

## Toponymic Lexicon of River Culture in Central Kalimantan: An Ethnosemantic Study

### *Leksikon Budaya Sungai pada Toponomi di Kalimantan Tengah: Kajian Etnosemantik*

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#### ABSTRAK

##### **Abstrak**

Masyarakat Kalimantan Tengah yang mayoritas tinggal di sepanjang daerah aliran sungai besar, menjadikan sungai sebagai sesuatu yang penting dalam sendi-sendi kehidupan mereka. Budaya sungai yang dianut oleh masyarakat Kalimantan Tengah dapat dilihat dari leksikon-leksikon yang terkandung dalam toponimi wilayah. Penelitian ini berusaha mendeskripsikan leksikon-leksikon yang muncul dari budaya sungai yang tecermin dalam toponimi Kalimantan Tengah sehingga karakteristik masyarakatnya dapat terungkap. Penelitian ini mengungkap karakteristik budaya sungai Kalimantan tengah dari segi penamaan wilayah. Pendekatan etnosemantik digunakan untuk mengupas hubungan antara bahasa, budaya, dan pola pikir masyarakat. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan metode wawancara. Hasil dari penelitian menunjukkan bahwa cara menamai suatu wilayah di Kalimantan Tengah dipengaruhi oleh anatomi sungai yang terletak di hulu, tengah, dan hilir. Selain itu, sistem pengetahuan dan sistem kepercayaan juga turut berperan serta dalam penamaan toponim di Kalimantan Tengah.

##### **Abstract**

Rivers have a significant role in the life of most of Central Kalimantan people living along riverbanks. Their river culture is reflected from their toponymic lexicon. The purpose of this study was to describe the lexicon of their river culture which is reflected from the toponyms found in Central Kalimantan in order to reveal their characters. Ethnosemantic approach was employed to reveal the relationship among language, culture, and mindset of the society. Data collection was carried out by means of interview method. The result of this study shows that the toponyms in Central Kalimantan was influenced by river's anatomy i.e. upstream, middle and downstream Furthermore, it was also influenced by knowledge and belief systems.

## 1. Introduction

Rivers have a very important role for Kalimantan people. Rivers are not only a vital means of transportation, but also life process transformation, the so called culture. Therefore, the familiarity of the Dayaknese with rivers ecologically becomes an important part of historical record of transforming an old culture into a new one. Kalimantan people's river culture is reflected from lexicon used in toponymy. Utami (2017) stated that lexicon can show a conversational relationship with the entity being referred to, the relationship of the entity referred to with the culture, and the relationship of the entity with the environment in which life and population are supported by the interaction itself. Therefore, there is a connection between culture of certain ethnic and lexicon it uses.

Toponym, place names of a region, is related to various social and cultural phenomena, and events experienced by humans (Miftah, 2008 and Rais et al., 2008). Therefore, every event and knowledge of the community is an example that can be taken to name a region. Quoting Saussure's opinion about the concept of sign and signifier, toponymy can function as a distinctive signifier of a place. This can be seen from the diversity of natural phenomena combined with socio-cultural plurality in Indonesia which results in a diversity of place names of a region based on local culture as identity. For example, in Sundanese ethnicity, if the place is a water source, it usually has *ci-* or *leuwi* prefix. The concept of toponymy is a sociocultural paradigm that exists in a society. As a form of the realization of the language concept, its presence cannot be separated from the sociocultural aspects behind it.

According to BPS of Central Kalimantan, the population of Central Kalimantan lives in fourteen regencies and one city. The majority of the population lives along eleven riverbanks which are connecting one village to another. Only about 20% of the total population lives in the mainland (without river access or road access only). That is why rivers play a very important part for the continuity of life, transportation, and social interaction through language, economy, and river cultural transformation of Dayaknese's life in Central Kalimantan. Furthermore, rivers become a means that must be maintained and cared for. From archeological perspective, the river culture in Central Kalimantan is a distinctive culture of indigenous people that can be observed through cultural material, both in the form of objects and non-objects. Based on the reason above, a research on cultural materials related to rivers is very interesting to conduct in order to describe their meanings scientifically.

This research is intended to reveal lexicon of river culture reflected in the toponyms found in Central Kalimantan. The purposes of this study were to describe lexicon dealing with characteristics of Central Kalimantan people's river culture and identify characteristics of their river culture based on the lexicon, so that functions, usage, and other elements related to the toponymy found in Central Kalimantan could be exposed.

