of sounds to represent object properties. In Indonesian, the concepts of big, small, tall, long which are formed in the semantic component 'this object/person is big/small/tall/long' are represented by vowel sounds. Meanwhile, the concept of 'small' which is represented by the vowel /i/ states that the semantic component of this object/person is small. The process by which certain vowels, consonants, and suprasegmentals are consistently selected to represent object properties, such as size or shape.

4.3.1. Small Concept

The concept of 'small' is represented by the vowel /i/ stating the semantic component of this object/person is small, as in the word *adik, bintik, cilik, gerenik, indik, kepik, kersik, tuik, manik, percik, putik, recik, renik, rintik, a*nd *titik*

4.3.2. Big Concept

The concept of 'big' is represented by the vowel /a/ expressing the semantic component of this object/person being big, as *babak, badak, bapak, barak, bayak, bengkak, gagak, gerobak, kutak, ledak, mangkak, marak, ombak, semarak* dan *tabak*

4.3.3. Length Concept

The concept of 'long' is represented by the vowel /u/ which indicates that the semantic component of this object is long, as in the word *dayung, duyung, jangkung, jelutung, kangkung, kerudung, landung, lendung, mancung, manjung, muncung, pentung, runjung, salung, semenanjung,* dan *tanjung*

4.3.4. High Concept

The concept of 'high' is represented by the vowels /a/ and /u/ indicating that the semantic component of this object is high. The vowel /a/ represents the concept of height such as contained in the word *cacak, cagak, codak, congak, dompak, dongak, jingkrak, jompak, lenggak, ombak, puncak, tanjak, tegak,* dan *tonggak.*

The vowel sounds /a/ and /u/ can express semantic components related to the concept of height due to the characteristics of the articulation and perception of the sound produced. The vowel sound /a/ is a low and unrounded vowel produced with the mouth wide open, giving the impression of a strong and resonant sound, which in some contexts can be associated with something large and tall physically or in meaning as in the word "erect". The vowel sound /u/ is a high and round vowel produced with the tongue positioned high at the back and the lips rounded, giving a resonant and high-pitched sound as in the word "mountain". These characteristics can be associated with the concept of height, because high vowels articulatory involve a raised tongue position. In

Indonesian and phonological studies, high vowels such as /i/ and /u/ are often associated with concepts involving height or something raised, while low vowels such as /a/ can also represent something large and tall in a broad sense.

The vowel sound /i/ represents something/someone is small and the vowel sound /a/ represents something/someone is big. The antonymous meaning relation between the words small and big is a meaning relation that is opposite or contradictory in terms of size or dimension. In Indonesian, small indicates something that is small or not large, while big indicates something that has a larger size or is physically or meaningfully large. This antonymous relationship is complementary, meaning that if something is said to be small, then its opposite is automatically big and vice versa. These two words are often used to compare or contrast objects, spaces, or concepts based on size or scale. Semantically, the antonyms small and big help in classifying and understanding objects or phenomena by providing clear boundaries of meaning between two extremes of size. On the other hand, the vowel sound /u/ represents something/someone is high and the vowel sound /a/ represents something/someone is low. Because both are in opposite articulatory positions (high vs low), the vowel sounds /u/ and /a/ form an antonymous pair in terms of representing the meaning of vertical position or height. This relation is not only phonetic but also plays a role in the semantic and perceptual aspects of language.

4.4. Conventional Sound Symbolism

Conventional sound symbolism is an analogous relationship between certain phonemes and clusters with meanings that refer to the relationship between certain sounds in a word or morpheme with certain meanings that have been conventionally agreed upon in a language or culture, not based on iconic similarities or natural motivations. the analogical relationship of certain phonemes and clusters with meanings that refer to the relationships between certain sounds.

Fonestem /gel-/ means movement (Gerakan) (geledah, gelundung)
Fonestem /-ak/ means big (besar) (tamak, ombak)

Based on the analysis of Phonestem /-ah/ as in the words move and steps and several other words such as direction, goyah, lingga, jelajah contain the same element of meaning, namely this person/object moves in an instant. From the analysis of conventional sound symbolism above, it can be concluded that conventional sound symbolism is a process in which certain phonemes and clusters are associated with certain sounds that are language-specific rather than universal (Mulyadi, 2008; Rhodes 2006). Indonesian phonemes are generally formed with VK, CV and CVC patterns, and none of them are formed by consonant clusters. Universal semantic elements found in Indonesian phonemes are movement, feelings, and object properties.

4.5. Finding

This study has limited to findings in the form of facts about Indonesian sound symbolism that support theoretical findings. The inherent conformity in the meaning of Indonesian sound symbolism finds several new words used by social media users in interacting as shown in the table below.

No	Meaning	Sound	Findings	Type of Sound Symbolism
1.	Buang Angin (Kentut)	*tut tut*	*prot prot*	Simbolisme Bunyi Badani (Bunyi Simptomatis)
2.	Kekaguman	*wow, amboy, aduhai*	*anjay*	Simbolisme Bunyi Badani (Interjeksi)
			gyat	
3.	Tertawa lebar	*ha ha ha (wkwkwk)*	*sksksk*	Simbolisme Bunyi Tiruan
4.	Mengajak	Ayo	Kuy	Simbolisme Bunyi Badani (Interjeksi)

Methodological findings in this study on the findings of the testing process. In testing the association of certain meanings to certain sounds, not only is Google Form used to collect data but also requires the context of the association of meaning with additional video (audio) so that respondents understand the association of meaning from the sounds given. Researchers consider it new in terms of its application, because so far researchers have not found previous studies that test the association of certain meanings to certain sounds of Indonesian sound symbolism.

5. Conclusion

There are fours types sound symbolism namely corporeal sound symbolism, imitative sound symbolism, synthetics sound symbolism, and conventional sound symbolism. Corporeal sound symbolism consists of symptomatic sounds, expressive intonation, and interjections. Fricative, plosive, and nasal consonants form symptomatic sounds. In contrast, expressive intonation consists of two forms of sound: inserting the vowel /u/ and lengthening the vowel. Interjections in Indonesian can be classified

based on the emotional aspect of the speaker. Based on the data obtained, the meaning found in interjections consists of three forms: emotive, cognitive, and volitive. These results refer to Wierzbicka's theory of interjections (1999). Sound symbolism is formed by nasal consonant sounds, fricatives, nasals, and plosives, but the imitation sound symbolism of Indonesian is dominated by plosive sounds. The study of sound symbolism is important in understanding the relationship between language and human cognition, and how language reflects human experience and perception of the world.

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