This study uses ethno semantic theory which is a part of anthropological linguistic and ethnolinguistics. Arifin (2015) stated that ethno linguistic is an appropriate study to look at people's perceptions of the found lexicons. Based on ethnolinguistics, there is a relationship between the culture of certain ethnic speakers and the language they use. To find out the relationship, the meaning contained in each lexeme of the language must be known, so that lexical meanings and their functions or uses in the life of a society can be described. The description of the lexical meaning is called lexicology. Lexicology contains a discussion of meaning lexically.

Lexical and contextual meanings can be assessed through ethno semantic if they are related to broader meanings and related to culture of a society. Ethno semantic is used to reveal relationship between language, culture, and mindset of a society (Humaini, 2007; Duranti, 1997; Kramsch, 2001). Baihaqie (2013) argues that the meaning of a language based on context related to functions, uses, and other elements that support cultural life of native speaker is generally referred as ethnolinguistics. Baihaqie (2013) also stated that ethnolinguistics is synonymous with ethno semantic.

Lexical meaning is the meaning of a lexeme when the lexeme stands alone in its essential or derivative forms as we can see in dictionaries (Pateda, 2010). Lexeme stands alone because its meaning could change if it is in a sentence. Then, lexical meaning approach describes the meaning that is owned or existing in a lexeme even without any context. By using the approach of lexical meaning, toponymy in Central Kalimantan could be elaborated to after exploring the meaning behind language or certain words used by groups of people based on the culture of the Central Kalimantan's Dayaknese community at the ethnolinguistic level.

The previous researches that used the ethno semantic study were conducted by Yayuk (2018) entitled "*Leksikon Pengungkap Karakteristik Budaya Sungai Masyarakat Banjarmasin dan Nagara: Telaah Etnosemantis.*" It shows that the identities of the lexemes, in the form of material and non-material that reveal the characteristics of the Banjarese Communities in Banjarmasin and Nagara, are influenced by nearly same geographical factors i.e. the relationships that have been established between the two communities for a long time, and the domination of Islam and Malay culture in their ways of life. As a result, lexicons related to their culture in everyday life are the same.

There are differences between the present study and the previous one. If the previous study discussed the river culture lexemes of Banjar and Nagara communities in material and non-material forms, then, this research discusses river culture lexemes of Central Kalimantan's Dayaknese in terms of place names of their region. Then, the characteristics of Dayaknese ethnicity in Central Kalimantan could be described through the way they give names to a place, as it is well known, since Dayaknese ethnics live close to nature, they have a lot of local lexicons related to nature in naming their regions. Thus, other than regional differences, the objects studied are also different. On the other hand, the similarity with the previous study is in terms of the study of the activities of certain ethnic cultures based on ethno semantic. Hopefully, this research will be useful to increase public interest toward toponymy coming from local languages. In conclusion, sociocultural factors (river culture) that influence the toponyms in Central Kalimantan as a consequence of nature diversity can enrich toponymy studies in Indonesia.

## 2. Method

As a qualitative research, the data collection is only based on facts and phenomena that are empirically still exist to the speaker, so that what are produced or recorded in form of language are regarded as description (Sudaryanto, 1996).

The data were collected by means of note taking and interview. The data in this research are primary and secondary data. The primary data is the result of interviews with the Dayaknese native speaker about their perception of the toponymy in Central Kalimantan. Most interviews were conducted in Palangka Raya

on July 2018. Meanwhile, the secondary data is in the form of district names and district profiles taken from *Badan Pusat Statistik* of Central Kalimantan.

In collecting the data, the researchers started the interview with questions about demographic background to find out the background characteristics of the informants. The interviews were conducted to obtain information about the meanings of the region names and how the indigenous people perceived them. The interviews were conducted in an informal form and depend on spontaneity in asking questions to the informants. The informants are three observers of Dayak culture who live in Palangka Raya. The process of collecting data in the form of interview lasted for two weeks from July 3 to July 18, 2018.

In this study, the researchers also conducted a literature study by collecting data from written sources i.e. dictionaries of Ngaju Dayaknese and some documents related to Central Kalimantan. They were analyzed to find out the culture of the people in Central Kalimantan. The researchers used certain methods and techniques of data analysis to deal directly with the data. Theories and conclusions are formed from various data that are found in the field and discussed in a multi-perspective way (Sutopo, 2006). The first step was to analyze the lexicons of villages which relate to river culture in Central Kalimantan semantically to find out lexical meanings. Then, interpreting the relationship between the lexicons with the characteristics of the owner of the river culture.

### 3. Result and Discussion

The data used by the researchers are the names of villages along major rivers in some districts of Central Kalimantan. The researchers took various village names in terms of lexical meaning. Finally, The data are the names of the villages using local language.

#### 3.1 The Anatomy of The River

The Dayaknese ethnicity has many lexicons related to water and rivers. It is because of their culture river. Rivers are considered the source and support of life. Anatomy of a river can be seen from the flow of the river and the shape of the river i.e.in the upstream, in the middle, and in the downstream of the river.

##### 3.1.1 Upstream Region

In the upstream region, there are several lexemes associated with rivers and water used to name the places of the areas., The lexicons are *Tumbang*, *Kuala*, *Muara*, *Nanga*, *Kuluk*, and *Lubuk*. These are the examples of the village names:

1. *Tumbang Rungan*
2. *Kuala Pembuang*
3. *Muara Talang*
4. *Nanga Bulik*
5. *Kuluk Leleng*
6. *Lubuk Hiju*

The *tumbang* lexicon is widely used by people in Kotawaringin Timur, Katingan and Kapuas regions. In term of culture, the *tumbang* lexicon is used in naming certain villages. It is an indigenous word of the community which is equivalent to “river”. The *nanga* lexicon is only found in the Lamandau area. Similar to the *tumbang* lexicon, the

*lubuk* and *nanga* lexicon are also derived from the indigenous words of the Lamandau and Kotawaringin Barat districts which are equivalent to “river”. The *kuala* and *muara* lexicons are found mostly in names of villages of Kapuas area and they are influences of Banjarese Malay . The Kapuas river is geographically adjacent to South Kalimantan where the population uses Banjarese Malay, and therefore the toponyms of villages in Kapuas area are also affected. The *kuluk* lexicon is found in Katingan area. The people gave the name to a place based on the direction of the river which was influenced by anatomy of human body. *Kuluk* means ‘head’; therefore, culturally, *kuluk* is associated with villages that are located in the upstream region.

### 3.1.2 Middle Region

In the middle region, there is a lexicon represents the villages which are located in the middle river areas. The lexicon is *hurung* which means U/S shaped river. These are the examples of the village names:

1. *Hurung Kampin*
2. *Hurung Tampang*
3. *Hurung Tabengan*

The *hurung* lexicon is widely used in Kapuas area. Culturally, there are many villages in Kapuas which are located on the the riverbanks . The Kapuas River is a source of life for the Kapuas people because most of community activities are carried out at the river such as bathing, fishing, transportation facilities, and so on.

### 3.1.3 Downstream Region

In the downstream region, several lexemes are affecting the villages naming. The lexemes are *buntut* and *kiham*. The *buntut* and *kiham* lexicon are usually used in Katingan. Here are some examples of village names:

1. *Buntut Leleng*
2. *Kiham Batang*
3. *Buntut Bali*

*Buntut* means ‘tail’, therefore, culturally, *buntut* refers to villages that are located in the downstream region. Meanwhile, *kiham* means ‘heavy flow that reaches downstream’, and from the cultural point of view, villages that use lexicon *kiham* in their names are villages in the downstream part of watershed.

From the findings of many ‘water’ lexicons, it can be concluded that water/river plays an important role in the life of the Dayaknese ethnics. The culture that is directly related to river is characterized by the uses of river in its toponyms.,. In addition to carrying out its ecological functions, the river has also carried the mission as a means of transforming the Dayaknese’s values and culture for thousands of years.

## 3.2 Water Embodiment in the Toponyms Found in Central Kalimantan

The existence of river is very influential for the people of Central Kalimantan in general and the Dayaknese ethnic in particular. It is reflected in its river associated name of villages. Therefore, due to its large rivers and dozens of tributaries, in Central Kalimantan the embodiment of water is easily found in the toponyms of many villages. . .

The following are the lexemes related to river anatomy contributing to toponyms of Dayaknese villages in Central Kalimantan that reflects the water embodiment:

*Hurung Tabengan*

hurung (n): U-shaped river located in downstream

tabengan (n): footbridge

*Tewang Rangas*

tewang (n): riverbank

rangas (n): *Jingah* tree (*Glutha rengas*); swamp plants that can cause allergies if touched.

*Sei Gohong*

sei (n): river

gohong (n): cascade (*Sangiang* language)

*Kuluk Leleng*

kuluk (n): head, upstream

leleng (n): stream

*Buntut leleng*

buntut (n): tail, downstream

leleng (n): stream

*Rantau Bahai*

rantau (n): straight-shaped river

bahai (v): getting bigger

The term of rivers or creeks is very diverse in the Dayaknese language. In Central Kalimantan, there are at least eleven large river grooves outside the tributaries that connect one village to another. Not surprisingly, the Dayaknese has many vocabularies related to water or rivers. So, it is understandable how the river becomes an essential part of the continuity of life, transportation, and social interaction through language, economy, and cultural transformation. The following are some of the lexicons used in reference to rivers and creeks and they are used for villages toponyms in Central Kalimantan: *Kuala, Muara, Lubuk, Rantau, Tanjung, Tewai, Tewang, Terusan, Saka, Kuluk, Buntut* (consist of *ulak* and *dehes*), *Teluk, Juking, Hurung, and Kiham*.

### 3.3 Social Aspects

The social aspects of villages' toponym in Central Kalimantan are related to community activities. According to Forde (1963), the relationship between human activities and their environment is influenced by their cultural patterns. These cultural patterns are recorded in the form of places' names as an effort to conserve local culture. The following are the names of villages in Central Kalimantan whose backgrounds are their community activities.

#### 3.3.1 Pelangsian

*Pelangsian* village means the port for cutting and processing wood. Central Kalimantan has many trees which are used as materials for building houses and furniture. Timber that has been felled usually placed in the 'Pelangsian' and then processed into plywood or other processed wood. The wood processing plant is usually built as an effort to improve the welfare of the community living in the forest area or around the forest at that time.

### 3.3.2 Parenggean

*Parenggean* name means the place where nets or trawls are put to catch fish. Since Dayaknese culture is associated with river culture, it would be possible if, in the past, Parenggean village was used as an area for fishing. The livelihood of the people as a fisherman was a reason behind the toponym of the Parenggean village.

### 3.3.3 Panarung

*Panarung* comes from a combination of prefix *pa* and *tarung/narung* which has the meaning of an informant. People in the area thought that the name Panarung was inspired by the construction of an airport in that area. People in the area thought that the airport is a place where everyone can come and go with the news. Every person who leaves will bring news to his/her destination, and vice versa, every person who has just arrived will bring news from the area of his departure. Therefore, the area is called Panarung. So, the Panarung name describes the social and cultural conditions belong to the people in the region.

### 3.3.4 Pahandut

Morphologically, the *Pahandut* name is formed from two words, namely *pa* and *handut*. The word *pa* (n) means 'father', male parent; (KBBI V). Meanwhile the word *handut* (n) is taken from the name of the person; the name of a little child who used to live in the area (the result of an interview with the Chairperson of the Palangka Raya Hindu Kaharingan Assembly, Mr. Parada). So, etimologically, , the word '*Pahandut*' is a term for an adult male who has a child named *Handut*.

In the old days in the area, there was a man who had a child named Handut. Thus, his nickname in the community was 'Pak Handut' or 'Pahandut'. Mr. Handut is a prominent and respected person in the village. In terms of historical place toponyms, the people of Palangka Raya in general and the Pahandut village, in particular, have a culture and habit of giving nickname to someone who has children with the name of his/her first child. For example, *Mama/Indu* Rama (Rama's mother) or *Bapak/abah/papa* Nathan (Nathan's father), in other word, those who are married and have children are not called by their youth names.

In terms of socio-culture, the uses of children name in someone's nickname could increase social status because his/her position in the community is more appreciated. The Dayaknese believes that those who are married and have children are considered more mature and responsible. Thus, the name 'Pahandut' can describe the culture and habits of the people of the Pahandut village in the past.

## 3.4 Knowledge and Technology Systems

Yulianti (2019) stated that the knowledge system that is owned by the river community which had derived from their experiences, thoughts, or ancestral heritage led them to dig deeper useful knowledge to cope with situation in the river and its surroundings. This knowledge has created technology to support life, such as making fishing equipment, making boats, and agriculture equipment which are suitable for wet and swampy lands.

The physical environment of Central Kalimantan is forest areas. The Dayaknese ethnic knows which types of forest to be used as fields. To ensure soil fertility, they usually examine the condition of growing trees on the surface of land. If there are significant and tall trees, they indicate that the land has not been cultivated

for a long time and therefore the hummus is very fertile. To ensure soil fertility is by inserting the tip of the machete into the soil about 10 cm. When the machete is pulled back, the soil attached to the two sides of the machete can show about soil fertility. If much frosty blackish soil sticks to the two sides of the machete, it indicates that the land is fertile. Conversely, if the soil condition is not fertile, the soil sticks to the two sides of the machete is sandy soil. Another physical environment known as a field is the land located in a valley between hills. The condition of marshy land is always wet and muddy. Farms in lowland are usually monoculture. They can be planted with rice for three consecutive years. After the third year, the land was abandoned for 2-4 years and then planted again.

The needs of Dayaknese in obtaining large yields have resulted in a knowledge system that can understand the characteristics of natural phenomena that affect cultivation. According to Mudiyono (1990) the knowledge of natural phenomena related to Dayaknese's farming in Kalimantan is the knowledge of *seven stars*. If seven stars have arisen, then at night the air will become very cold until morning, it is a sign for people to start opening fields. If the seven stars arise in the East and one star lower than a seven star, it indicates that people may start planting rice. If in the sky, a line looks like a wall and clouds resemble fish scales; people know that the dry season has arrived. Conversely, if the sky appears red in the morning and clumping clouds look like mountains are seen, it indicates that rainy day or season will arrive soon.

Another indicator of the arrival of the rainy season is if the woods growing on the edge of the river blossom and their shoots sprout. When natural signs have indicated that dry season will soon arrive, people begin to prepare themselves for farming. Machetes and pickaxe as tools for farming begin to be sharpened so that they will not encounter obstacles when opening fields.

In farming work, one must pay attention to the time cycle and understand its properties. The incompatibility between natural conditions and the stages of farming will result in crop failure and if this happens, it is a disaster for the population. Their knowledge system also teaches them about building a house. The materials such as wood and bamboo may not be cut down during the full moon in the sky because it may cause wood and bamboo will quickly rot. Therefore, the right time to look for wood and bamboo as building materials is when the moon in the sky is receding.

### 3.5 Belief Systems

The belief system in Central Kalimantan is also inseparable from beliefs elements that exist in Indonesia, such as Hindu-Buddhism, animism, totemism, and dynamism. Among societies in Central Kalimantan a variety of religious beliefs or systems are found i.e. Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, *Kaharingan* Hinduism-, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. *Kaharingan* is the belief of the native inhabitants of Central Kalimantan which is only found in the Kalimantan but then it can be recognized as a religion due to its integration into Hinduism. The religion of *Kaharingan* Hinduism is spread in Central Kalimantan and mostly found in the upstream region, including the upstream region of the Kahayan river, the Katingan river, and others.

Ethimologically, The word 'Kaharingan' means to grow or live, as in the term '*Danum Kaharingan*' (the living water). It is a tribal religion that believes in God Almighty (*Ranying*). It has lived and grown from generation to generation among Dayaknese in Kalimantan. Kaharingan was first introduced by Tjilik Riwut in 1944. In 1945, Kaharingan had been proposed to be mentioned as a Dayaknese religion.



Meanwhile, in the new order period, its followers were integrated into Hinduism, the so called *Kaharingan* Hindu. The choice of integration into Hinduism is not due to the similarity of the rituals, but because of Hinduism is the oldest religion in Borneo. This reason leads Kaharingan becomes the Hindu section.

#### 4. Conclusion

By employing ethnosemantic approach, the lexicons of the river culture which are reflected from the toponyms of villages in Central Kalimantan are eventually described and its people's characters are simultaneously revealed. In general, the toponyms of the villages are based on the river culture and the community activities. Besides, knowledge and belief systems also influence significantly the toponyms. As a source of life, socio-economically and socio-culturally, Rivers become inseparable parts of the Central Kalimantan people's life. Based on Dayaknese ancient belief (*Kaharingan*), water is an essence of life or the so called *danum kaharingan* (water as a living essence and livelihood). Thus, the ancestors of the Dayak are familiar with various disciplines of knowledge long before they are scientifically well-known as biology, geography, geophysics, and other sciences.

From the findings of many lexemes in the form of water, it can be concluded that water/river plays an important role in the life of the Dayaknese ethnicity. Their culture that is directly related to rivers is characterized by the names of the villages situated along rivers. In addition to its ecological functions, the rivers have also carried the mission of transforming Dayaknese's values and culture for thousands of years.

Toponymy and its relation to linguistics are exciting studies to be explored by other researchers who have interest in exploring toponymy of a region in an area. Aside from being one of the efforts to preserve language and culture, a study on semantic and culture is also an effort to strengthen an ethnic identity which is usually not recognized by the cultural owner.

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